

Highline Public Schools | Regular School Board Meeting - August 20, 2025

Good evening, everybody. Welcome to our regular school board meeting. It's really great to see everybody back.

Can will you please stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance? Thank you. Roll call, please.

Director Espinoza.

Here.

Director Tidholm.

Present.

Director Jolene.

Present.

President Vang.

Here. Director Alvarez has an excused absence tonight. Thank you. Any calls or changes to-- changes or additions to tonight's board meeting agenda?

OK, hear and see none. We're going to move on to acknowledgment and appreciation. To my left, here's our superintendent, Dr. Ivan Duran. Dr. Duran.

Thank you, President Vang. I am happy to have the privilege of introducing our new administrators to Highline. I want to thank all of them for being here tonight, and welcome to Highline. So great to have you all here.

I just want to thank in advance for your work to ensure the Highline promise is true for each and every one of our students. So I will read a little about each new administrator, and then I'll ask them to stand to be recognized. So, here we go.

I think I'm going to start and try a little bit differently and just adjust a bit and start with school administrators. I'm going to start with the Evergreen High School, and I'm actually going to have Joe Boyer, Andrew Crook, and Stephanie Gallardo Lara, all stand up.

I want you all in a row here since it's the Evergreen High School. They're all together. All right, I'm going to read a little bit about each one of you all.

So, Joe Boyer-- Joe Boyer has been selected as a new principal at Evergreen High School. Joe has been part of the Evergreen campus since 2015. He most recently served as assistant principal beginning in 2023 and has also held positions as a teacher, instructional coach, assessment coordinator, and dean of students.

Joe has a bachelor's degree in history from Western Washington University, a master's degree of history medicine from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, a master's degree in teaching from Evergreen State College, and administrative certificate from the University of Washington. Congratulations and welcome again, Joe. All right, Andrew Crook is assistant principal at Evergreen. He's been selected as assistant principal.

Mr. Crook most recently served as executive director principal at Summit Sierra in the Summit Public Schools Network. He brings a strong background in secondary education, having also served as dean of culture and instruction and as an AP US history teacher at Summit Sierra. Early in his career, he taught seventh and eighth grade history in both Tacoma and Los Angeles. Mr. Cook holds a Bachelor's degree in history and Spanish from Trinity University, master's degree in education from UCLA-- my in-laws are going to be really happy about that-- master's degree in education leadership, and a principal certificate from Columbia University. Welcome, Andrew.

Stephanie was just-- there she is. Oh, she's got a little baby with her. Oh, Yeah. look at that. It's great. Stephanie has been part of our-- was hired as part of our leadership cadre as accepted assistant principal at Evergreen High School. Stephanie served as a dean of students at Innovation Heights Academy and previously served as the school's instructional coach.

She began her career as a bilingual instructional assistant in Seattle Public Schools, and worked in Tukwila School District as a social studies teacher for several years. Stephanie holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and social studies, a master's degree in secondary education from Western Washington University, and a principal certificate from the Danforth educational leadership program. Stephanie is also fluent in Spanish. So congratulations and welcome to the Evergreen team.

All right, I'm not sure. Was Tamasha here? Is Tamasha here. I don't think I saw Tamasha.

We'll save Tamasha for another night. Anisha Grigsby? I saw Anisha. There she is.

Anisha Grigsby has been selected as a new principal at Cedarhurst Elementary School. Ms. Grigsby has served as principal at Woodridge elementary school in the Bellevue School District for the past three years. She began her career as a high school special education teacher in Spokane.

She has also worked as a language arts and leadership teacher. Miss Grigsby has a bachelor's degree in English education and a Master's degree in special education from Whitworth University. She also has a school administration certificate from the University of Washington, Tacoma. Congratulations and welcome to Highline.

I think we have a rap there. Right, is Stephanie here tonight? Stephanie McNye. We'll have to hold her for another night.

All right, that concludes our school administrators. So again, let's give a round of applause for all of our school leaders. Next, we're going to move on to our district administrators. We're going to start with Omar Crowder.

Omar, there he is. Very great. Omar's hire is a homecoming to Highline as he began his career in education as a social studies teacher at both Tyee High School and Mount Rainier High School.

And Deb in the back was saying she was actually part of the hiring team way back when. Is that right? He most recently served as the principal for a large high school in Philadelphia. When we talk about large, it's over 3,000 students.

He also serves as assistant principal in Philadelphia and is a social studies teacher in Kent school district. Mr Crowder holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and law and justice from Central Washington University, a Master's degree in educational leadership from Western Governors University, a certificate in school finance from Georgetown University, and a certificate in school management and leadership from Harvard University.

He is currently earning a doctoral degree in educational leadership from St. Joseph's University. And soon, we'll be calling him Dr. Crowder. Welcome back.

All right, next up, we have Dr. Kevin King. Kevin's here, yes. Dr. King served as a school director principal at Achieve Academy in Mapleton Public Schools outside of Denver. He began his career in education as a middle school science and social studies teacher.

Dr. King has held a number of administrative positions in Colorado and Massachusetts, including instructional superintendent, special assistant to superintendent, director of learning services and human resources, principal, and assistant principal. Dr. King holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Harvard Graduate School of Education, a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Colorado Boulder. Congratulations. Welcome.

We have a few. All right, next up Katie Virgo-- where's Katie? There she is. Greetings, Katie.

Katie is our new executive director of student learning. She served as a school leader coach in Seattle Public Schools, supporting principals across the district. She also serves as a school principal in Seattle and the Oakland Unified School District and as a middle school math, social studies, and language arts teacher. Katie began her career as an instructional assistant in an emotional behavior classroom.

Katie holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and education from Wheaton College, a master's degree in curriculum and teaching from Fitchburg college, and administrative credential. Again, congratulations, and welcome, Katie. Tana Nelson-- there she is. Welcome.

Tana Nelson is our new director of community safety. Tana has most recently served as a dean of students at a middle school in Renton School District. She has also worked as a school social worker, program director, and program manager at various nonprofit organizations, focused on supporting youth.

She started her career as a campus monitor at a high school in Oregon, earned a bachelor's degree in Christian biblical studies and youth ministry from Northwestern University, a master's degree in school counseling from Northwest University, and a master's degree in educational leadership from Western Governors University. Welcome, Tana. Great to have you here.

And next up is Jason Smith, our director of facilities. Mr. Smith brings extensive experience in facilities and program management across biotech, health care, and tech industries. He most recently served as an associate director of engineering at partner therapeutics.

Jason's previous roles include facility supervisor at Bio Control Systems, technical program leader at GE Healthcare, program manager at Amazon and Facebook Reality Labs. He has also served in the US Navy. Mr. Smith holds a Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering technologies and a Master's degree in engineering management from Old Dominion University. Welcome, Jason. Glad you're here.

Right, Angela Bartlett is our assistant director of health services. Angela served as the lead nurse and school nurse in Highline since 2022. Prior to Highline, she worked as a nurse at Swedish Hospital and Mary Ridge hospital and as a licensed practice nurse at CHI Franciscan and at a school district in Arizona.

Angela holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from Grand Canyon University, and is currently studying to earn her Master's degree in public health from Western Governors University. She's also nationally certified as a school nurse. Welcome, Angela, and congratulations.

All right, a couple more-- Mikaela Riggs is our assistant Director of human resources. Where's Mikaela? All right.

Mikaela will lead leadership development, including training evaluation. She has served as a project manager and analyst in human resources since 2021. Mikaela previously served as the Dean and instructional coach at Highline High School. She began her career as a social studies teacher in California.

Michaela holds a Bachelor's degree in comparative studies in race and ethnicity and a master's degree in education from Stanford University. She earned a principal certificate from the Danforth Educational Leadership. Congratulations, Kayla.

And our last one for tonight is Shirley Salois. Where's Shirley? There she is in the back.

Oh, wonderful. That's great. She's our assistant director of human resources.

Shirley will lead workforce planning, including recruitment and hiring. She has served as a recruitment and retention program manager in human resources since 2021. Before joining Highline, Shirley held roles at the Evergreen State College, Seattle University, and Tacoma Community College, leading work in student programs, equity, and admissions.

Shirley holds an associate's degree from Tacoma Community College, a bachelor's degree in social welfare from University of Washington Tacoma, and a master's degree in public administration from the Evergreen State College. So again, congratulations, Shirley. That is everybody for tonight.

Well, thank you so much.

And I'll say, if directors have any comments to share, I invite them to do so now so our new administrators may leave before the board meeting continues.

Directors, any comments or questions?

No questions, but welcome, everybody, and I look forward to getting to know all of you in a very productive year.

Thank you. Any other comments or questions? With that said, Dr. Duran, I would love to have all the new administrators as well as their new roles come on up. We're going to do a quick picture, please. So please-- and families, come on up.

All right. Thank everyone for being here. Looking forward to working with you, and our new administrators are welcome to stay for the board meeting. But you're also free to leave now. Enjoy the rest of the evening.

Well, thank you so much, Dr. Duran, for that. We're going to move on to our next section here. It's our superintendents reports.

I thought.

Have a drink.

All right. Well, welcome to the 25-26 school year. I hope everyone had the opportunity to rest and recharge over the summer break. I know I definitely did, but we're looking forward to welcoming our students back on the first day of school, which is September 3.

The first day of kindergarten is September 8. First day of preschool is September 10, and Kindergarten Jump Start started today. So we had some of our students in buildings today, and I heard Cedarhurst had a wonderful welcoming for their students.

The last few weeks have been full of professional development and planning with our school and central office leaders for the coming year. I shared during my remarks at one of the sessions how proud I am to be a member of a governance team that supports all students and is committed to keeping our students and our families safe. I recognize that Highline could not do this important work without the board's leadership and approving policies that implement Highline's values and promise. Thank you, directors, for all the work that you do in the Highline community.

I also had the opportunity to speak at the new educator induction this week. It was exciting to see so many educators, including our new paraeducators with such a new approach to how we do some of our induction work. So, really grateful to have them all together.

They were learning alongside each other, and they prepared to support each one of our students. I shared an exercise in identity, as I believe aligns commitment to creating a culture of belonging begins with knowing ourselves so that we can then ensure our promise comes true for every student known by name, strength, and need, and graduates prepared for the future they choose. Thank you to all educators for your commitment and hard work in supporting our students.

This year, I will continue to invite staff to share brief updates on a variety of topics during my superintendent's comments. Last year, the staff updates mainly focused on budget. This year, we will expand the list to other areas.

I'm also happy that we will continue to hear regular updates from our labor partners. And tonight, we'll be hearing from Deb Binns, our HA President. But first, I'd like to ask Jackie Bryan, our chief financial officer, to come to the podium and give a budget update here in August. Welcome, Jackie.

Good evening. So we're back in August, and we're very excited to start the new school year. But tonight, I will be talking about 24-25 still because we are still in the 24-25 fiscal year until the end of August. So what I will be presenting tonight is our monthly budget update as of July 31.

I did arrow. Oh, there we go. Thank you.

So we've been doing monthly updates on enrollment throughout the year, and tonight, we're going to be talking about our AAFTE enrollment, which is our Annual Average Full Time Enrollment. And this is the numbers that we receive our funding based off of. So as we talked throughout the year, you saw enrollment change on a monthly basis. But the actual apportionment that we receive from the state is the average of all of those months. So those are the numbers that you're looking at here.

You can see for K through 5, our elementary, we were up. And we knew that throughout the year. We started above projection, and we kind of held steady all year.

So these aren't final numbers, but they are very, very close to what the annual average will be for the year. So we were up roughly 319 FTE or students in K through 5. Secondary 6 through 8, so our middle school, we were very, very close to projection-- 30 over projected enrollment, which is very good.

And then at our secondary 9 through 12, we were 108 students over our projection. So in total, it was 457 FTE over our projected enrollment for the year. And this is the first time in many years that we have actually come in over projection, which is great news, and it's a trend that we hope that continues into next year.

The second AAFTE enrollment we're looking at is special education. So there's really three or four pieces of enrollment that we look at separately throughout the year. The first one was the one we just looked at, which is the annual average of all FTE.

Then we always look at special education, and we report this to the state on a monthly basis as well, and then CTE and PSC. And the reason those four are really important is because they're funded differently each group. So we have to analyze each group separately. So for our special education, we had projected a growth this year because we have seen special education grow, especially since 2020, 2021.

This year, we didn't see the growth that we had seen in the past. It actually-- it looks like there was a decrease. I wouldn't say there was a decrease. We held steady.

So we didn't grow at the rate that we had grown in the past. So we didn't come into-- we didn't hit our projections, but we didn't also decline in our special ed enrollment. And then CTE and PSC, we saw really close to projected numbers.

So for CTE 7 through 8, it was exactly at projection. 9 through 12, we were slightly over with 67 FTE over and PSSE with 53 FTE. So overall, for funding, we were over projection, which is great news for our budget. So looking at year to date numbers, again, this is as of July 31, and the fiscal year ends August 31.

And after August, there's quite a bit of year end activities that happened, and we will be working on that through September, October, and into November. So our year isn't actually officially closed until November 15. So our year to date revenue, you can see we're at 87% of collected revenue of what was budgeted.

That is really, really on track with what we would expect this time of year. It's slightly, slightly lower this year because the state, the way apportionment works when we receive our money from the state, it's not an even amount each month. It's a percentage of the overall.

And usually, traditionally, May, and June are very low. It's the lowest percentage. So we don't receive as much revenue from the state those two months. And this year, because of cash flow issues at the state, they actually withheld additional funds in May and June.

So we're receiving that in July and August this year. So it's not that we're not receiving the funds. It's just when we receive them is different. So you'll see this catch up now as we close out the year. For expenditures, we're right on track. 90% of expenditures, \$365 million as of July 31, and that's exactly what we would expect to see at this time of year.

Year to date revenues-- again, this is just breaking down those revenues a little bit further. And you can see state, we do have quite a bit to still receive from the state. And we actually are projecting to receive slightly more than budgeted because our enrollment was higher. So we'll see that happen through August and then as we close out the year.

There were some questions about federal funds. I know throughout the summer. We haven't really we haven't spoken since beginning of July. But there was a lot in the news about federal funds this summer, and there was kind of-- federal funds were withheld because we usually receive them July 1.

The good news is we will receive all those funds as was appropriated by Congress. We also, in the time span where we weren't sure and we were unclear, we came up with some really good contingency plans if that were to happen again. So just know that we are looking at that constantly, and we do have contingency plans in place if that were to happen.

Year to date expenditures-- again, you can see we are trending. The only one here that's slightly different is special education. It's trending slightly higher than budgeted this year, which is not unusual for this time of year. And the rest are trending exactly where we would expect them to be.

So what's next with our budget? Again, like I said, 24-25 doesn't close officially until November. So we will be working with OSPI and doing all of our last grant claims for the year, our federal claims, and then reporting to OSPI. That is due mid-November.

We actually are scheduling a year end work session with you for November 12th. So that's when you'll see the official numbers for 2024-25. Looking ahead, 25-26, we will have our four day enrollment count. That is the kind of first enrollment count of the new fiscal year.

That's due to the state September 8. And that's kind of a preview of where we think enrollment could land. September is not a good indicator of the overall enrollment trends. Usually, October 1 is really the first indicator of what we think enrollment will look like throughout the year and how close we are to projections. 25-26 Staffing analysis will continue throughout September.

So as soon as we get those four day counts in, we're looking at each individual classroom and the class size and the staffing allocated to those classrooms. So that will happen throughout September, and any adjustments will happen hopefully by October 1. And then on the capital side, we're opening Evergreen and Tyee on time and on budget in a couple of-- well, they're open now, but students will arrive there in a couple of weeks, which is very exciting. And our CFAC team, Capital Facilities Advisory Committee, our first meeting this year is September 8, and we are actually meeting almost on a monthly basis with CFAC this year as we prepare to bring something to present to you in the spring. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you so much, Jackie. Directors any follow up questions for her?

I don't have any questions, but I just want to Thank you and your team for your meticulous work, per usual and as always.

Thank you.

Jackie, I have one question in regards to the 457 students that we saw the plus on. Was there a specific area that we saw more increases in? Was the south end of our district or north or in the middle? Where were we seeing the increases at?

Generally, it was spread out throughout the district. I would say for elementary, I would say the larger portion would be at the south end of the district. Yeah.

Thank you very much. And you did share with us that, you know, the September count is not a good time to look at numbers but in October. So we'll look at that and reassess it. That's it.

Very good. Thank you, Jackie. All right. Next up I'd like to ask Steve Grubb, our associate superintendent, to come in to give an update on foundational supports. Welcome, Dr. Grubb.

Thank you. Delighted to be here, President Van, members of the board, Dr. Duran. Happy to talk about our favorite topic-- foundational supports.

Right, we're set. In my high school language arts class, I was told that Mark Twain said at one point, I didn't have enough time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one. This will not be a long presentation. I hope we've done our preparation, and we'll be concise.

And I really want to spend my time on this image, and I want to thank our communications team for helping us put this together. There's a central point that I think is the foundation of all of our work, and that is our work surrounding people, learning environments, and access. Support our core mission, our vision, but specifically the student learning goals of the district. Full stop. Dr. Shawn Ginwright spoke to us a couple of years back from Harvard, and he described his grandmother's tomato plants.

He said the fruit was the talk of the town, and people would ask his grandmother, how did you produce such lovely fruit? And her answer was always, it's the nutrients in the soil. And the human resources, the people part of this, is 85% of our budget.

Bringing in the right people, aligned to our vision, aligned to our mission, is essential to our ultimate success in these areas. The learning environments-- our superintendent frequently uses the word and expectation around pristine. The expectation is that we have pristine learning environments that are worthy of our students and of our children, and our focus is to ensure that, you know, multiple million dollars of investments are ready and functioning and serving the learning agenda of the district and the teachers who work in those buildings.

The outdoor school Camp Waskowitz is a gem of Highline and increasingly scarce and rare for any school districts to provide those opportunities and own the property and provide the outdoor learning experience. That's part of our learning environment in Highline that we're so proud of. And then finally, access-- our transportation program, fundamentally, is about equity of access to our schools and to learning learning opportunities.

Our bus drivers greet our students, the first ones to see in the day and in many cases, the last school district employee in the afternoon and evening. And then our community safety program is calibrated to ensure that all students are safe and can access the outstanding learning that we provide in highlighting that we're so proud of. So I'm going to skip my next two slides and allow time for Sarah Baker to come forward and talk a little bit about human resources priorities, and she'll then introduce Claire.

Good afternoon. Sarah Baker, executive director of human resources. When he said he was going to skip a slide, I was like, no problem. But then I realized everything I want to share with you is about the previous slide.

So I will say this. Steve has given us a charge under the redesign of what does it mean to be district operations as a division. And the charge for this year is working together. And so when I think about human resources and people and access and learning environments, these are the three kind of big tie-ins that I can name for you about how human resources wants to work better and work differently for our staff so that they can deliver on the promise to students.

Coherence, to me, to my leadership team, is about standardizing what we're doing. People should know and be able to expect clarity from us. There should be transparency and accountability around the processes that we have that are designed in service of staff and students.

We're fighting against some status quo, and I didn't plan to say this, but I'm going to say it because Dr. Duran is looking into my soul. Human resources is uniquely positioned that we could be the policing agent in a district to maintain the status quo. And we owe you, and we owe our community and we owe our staff to interrogate those practices and make sure that we're not just perpetuating more of the same but really reimagining how do we serve students better?

And I think that's the through line of these three things. For me, that support means we need to restructure the support we're providing as a department so that we can make sure we're aligned to strategies, that I have an implementation lead for the things that we say we're doing. Practices about building on what we have-- we have tools.

We have platforms. We have technology and this thing called AI that we're all trying to figure out how to have a relationship with. And we need to use those things effectively and efficiently and not make workarounds because the tool isn't working the way that we need.

So I'm excited in the restructuring of our team, around my leadership team. So I'm going to ask them to stand. Up. Deanna Russo is our Director. You got to stand, girl.

Deanna Russo is our Director of professional learning, and she's really going to be the lead implementer around our workforce development strategy. We have Christine McGarr, our staffing services manager, and Sean Morrow, our director of labor relations, who both lead differently the work of employee support and services. And then we have Michaela Raikes, who you met a moment ago, and Shirley Siloi in the back, our two new assistant directors that are coming out of the redesign around what are the gaps.

And one of the gaps was how to make sure recruiting and hiring efforts are succinct, that they're clear, that we're ultimately making sure that we're finding the people our kids deserve, that have the skills that our kids deserve. And Michaela's role will really be to focus on how do we develop the leadership capacity so that we have leaders in every space and every role in this system prepared to deliver on our promise. So I'm excited about the work that we have ahead of us and what it means to work together. And I get to introduce my most favorite new friend, my elbow buddy, Claire Gloede executive Director of foundational support.

Thanks. Sarah Baker is hard to follow, so I will do my best. My name is Claire Gloede, and I oversee-- I'm the executive Director of foundational support. And what that means is I oversee transportation, community safety, facilities and maintenance in Camp Waskowitz, our outdoor education center.

So it is a privilege to share the work we're doing, and I look forward to sharing updates along the way. In line with the three points, in alignment with the overall foundational support, goal, and strategic plan, foundational support is assessing the now and figuring out where we're at. I'm so excited to share that we are building operational plans, built in the MTSS model to support learning services in our students and to serve the mission, Hihgline mission.

We're creating systems that support staff, connection, and voice, leaning into the people we have who do the foundational work every single day to provide access and safe and clean learning environments for our students. And we're building sustainable practices that elevate our current status and are driven in continuous improvement. The now is only good enough for the now, and we're looking forward to always being better and the best for our community and students.

With that, I'd like to introduce-- they left, but you got to meet them. Some of the directors leading this-- this is not encompassing of our full leadership team. These are the directors that serve. Jason Smith, director of facilities-- Tonya Nelson, director of community safety. We are in the hiring process for a new director of transportation, which will hopefully be wrapping up in the next two weeks, and I'll be excited to share that update with you when we hopefully find our person.

And last but not least, Meredith Von Trapp, who serves as our director of Waskowitz Outdoor Education Center. And looking ahead, I'm certainly confident in the team, human resources, foundational support that we're going to be able to deliver on our promise to be the foundation, to build systems, and to elevate our current status, to better serve our students and community at the level in which you expect and which they expect of us. And they're coming back up. But if you have questions for any of us, we will take those now.

Directors, any questions or comments?

No questions again. But thank you, Sarah, Claire, and Steve. I really appreciate you stepping into this new position this last year and really just hitting the ground running-- I mean, all of you. I really appreciate the work that you do, and I'm grateful for what we've done so far and looking forward to where we go from here.

Yes, I have a question. Hi. Thank you for all your hard work and your presentation.

A note on recruitment and messaging-- I saw the billboard that went up last week, I think, on First Ave advertising the recruitment of paraeducators starting at \$25. You belong here. I loved it.

Thank you.

I also want to understand a little bit more how employee voice is informing these updates because you mentioned that there are tools and frameworks that we already have that you all are just strengthening and building upon. So there's a lot of data, I know, from employee voice. So how's employee voice informing all these updates?

Thank you for the question. That feels like a plant. Yeah, there's a couple of things that we've really leaned into in the last couple of years. One is the panorama staff survey and how can we tack on specific questions and then tie strategies to how do we move the needle on that question.

That's the most global kind of universal voice. More specifically, we've really leaned into the idea of design teams. And how do we first acknowledge that we're all figuring this out together. This is my first life, you know, that I know of, and I don't know all of the answers.

But there's people that are doing the work every day that are in our classrooms, and I don't know their experience. So our teams really leaned into how do we build diverse perspectives into design teams. So as an example, tomorrow, we have a professional learning coordinator. Anh-Minh Nguyen is hosting a kickoff design team for our onboarding efforts around classified staff.

And that will have paraeducators and teachers and principals and central office admin to start with what's the problem we're solving for and how do we identify what the solutions could be. We have a couple of different design teams like that in different pockets of the work. And then lastly, and this is kind of like, eh, we really listen when people say, this isn't working. So, exit surveys, exit interviews-- we've really interested this year in leaning into stay interviews and how do we talk to the folks who have stayed and really recommitted to Highline over and over again.

Why did they do that? What was working? How could we do better? And then we've got a couple other just kind of discrete data points that I'm happy to follow up if you'd like some light reading. Yeah, you're welcome.

Thank you. That is it. I don't have any questions.

Thank you.

All right, very good. Thank you all. Appreciate you being here tonight.

All right. Next, I'd like to welcome Jeb Benz, our Highline Education Association President, to the podium to share a few remarks. Good to see you, Jeb.

You got a new sweatshirt. All right, very good. Very good. Nice. Thank you.

Yeah, I didn't realize just quite how green I was going to be today. But you know, I was channeling my inner Kermit. Superintendent Duran, President Van, members of the board, thank you for being here and thanks for the opportunity to speak. The shirt strikes me a lot for a variety of reasons, one, because it stems from the sign that was in the classroom of an educator in West Ada school district in Idaho who was terminated because there was a sign that said that everyone is welcome here in her classroom.

And she worked in a district where the school board upheld the termination decision. And then the attorney general of the state of Idaho decided to write an opinion that stated that this was a political statement that could not be allowed in any school. And I'm so thankful that I work in a district that actually believes that everyone is welcome here and who supports that with all of the work and all the decisions we do. And in fact, when I welcomed 95 new HEA members on Friday at new employee orientation, one of my little schticks was the idea of saying, everyone is welcome here. And if you do not believe that there's the door.

This can be your quickest moment of employment ever because that's what we believe as an organization. That's what we believe is the district. And I said that same thing at the human and civil rights convening that WA ran.

Shawna Moore and I co-hosted it this weekend at Highland college with 450 educators from across the state and said the same thing. There's the door or a window, if that's quicker. So, on this idea of what we do and truly believe in.

Appreciate the idea, actually-- I appreciate what Sarah just said, and this is my first life that I'm aware of. So I appreciated that and thinking about knowing all the things or not knowing all the things. And I think that we do our best, right, in this opportunity.

I am super excited about this new crew of educators that came on board. I'm super thrilled to see two of my former students who are going to be teachers in the district. I am excited to welcome friends back who used to work in the district who then said, oh, I think I'm going to go find greener pastures, only to realize that the pastures weren't greener. So they came back with this idea of kind of wanting to continue their work. So it's good to see a nice mix of new to the profession and folks that are returning from other spots to strengthen the ranks and the numbers.

I appreciate the work that human resource is doing in hiring. We do need to bring more people in. I appreciate the billboard.

We need more billboards to go through to ensure that we have the support staff that our students and our colleagues need as we go through. So, look forward to the year, look forward to working. Didn't necessarily know if I look forward to the fact that CFAC is meeting monthly.

Thanks, Jackie. So, looking forward to a few more evenings in this room. Thank you very much.

Very good. Thank you, Jay. I appreciate you being here. All right. That concludes the superintendent's update for tonight.

Thank you so much, Dr. Duran. We're going to move to our director's report. Start to my left, Director Helene.

Thank you, President Van. I wanted to draw attention to the levy that is obviously coming up here in a couple months. Take a look at the website highlineschools.org/levy. You can also find the link near the top of the district website labeled Levy.

The levy renews local funding that fills the gap between what the state provides and what our schools ultimately need. On the website, you'll also find details about what the levy funds, the cost information, and answers to frequently asked questions. Thanks

Thank you so much. Dr. Espinoza.

OK, so the finishing touches are being made to the new Tyee High School. Staff and teachers are there now. They're setting up their new space and getting familiar. The school will officially open the first day of school two Wednesdays from now on September 3 on time and on budget.

Let's see. Please save the date for an open house-style community grand opening on Tuesday, October 7, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM. I also wanted to note that last week I was at the ribbon cutting ceremony for Para Los Ninos, and I was really thrilled to see our community partnerships team there, just cultivating those relationships and supporting our community partners in their achievements and goals. So it was really great to see. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Vice President Tindall.

Yes, the new Evergreen High school opened up on Tuesday, September 3 for students. I had the honor and privilege of going on a tour with Dr. Duran, our very own Aaron Garcia. Beautiful tour. My son and his friend, who are going to be juniors at Evergreen this year, got to come.

And we also had a freshman join us. And just walking through and seeing those babies' faces, I keep telling everybody. My kid is 16 years old and is entirely too cool to smile these days. But he was beaming from ear to ear, and him and his friend were just walking through and looking at everything and talking about what they're going to do here and in this corner and with that place.

And it's amazing. I'm super excited. My mother graduated from Evergreen High School.

So to see it going from the school that was not new when she went there and now a brand new school that my baby and all of our babies get to experience is super duper exciting. I can't wait to pop up and embarrass him. This month also, staff and teachers are going to be settling into the new building, obviously, with the babies.

Super excited. Old building is gone. I don't know if you've driven by, but it is gone.

And hopefully, we will have a parking lot soon enough where the new fields also will be built in their place. And we're going to host a community grand opening event in October. More details to come, including the date. It'll be shared in the coming weeks.

Today was also the first day of Kindergarten Jump Start. It's a free program that we have for all of our incoming kindergarteners to get them started a little bit in the quieter space before they're overwhelmed with all the big kids. Over the three days, the students get to take part in engaging in activities to ease their transition, and they get to know the routines, meet their teachers and classmates, and the families also get to connect with the teachers, learn about readiness, and discover what resources our schools have. And that is all I have. Welcome to the end of summer, everybody.

Thank you so much. So I had an opportunity. I was walking by Lisa Johnson, our director of nutritional services, when I was walking in this afternoon. I'm like, Lisa, how are things going? And she's like, Joe, it's been a crazy summer.

I just want to do a quick shout out to our nutritional services team. You know, they served about 10,000 free meals to our students this summer, six meals sites operated over six weeks offering breakfast and lunch. That's great. That's just a great way to make sure that our kids in our community have the access to healthy and delicious meals all summer long.

But in addition to that, she was sharing with me just getting our schools set up with Evergreen and getting our staff trained on the new equipment, things of that sort. So she's really excited but tired and is just really excited to get that going.

School's starting, and we have two new schools. We have a new transportation building and a new building at Valley View. There's a lot of new things happening within Highline, and I just want to thank our community for the bonds that they're passing.

It's to you. The thanks are to you for helping our community grow. Our students have a better learning opportunity. So, thank you so much, And that concludes my director's reports.

And now we're going to move to our scheduled communications here. On behalf of the board, we sincerely appreciate you taking the time to join us and sharing your thoughts with us this evening. You'll notice that our norms and guidelines are displayed on the screens for your reference.

Please remember that you're addressing the board, and there may be students presenting or present or watching who are listening carefully to what you are saying. Please note, while the board is unable to respond directly to your testimony during the meeting, we value your input, and thank you again for being here and speaking with us. First up is Katie Kressley.

Good evening. My name is Katie Kressley, and I am running for school board position three. But tonight, I will be discussing or talking with you as an individual.

Tonight, you as a board, have an opportunity to show parents that you are willing to work together with them in a transparent, equitable, and respectful way. I'm proposing inclusive policies and practices that make the process of opting out simpler for diverse families. The proposed changes that are coming tonight introduced for policy 3232 bring our district into federal and state compliance regarding survey opt outs.

However, not all surveys seem to be covered. Some are exempt from the opt out requirement and it is not clear on the district website what the choices are. And what are available to parents. State law recognizes parents as the primary stakeholders in their child's upbringing. They're the people with the chief interest and authority.

To respect that role, I urge the district to create a simple one page opt out form, available in multiple languages, at the beginning of each school year. This could be combined with sex ed opt outs, but mostly, it is for the clear and accessible process of opting out. Such a step would reduce confusion, promote equity, and ensure parents can engage without fear or fear of missing deadlines.

Turning to the Senate Bill 5462, this was passed in March of 2024. The law requires school districts to adopt inclusive curricula and select instructional materials reflecting historically marginalized and more. Yet the state law RCW28A6505005 again affirms parents as the primary stakeholders in their child's upbringing.

In that spirit, I proposed this new curriculum be opt in rather than required. Now, you maybe not be ready to do that, but I have something to hand to you. Thank you.

Thank you. Next up is Margaret Saget.

My name is Margaret Saget. I've been a Burien resident since 1972, and two of my three children attended Highline Schools. Constitution Day is observed on September 17 each year to commemorate the signing of the US Constitution in 1787 and to recognize all who have become US citizens. It is a federal observance that encourages educational programs to promote study and education about the Constitution in schools and government institutions.

All federally funded educational institutions are required to hold educational programs about the US Constitution on this day. My simple suggestion would be to ask students to memorize at least the preamble to the Constitution. Students in middle school and high school should be required to read the Constitution.

In teaching them about citizenship, you could also teach how immigrants can become US citizens and encourage students to attend a naturalization ceremony to welcome new citizens. Constitution Day is not just another date on the calendar. It is a day to reflect on the values that make America exceptional, a day to remember the sacrifices made to establish a government of the people, by the people, for the people, and a day to emphasize citizens' responsibilities for protecting and defending the Constitution. But as important as this day is, many Americans, especially young people, are unaware of the significance of the Constitution.

The Constitution is more than just a piece of parchment written over 200 years ago. It is a living blueprint of our constitutional Republic. By celebrating Constitution Day, we are not simply honoring a historical document. We are reaffirming our belief in the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution-- freedom of speech, religion, the right to worship God, and the right to bear arms, among many others. These are freedoms that countless Americans have fought and died to preserve, and they are rights we must actively defend. I ask you to make plans now in your classroom schedules for the required observance of Constitution day on September 17.

Thank you very much. Patricia Bailey.

Good evening. The de-professionalization of teaching is leading to poor academic outcomes in public education. Due to the interference of central administration in the form of curriculum mandates, procedural demands, and required practices, teachers no longer have agency over their own classrooms.

From my experience as an educator and listening two scores of interviews of very capable teachers who sadly quit teaching, it's clear that teachers now have to do their jobs with one hand tied behind their backs. For example, I recently met an obviously bright and dedicated Highline primary school teacher with 25 years experience who is being required to plan for five reading groups. I knew immediately this was counterproductive, and she stated as much. It's simply not true that small groups are the best way to meet individual needs.

Let's look for an example at a gym class. Some children can dribble and shoot the basketball very well while others struggle. Does that mean that gym teachers should divide the class into five ability groups? This is ridiculous.

The gym teacher teaches the whole class. Everyone gets to participate, and 4/5 of the class is not left without supervision and direction from the teacher. I did not use small groups with my primary school students, and they were highly prepared for the next grade.

Allowing teachers to do their jobs unimpeded needs to be a priority of the board. If teachers need help, they can ask for it. Otherwise, they should be trusted to teach the standards and content they were hired to teach without interference from central administrators or outside entities. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Alex Myrick.

Good evening, directors. One of tonight's introductory items, a revision to policy 3232, parent and student rights and administration of surveys, analysis, or evaluations, is scheduled to be voted on September 3. You will almost certainly follow your pattern of passing a motion by a 5 to 0 vote. One of the most pervasive and problematic programs is social emotional learning.

SEL undermines parental authority, prioritizes feelings over facts, and has an unhealthy focus on negative emotions which lead students to identify as victims. Additionally, it consumes class time that is needed for teaching reading, science, and math, areas in which the state has already found our district to be woefully deficient. Your revision states, quote, it is important to note that this notice and opt out only applies to surveys, analysis, or evaluations that are federally funded. It obviously does not apply to activities that are covered under other funding sources, such as state funds or grants, unquote.

How are parents to know which surveys are federally funded? It has been established and affirmed that parents are the primary stakeholders in the education of their children, but policies are not respecting this. District policy forbids school staff from disclosing to parents a child's decision to try to transition to the opposite sex unless the child agrees.

SEL has received billions of dollars in federal funding. Therefore, by your definition, parents should be allowed to opt out of its activities. If the district does not allow for opting out of SEL, how does it justify this?

Administering these surveys opens the door to multiple serious side effects-- unauthorized access, stigmatization and discrimination, profiling, and data breaches. The district has already suffered a disruptive data breach. It should not be gathering more data when it has been demonstrated. [AUDIO OUT]

Erin Odell.

My name is Erin Odell. My daughter, excuse me, is a first grader at Madrona Elementary. Madrona has been absolutely wonderful, not only to me-- I was a student there in the '80s-- but also to my daughter.

My problem last year was with a student-- I'm sorry, with a district employee. I was directed to her to get our PTA going, and she, on numerous accounts, told me a few more months to get the PTA going. Finally, in March, I asked for a meeting of the parents that wanted to get this PTA up and running, and we finally had a meeting.

I found out we were out of compliance and all of these things. Now, I know the board and the district don't have any part in the PTA, but you do have a part in your school district employee. And if that employee's responsibility is a family and communication-- I'm sorry, family, and community engagement specialists, they should be working with the parents.

When we finally had a meeting, there was derogatory comments made to me and another parent in regards to our leadership as well as whether or not we were able to lead at a diverse school. I decided to have a one on one meeting with this school district employee to try to dispel any tension because I saw that her leadership and her participation in the PTA was integral, and I sat there and begged for her assistance in a meeting in June, begged her. It should be the other way around.

I have the time. I have the experience. Let me help the school and the community.

She then looked at me, and I said after I told her my daughter had five years left at Madrona, she goes, we'll see about that. That is absolutely unprofessional from a school district employee who we have been hearing so much about HR tonight. We've been hearing about equity and inclusion, and this person is not allowing us to try to build a community. I have sent you my notes to your email. So if there's anything further-- but Thank you.

Thank you very much. Pat Thompson?

Good evening. My name is Pat Thompson. I'm executive director of the Yes Foundation of White Center, and I just came to say a couple things.

One, I'm an Evergreen grad. Going on here? I'd like to reclaim my time.

Just kidding. I've always wanted to say that. Anyway, so I'm an Evergreen grad, 1981.

I am one of five people in my family who all graduated from Evergreen. We are Highline district products-- Mountview, Cascade, Evergreen. And to drive by Evergreen High school right now is a thrill. Every day, it's just a thrill.

So I just want to say thank you, and I know it's been already said that it's the community. So, thank you to the community. Thank you to all of Highline that voted as such.

And I know the bond was a hassle. And I sat through a couple of the meetings that happened here. And yeah, so all the work that CFAC did, all the work that you all did, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. Because it was old when I got there, and it was 1979 when I got there. So, there.

Second thing I want to say is I see that you put forth a Levy for the November vote. I want to thank you for that. I'm here to support. I'm grateful for what's on the levy, support for all learners and college and career readiness. I especially appreciate the student and student well-being piece that's in there. And with funding being so-- the funding conversation, whether it's state or federal or local, it's sort of beyond my understanding in many ways.

So I'm just grateful for any funding that you're seeking out. And so I will be voting yes on the Levy, and everybody I know will vote yes because I just recall a conversation I had with my dad when I was a kid, and we were talking about the levy, and I asked him how he was going to vote. And he said, I'm going to vote yes.

I said, who votes no? He goes, I don't know. We don't know people like that. So, thank you.

Thank you very much. And last but not least, our former director, Aaron Garcia.

All right, all right, all right. Good evening, everyone. My name is Aaron Garcia. You already know me, so I won't do the spiel.

But I want to say thank you, thank you, thank you for the school, for the work. Last June, I had the honor to go to a couple of the graduations, and y'all are standing on business. I saw more success, more rigor, more dedication than I've ever seen in this district, and it's because of y'all.

You guys are holding it down. I am proud of you guys. I appreciate you guys.

Y'all, I know what it is to do the work that you guys are doing. And that is why-- I got about a minute. That is why this fall, I'm also here to cheer, to support, to figure out what we can do to continue the promise that you guys are upholding. Our kids need the resources to live up to this promise, and the levy is going to be able to do that.

I know we gotta go and figure it out from all sorts of places to get the resources that we need. And that's why in White Center, me and Pat and everybody that we know, we're going to be coming to bat to make sure that we're also, like, living up to the promise that you guys are holding for our kids.

So I appreciate y'all. You know, we have your back, and I don't need the 45 seconds. I'm going to give it back to y'all. Thank you.

Thank you very much. And that concludes our scheduled communications for this evening. So thank you so much for everybody for coming out and speaking with us. And this moves on to our consent agenda. Any questions or comments in regards to our consent agenda?

I do have one comment, and this is on 6.5, the approval of the donation to Evergreen High School. I just want to thank Safeway and Albertsons foundation for donating \$15,000 to Evergreen's athletic. So that additional support will help those kids just look better and do better. So, thank you so much. With that said, do I have a motion to approve the consent agenda?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the consent agenda. Can I get a second?

I'll second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed? Hearing, seeing none, thank you very much. We'll move to our action items here. 8.1-- this is motion to approve revision to board policy 6970, naming facilities. Any questions or comments to this? Hearing, seeing none, can I please have a motion?

I move-- excuse me. I move that the Highline School Board approve revisions to board policy 6970, naming facilities. Can I have a second?

I second.

Roll call please.

Director Tidholm.

Yay.

Director Espinoza.

Yes.

Director Holien.

Yay.

President Van.

Yay.

This motion passes 4 to 0.

Thank you very much. 8.2-- this is motion to approve the annual renewal of software licenses for the Verkada camera and security systems. Any questions or comments on this? Hearing and seeing none, can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the renewal purchase of software licenses for the Verkada camera and security systems for a total of \$290,662 with \$0.42, including tax.

Can I please have a second?

I will second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Holien.

Yay.

Director Tidholm.

Yay.

Director Espinoza.

Yes.

President Van.

Yay.

This motion passes 4 to 0.

Thank you very much. 8.3 has been postponed to our meeting. Move to 8.4, motion to approve professional services agreement with Seattle Children's Hospital for athletic training services.

Any questions or comments on this? I do have a comment, and Bill, I see you're out there. Just want-- I was in the crowd last year at quite a few of our games, and I just want to say that the supporters out there, they were great, attended to our kids when they were hurt, when they got hurt, and just made sure that everything was great. So, just thank you so much. And if you can share that with them, that'd be great.

And I just want to second that. My sons play pretty much every sport there is. However, last year was our first year wrestling, and I thought football was bad.

Although they say wrestling is more strategic, so it's not. But it's scary as a parent to see it. So I greatly appreciate the staff being there and how prompt they were when there was any kind of owies and boo boos. I appreciate them and give them my thanks as well.

Thank you so much. Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline school board approve the professional services agreement for athletic training services with Seattle Children's Hospital for the 2025, 2026. School year. Could I get a second?

I second.

Roll call please.

Director Espinoza.

Yes.

Director Tidholm.

Yay.

Director Holien.

Yay.

President Van.

Yay.

This motion passes 4 to 0.

Thank you very much. That concludes our action items. Moving on to our intro and action. We're going to have a presentation on this one. So if I can have Dr. Greg come on up.

This is 9.1, motion to approve the annual renewal with Brown and Brown Incorporated and Schools Insurance Association of Washington for district insurance coverage. One of our favorite things is about insurance and our costs. So there you go.

If there's anyone who can make insurance interesting, it's our brief speaker tonight. And I just want to introduce Alex Bogart, President of Brown and Brown Incorporated of Washington. And he is our insurance broker, and he'll do a brief presentation.

Good evening, President Van, Dr. Duran, members of the board. We are privileged to serve the Highline School District. We have done this since 1951.

I have not done this since 1951. I know I look old, but I'm not that old. And we look forward to continuing. I will try to condense what's been a very busy year in partnership with our services as well as the team at Highland school district, busy in terms of claims activity, policy, and insurance, contract enforcement and then program changes for the upcoming renewal. And then rate control is something that I'll touch on.

The summary, I would say, is the choices you've made in the premium dollars you've spent in your insurance program over the last two years have paid off. And so let me touch on the main ones. We had a total loss, fire loss, at Southern Heights Elementary school.

And the net result of that is a \$25 million payment settlement that we negotiated. It is not closed, meaning that if there are additional dollars that need to be secured, we'll have the ability to do that. But what's significant is that we were also able to get those dollars to be uncontested by the insurer.

So normally, the way it works is the insurer only pays when you replace what you actually had. And in this case, Highline wanted the flexibility to maybe not rebuild the building as it stands today but do something a little bit different. And so to that end, we've got the securement for \$25 million of uncontested funds.

Of that \$25 million, we got to use \$6 million of that to renovate Beverly Park School so that we could bring it back online for educational purposes, providing temporary teaching space for Southern Heights Students, and preserving that capital investment inside the school district for the future use as we see fit. Evergreen is an exciting project and was mentioned a number of times this year. Earlier in the year, we had an unfortunate event where somebody decided it was a good idea to put a garden hose through a ventilation system and caused tremendous damage, water damage in the facility.

The Highline team internally moved heaven and earth to still be in a position, despite that loss, to open on time and on budget, as was mentioned. And our job on the Brown and Brown side was to go collect those dollars, to try to make that happen. So as we stand today, that's about a \$7.3 million problem that we're securing through insurance contracts.

And then last year, we kicked off the year-- this is maybe hopefully a distant memory now, but we kicked off the year with a cyber attack at the very-- I think it was week one. And that ended up essentially using up pretty much all of \$1 million worth of coverage items. So total paid losses so far and counting for this year is about \$33 million.

So here we are coming up to renewal. The renewal is coming up effective 9-1, and the program with SIAW is one where we as a school district, along with another-- a whole bunch of other member school districts-- come together to buy coverages as a group. And essentially, what we do is we buy shared coverages. And in the past, some of the limits that were available when shared across 30 plus school districts had the potential of being too low for a school.

So, pleased to report that the 25-26 renewal includes enhancements that we have been asking for the last couple of years. So most notably, the program total available for any one loss on an annualized basis for the program had been set at \$200 million on the policy. We have schools in our own program, in our own district, that would use all of that by themselves, never mind if we start sharing that with 33 other school districts.

That number has been pushed up to \$1 billion. Business interruption coverage and extra expense coverage, which are coverages that we used to deal with Evergreen and we also used to deal with the Southern Heights claim and in renovating the Beverly Park Place, those limits were increased from \$10 million to \$15 million. Building ordinance and code upgrade coverages were increased from low single digit millions of dollars to 50 million, and the cyber coverage, which we also used this year, had a program group aggregate of \$5 million, and that's been doubled to \$10 million.

So those are all great enhancements that we get to look for for 25-26. Finally, on the rate control, SIAW I initially indicated to us in May of this year that Highline would see a 30% rate increase in the premium. We took advantage of some miscommunication on their part and got that number reduced from 30% to 22%.

And that essentially brings back into the Highline coffers \$410,000 of monies you now don't need to spend on insurance and instead can spend in the classroom. Since then-- and Jackie doesn't know this yet, but since then, the numbers have actually come in, and the net increase actually is 20% So there's another \$100,000 that now we don't need to spend and can put back in the classroom if we wanted to do that. So that's the summary of my report, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Thank you very much. Directors, any follow up questions or comments?

Thank you so much for your effort and your advocacy on our behalf.

You're welcome.

Yeah, the 8% decrease from 30% down to 22% and now it's down to 20%, thank you so much for just advocating on behalf of our district. Just curious. If you wouldn't have advocated for us, would they have stuck with the 30%, or would they have dropped it?

They would have stuck with it.

Thank you. I appreciate that. Also grateful for that 8% decrease and for the increase in coverage. Hopefully, though, we don't have to use it.

Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

With that said, I'm going to read the intro and action item again. This is motion to approve the annual renewal with Brown and Brown and Schools Insurance Association of Washington for district insurance coverage. Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the annual contract renewal with Brown and Brown Incorporated for \$537,500 and approve the annual contract renewal with Schools Insurance Association of Washington for \$6,769,502 for a combined total of \$7,307,002, with minor modifications or adjustments as approved by the superintendent for the 2025-26 school year. Can I get a second?

I second.

Roll call please.

Director Holien.

Yay.

Director Espinoza.

Yes.

Director Tidholm.

Yay.

President Van.

Yay.

This motion passes 4 to 0.

Thank you very much. That concludes our intro in action. We're going to move to our introduction items.

We have 15 this evening with, I believe three presentations. So we'll get going. It's 10.1, motion to approve revisions to board policy 1111, oath of office. Any questions or comments?

Hearing, seeing none, 10.2, motion to approve revisions to board policy 3232, parent and student rights and administration of surveys, analysis, or evaluations. Any questions or comments? Thank you.

10.3, this is motion to approve revisions to board policy 3250, student records. Questions or comments? Hearing, seeing none, we'll have a presentation on this next one here-- 10.4, motion to approve a contract between the Special Education Department of Sunburst Workforce in the 2025, 2026 school year.

Hello again, and I'm being joined by Katy Vergara, executive director of student learning. Thank you. First, thank you for the opportunity to give a brief presentation on this. I just want to name as kind of the face of the team that's left that you've seen, I recognize that Sunburst came to you a couple of times last year, and we heard the feedback.

And the number one thing I can say is that this is a complex problem, and I'm really excited and grateful. And on behalf of Katie and I want to acknowledge the work of Gabe Bungert and Darren Spencer and Jackie Bryan and Lauren McAllister. And, you know, I'll throw the two of us into that as well, that we've really, I think, learned from how can we better understand the complexity of the problem in an interdepartmental way and have created a work group to really try to suss out what's resulting in board action requests like this.

And I want to say that we have a plan, and I'm excited about it. I can speak to HR strategies related to that plan, and then Katie will speak to the student learning component. First off, we spent the summer in human resources thinking about where is the hard to-- where's the hard to fill piece coming in?

We know that there's workforce challenges and a workforce shortage around education in general that is even worsened in special education. This is hard work, and our kids deserve the best. And we know that.

So we spent the summer looking at how can we centralize some hiring processes so that we can kind of get ahead of the ball. It's a hard to fill area. There's a lot of reasons that it's really challenging for principals to hire throughout the year, and those contexts change. So we have a small cohort of additionally allocated staff that we're using to fill the gap.

New students will come. New enrollees will come. They will have an IEP, and we owe them the service related to their needs right away.

So we've in advance hired a few positions so that we can fill that gap in the immediate so that principals don't have to have that on their backs while they're going through a hiring process. We've also thought about some really challenging contexts in the spring related to a lot of factors around annualization so that we have those people and they can fill the gaps when it becomes even more hard to fill come second semester. And the second thing that I want to name is a commitment this fall.

I think I said this a little bit earlier as well. Run the commitment to clarify systems so that we can identify, post, and hire these positions as soon as possible while also making sure that students have the support that they need while those processes unfold. Equitable hiring processes are important, and sometimes that means time. So how do we fill the gap? That's our pieces of the plan.

Thank you. And when Sarah spoke to the cross departmental work group, that's across business services, HR, and special education.

We want to tighten the alignment between our departments, and we also want to collect and analyze some historical data and create progress monitoring plan using historical and current data that we collect to measure the effectiveness of new initiatives as we try them. And so the work group is going to be both understanding the problem and you know, looking for opportunities to mitigate some of that. And then also looking ahead, what are some best practices that we need to put in place so that, as Sarah said, we meet student needs always as a priority?

But we're also working smarter and working together to put as many minds on the problem as possible. So I'm excited for that. I also want to name a celebration-- that this is the first time this year that the paraeducators will have a full day of professional learning driven-- like, central professional learning.

And it's going to be in November. And part of our overarching goal for that day is that we want to make sure that our workforce are skilled in the ways they need to be skilled for our students, and we also want to create a cohort and an opportunity for the paraeducators to collaborate with their peers. And so a lot of that work that we're going to need to do to make that day exceptional is to understand what do all paraeducators, all paraeducators, need to be successful in their roles, and then how do we differentiate for bilingual paras and special education paras and understanding what the needs are somebody who has been in it for 20 years, somebody who started in September.

So all of that's going to factor in, and student learning is working in partnership with HR and other departments to create a really robust day that we are hoping will not only support paraeducators in their role but also help us retain and build that cohort over time. Let's see. Anything else?

The only thing that I would add on Jackie's behalf, because she said it earlier-- I wrote it down. With business services. Katie, myself, and the special education team, really looking at the staffing analysis that Jackie referred to earlier today. That's also an interdepartmental workgroup. So when we're looking at what are the numbers of students that are actually coming in, what are the needs of those students, how did we project staffing in March of 2025, and how is that showing up in classrooms in September? That that's a big piece of this as we figure out, where do we have talent to move around to fill some of those gaps as well? So just want to name the work that Jackie noted.

Congrats.

Oh yeah.

Another piece that I wanted to mention is that our workgroup has committed to providing quarterly reports to the board so that we can look at some of that data together. And you know, we will do some analysis of the progress monitoring, but we would like to be able to give regular updates.

That's us. If you have any comments or questions, we hope we address them, but we'll take them anyway.

Thank you very much, directors. Any questions or comments? I have a couple questions. The contract or the service agreement is rather long. So I didn't get a chance to read through everything.

Sure.

But one question I have is if a paraeducator that is hired by Sunburst is not working out in the classroom, how do teachers or administrators at the school level communicate that? What gets done? I couldn't see how that happens.

Yeah, great question. So, Sunburst is functioning as, like, the primary contact for Highline. And then they have staffing agencies that people are getting assigned to positions on a temporary basis as we need them. So the feedback loop between schools to HR, who's administering those assignments, and Sunburst is super streamlined right now.

So principal could call and say Blaine came today, and we need Blaine to not come back tomorrow. And that could be said, and we can communicate that in real time to Sunburst, and they'll assign someone different. So the feedback loops are pretty tight right now. And because of the way that we've built this contract, we can set pretty high standards of who they're even allowed to send to us, if that--

Yeah, that makes total sense. Thank you.

Hi. Thank you again for your presentation. So can you help me understand how this new contract and the work that you're doing are going to go hand in hand? I mean, yeah, how is-- if the contract is in place, will the work still continue to build these new systems, strengthen, fill the gaps, all of that?

Yeah, well, we used the amount that was spent last year to, to develop the ask for this year knowing that our goal is to not need it but to not also have to keep coming back to ask and revisit it. Because I know that was a point that the board made last year. But while we're building things, that's why we need to be able to measure the effectiveness.

And so there are times we're absolutely going to need to use the agencies for some things. There are things that we cannot fill because kids have very specific skill set-- or specific needs that require a specific skill set that we are talking about how to fill hard to fill positions, how to recruit for those. But, you know, in an ideal world, we wouldn't need to use agencies at all.

But in order to make sure that all student needs are met, sometimes we have to look for specific skill sets that can only at this time be provided by agency. So we know there's going to be some people that are actually going to be necessary throughout the entire year. And then we have other people that are going to come in and fill vacancies until we can internally fill them.

So it's going to be a balance of both. And that's part of what our workgroup needs to analyze is what are things that are required in order to meet the legal obligations of every student's IEP. And then what are the pieces that we can actually take off of agency and put back into our centralized staffing?

OK, thank you. Just one more comment. Thank you for highlighting that celebration piece about paraeducators now joining that professional development opportunity. I would really like to see more of that integration and inclusion. It seems like it can be done. So thank you, and I hope to learn more.

Thank you so much. So the next five items are about special education. And in this one alone, the fiscal impact is about \$5 million. I just want to share with the board that out of this \$5 million, the state has a safety net program that is going to reimburse \$4.8 million of it.

So the district isn't going to take the whole hit, but we have to pay it up front to ensure-- you know, earlier, Jackie was sharing with us that special education on our graph was the one that we're spending a little bit more than we were supposed to. So we're moving our dollars where we need them. So it wasn't so much a question to you but a comment, just making sure that our directors know that we will be reimbursed for some of that but not all of that.

Excuse me. Hello, everyone. Jennifer Renick, deputy superintendent.

President Van, I don't like to do this, but I just wanted-- for the record, I want to clarify that we have received our safety net reimbursement for the 24-25 school year, and we will be applying, as we do every year, for a reimbursement of funds that we need to expend to provide the services that we are obligated to provide for our students with IEPs that are above the state threshold. So that amount that we apply for and that we receive, we do a great job. It's a high percentage, but it will vary every year. So I just want to name that clearly for the record.

Thank you for the clarification. I was just jumping ahead. So thank you very much. Positive thinking. All right, any other questions or comments?

No question. Just a comment. Thank you all for your work, and it'll be lovely when we see the day that the state fulfills its paramount duty to fully fund education.

Thank you. So we're going to move 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, and 10.8. We're going to have a presentation on all of those.

So I'm going to read the motion so we have it on record. And then we'll just jump into the presentation here. 10.5-- this is motion to approve a contract between special education department and Children's Institute for Learning Differences in the 25-26 school year.

10.6-- motion to approve a contract between the Special Education Department and the Emerald Learning Center in the 25-26 school year. 10.7 is motion to approve the contract between special education department and Heart Spring in the 25-26 school year, and then 10.8, this is motion to approve a contract between the special education department and Overlake Hospital Medical Center, Overlake Specialty School, in the 25-26 school year. So there you go.

Thank you. Well, good evening, President Van, Superintendent Duran, and members of the board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to those agenda items that you just named.

Each of these items recommends board approval of contracts with our OSPI-approved non-public agencies, often referred to as MPAs. They provide direct services to students with severe needs as outlined in their individual education plans. And across these four agencies, a total of six Highline students will receive direct services. This represents approximately 0.002% of all Highline students currently receiving special education services.

And for some students receiving educational services through these MPAs, it is after services have been delivered through the schools are found to have not achieved the outcomes needed for the student, or others may transfer into Highline and have it already stated in their IEPs that they need this level of service. In response to previous requests from the board to minimize the need for follow up increases to contracts, the bars that we're talking about for these-- tonight Overlake Child and Emerald Learning Center reflect the tuition for the currently identified students, plus an additional amount equivalent to the tuition for one more additional student.

This provides us some flexibility should an additional service be required for one of our current students or for a newly enrolled student. We did not offer-- we did not add this buffer to the 10.7 contract with Heart Spring due to the unique services offered and the unlikelihood of an additional Highline student requiring that level of support. In all cases, no additional expenditures will be made unless there are additional student needs identified.

Additionally, we will again this year apply for Safety Net, as we had just talked about, funding from the state which will reimburse us for the cost of special education services beyond the state threshold. We were recently awarded \$4.8 million in reimbursement through Safety Net. So we'll be reapplying to cover the additional expenses beyond the state threshold within these bars.

And that \$4.8 million, I just want to give a shout out to the special education team, which I am new to. So this was not on me, but they did a tremendous job reclaiming that much in our spending. I would be happy to answer any questions that I can.

Directors, any follow-up questions? I think we're good. Thank you so much.

Thank you.

10.10, this is motion to approve revisions. 10.9, jumping the gun-- 10.9, this is motion to approve learning assistance program, readiness to learn partnership. Any questions or comments on this one? Hearing, seeing none, now 10.10, motion to approve revisions to salary schedules between Highline School district and central office admin, executive assistants, Highline Education Association professional technical non-represented Teamsters 1, Teamsters 2, Teamsters 3, and Teamsters 4 staff.

Oh, sorry.

This is a big one. So, apologies for that, Director Holien. I was asked a question about timing. So I just want to name and then take any questions after this but name that part of the timing of how we send salary schedules to you is based upon when we are open for bargaining for any of the units.

So you'll probably recall that the beginning of July, which was the last meeting that we had with you, you approve the tentative agreement for our building administrators. And then on that basis, we were able to create central office administrator schedule. the remainder of the schedules in this bar are known, already bargained numbers that just need to get calculated and plugged in, and all of whom their calendar starts 9-1. So this is the normal typical cadence that we would try to send these salary schedules towards the end of summer.

It also gives us time to audit and make sure that things are accurate and then to get our systems in place, that that's online, that the back end of the systems are all loaded and everything's accurate. There's also a question about this idea of having to retro back for central administrators. It's real.

It's a challenge. Our central administrators are on contract that starts July 1. Given our schedules and given that bargaining being opened, this was the soonest that we could bring this to you in full package. So that's the comment on the timing. Then I can take any further questions or comments.

Directors, any questions or comments?

No/

We have none.

Great. I will say-- I should have said this before. You'll see one more of these after we do action. Based off of action, our sub schedules are made based off of the perm employee schedule. So there will be one more salary schedule you can expect to see this fall.

Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

10.11, motion to approve the 25-26 annual contracts with Everdriven and Hopskipdrive for McKinny-Vento-qualified student transportation services. No presentation on this. Any questions or comments?

I do have a question. Thank you, Claire.

Yeah.

So, looking at last year, it looks like we had approved a total of \$5 million with \$2 million to Everdriven and \$3 million to Hopskipdrive. And I'm not complaining by any means, but it looks like this year, the ask is only \$4 million, with \$1 million to ever driven and \$3 million to Hopskipdrive. Do we know?

I mean, I'm sure we know, but off the top of your head, can you tell me what the cause is of the reduction? Like, specifically what allowed us to save this money? How we got here?

I'm going to ask a support here. So this is Maria Chavez, who served as our interim director, and I think-- thank you.

You can send me a follow up email if you don't know as well. But I mean, I'm very grateful for the savings. I believe last year, we had actually increased the funds, which was a concern. So for us to be decreasing them, I mean, it's great, but I would like to know why.

I can-- yeah, go ahead.

We are asking for \$1 million just for Everdriven because last year, we actually only-- sorry. Sorry about that. We only used about less than half a million. So I think for the-- or, yeah, less than half a million. So \$1 million would be sufficient for Everdriven.

Do we know what contributed to that? Because again, I believe we had increased it the year prior. So do we know what the contribution was that actually allowed us to save the money? Is it students not coming to school? Is it less cancellations?

No, I think part of that was to make up for previous pay, and-- OK.

I can speak to this a little bit, and I can get you the actual numbers and differences in the space of assessing as kind of illustrated in our presentation, we were able to sit down and review and really look at spending and, when we brought our budget forth to Jackie's team, identify opportunities to save and be stewards in our fiscal responsibility and operations. And I think this is a demonstration to the work that Maria and her team did to identify that. And we're confident with this number and the services that it will provide to our students.

Thank you. So are we anticipating this being the trending number going forward? Obviously, you can't say for sure, but--

I hope so. But I think annually, we'll prepare the number that is best representative of what we know and bring the best numbers to the board for approval.

Thank you both.

Thank you.

Thank you very much. 10.1, motion to approve the 25-26 annual contract with First Student Inc. for supplemental student transportation services. Any questions or comments on this? Hearing, seeing none, 10.13, motion to approve the acceptance of air quality clean diesel electric school bus grant from Washington State Department of Ecology and authorized payment for two electric buses for Schetky Northwest Sales Incorporated. Any questions or comments on this one?

I did have a question. So this is for two school buses plus the charging station if I read it correctly.

It does include infrastructure within the grant.

OK, but it's just the one time award. So upkeeping maintenance, all that would be our responsibility.

Correct.

OK, thank you.

Thank you. Any other questions or comments? You're off the hook, Claire. All right.

10.14, motion to approve Tyee High School replacement project grant of easement with Highline water district. Any questions or comments? Hearing, seeing none, 10.15.

This is motion to approve a contract bid for 24-25-3 central administration building south improvement phase three. I know we don't have any dollar values in here, but hopefully, we'll get that in there soon so we can ask follow-up questions. Any questions or comments on that one?

OK, I hear and see none. With that, that concludes our intro items. Any additions to the upcoming consent agenda?

None? OK, wow. With that, I would like to have a motion to adjourn. Or we can hang up.

I motion to adjourn.

Second.

All in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Any opposed? Hearing, seeing none, thank you, everybody.

Thank you.