

## Highline Public Schools | Regular School Board Meeting - September 17, 2025

Good evening, everybody. Welcome to our regular school board meeting.

Just wanted to start off, earlier, we had an exit conference with our state auditor's office, and I just really wanted to share that. Every year, our state auditor office reviews our district in three areas, our federal grant funding compliance, financial integrity, and reporting and accountability.

In the spring of 2025, we had an exit conference that covered the first two areas, and we came back with no findings. So congratulations. Super happy. But also, today, I'm also happy and thankful that our accountability review also came back clean, with no findings.

So just wanted to reiterate thank you to our state auditor's office, but also our staff, with Tashawn, and then our business team, Jackie, just thank you. Thank you so much for your support and getting that through. Andrew, as well, wherever you are, Andrew. Just thank you again.

And, with that, I'm going to jump into our Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez.

Here.

Director Espinoza.

Here.

Director Tidholm.

Present.

Director Holien.

Present.

President Van.

Here. And to my left is our superintendent, Dr. Ivan Duran.

Any calls or changes or additions to tonight's meeting agenda?

I would like to move to move 8.2, 8.3, and 8.5 to consent.

OK. Director Tidholm would like to move action items 8.2, 8.3, and 8.5 to consent agenda.

Is there a second?

I would second.

All in favor? Or, roll call, please.

Director Tidholm.

Yea.

Director Espinoza.

Yes.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Holien.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes, 5 to 0.

Thank you. I would also like to remove item 6.3, approval of the personnel report, to a separate vote. There is a conflict of interest in there, and I would love to have a second vote on that. Can I please have a second?

I'll second.

There's no vote needed for a removal.

No vote needed. Even better. Thank you very much.

OK. We're going to move on to our acknowledgment and appreciation.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yes. Today, we are going to acknowledge-- I-- bear with me two moments-- Hispanic Heritage Month and the Highline mariachi program. Hispanic Heritage Month runs from September 15 through October 15, and this month-long celebration highlights the impact Hispanic and Latinx communities have made in shaping our community and country. We are Highline proud to honor the rich heritage that strengthens our community.

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, I'd like to share a video about our mariachi program. At Highline, we offer mariachi at five schools, including Evergreen and Highline High Schools, as well as three of our middle schools, Cascade, Glacier, and Chinook. The mariachi classes bring the heart of traditional Mexican music into the classrooms, offering a bridge of cultural pride and academic engagement.

A common theme among mariachi students is that they feel connected and excited about the class. That boosts their enthusiasm and sense of belonging at school. And while the mariachi music primarily features Spanish lyrics, the program is inclusive and welcomes all students, languages, and skill levels. Spanish words are taught phonically-- sorry-- making the music accessible to everyone, which I can confirm because my baby actually was in mariachi at Cascade.

Thank you, Director Van.

Where can I share a video here?

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Growing up, I heard my parents play a lot of mariachi music and, like, Mexican music. And something about the music just makes you feel like wanting to dance to it. It makes you feel good.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

It feels like I'm making my parents proud because I'm representing our culture.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- This has been something that the community has asked for, and we're so excited that we finally have the opportunity to bring it to the schools. And we're reflecting what the community has asked for and reflecting the cultures of our students. This is the first time, as a music teacher, I have seen students smile so much on stage.

- Being in the program has changed how I view school learning because I want to come to school now. It's more fun. And I get to look forward to just coming to class and being here. And I feel like it's also improved my grades because I have a place. Like, I have my club. Other people have sports. Other people have different things that they like. I like mariachi.

- [SPANISH]

- [SPANISH]

- When I first stepped into this class, I was like, oh, it's different from any other music classes I had from the previous years. It does get me excited to come to school now.

- We have support from the principal, from the teachers, from everybody, and everybody is eager to listen and see how we are. And it makes me feel like I really belong at this school.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

Thank you for that.

Next up is going to be our superintendent's update. Dr. Duran.

Yes. Thank you, President Van.

I just want to thank everyone for being here tonight and just enjoy spending time in schools over the last two weeks. And last week, I visited Seahurst, Gregory Heights, McMicken, for the first day of kindergarten. I loved seeing our new learners arrive. Some are excited, some nervous, some both, but they're all full of energy about starting a new chapter in their lives.

I sat next to one student, Sophie, and asked her what she wanted to do in kindergarten. She shared with me she wanted to paint, [SPANISH]. That interaction stayed with me, as she had the biggest smile and was ready for school. Our students arrive with a variety of interests and skills, and it is our promise, to each one of them, to learn them by name, strengths, and needs and prepare them for the future that they choose. It was a great experience to be out there.

Today, I visited Innovation Heights, Highland Virtual Academy, and Glacier Middle School with Director Tidholm. It was great to see our students engage in school and learning and connecting with each other and their teachers.

I'm excited to see new and clear expectations in place for students at Glacier Middle School, where they have created a new vision that states, "Glacier Middle School is a dual-language learning place, where each student is empowered by high expectations, compassionate support, and a commitment to embracing diverse identities, cultures, and experiences and partnerships with families in the community." When we walked through classrooms and the halls, we saw our educators holding students to high expectations and creating a unique sense of accountability for our students to follow those expectations. It was a really great experience to be out there today.

And although this is one recognition of a school, I want to just thank all of our students, our families, our educators, and our staff, for everything that you all do to support our students every day. It makes a difference in the lives of our students and our families.

Tonight, we are continuing to provide updates, during my comments, about some of our work that has happened in the district. Tonight, I asked Jackie Bryan, who leads our finance and capital teams, to give both a budget and capital update.

Jackie, come on up.

Good evening. I'm going to start with the budget update, and then I'll move into capital after that.

So, really, tonight, what I wanted to share was the four-year-- I mean-- sorry-- four-day enrollment for September. So each year, the way September enrollment works is different than every other month. We actually take account the first four days of school. And then, after the fourth day, we actually un-enroll students that were, what we call, no-shows for those four days.

So you'll see, on the four-day counts, we started significantly higher than projections, and, each day, as normal in September, it decreased. Our final, day four count was slightly higher than projection. And then, when we processed our no-shows, you can see that there was a change in that. And our September enrollment that we're reporting is that gray line.

So one thing to note about September enrollment, it is always our lowest enrollment of the year. So that's what we would expect to see. And when you look at this year's September enrollment, compared to last year's, last year's September enrollment was 16,445. So we're higher already than we were last September, which is great news. And, as you know, last year's enrollment came in higher than projections. Our AAFTE last year-- so that is the Annual Average Full-Time students that we are funded for-- the annual average ended up being 16,855. And then, the bottom, if you look at the very bottom line there, that is yesterday's enrollment.

So, as I mentioned, enrollment shifts dramatically each day in September. We always see the lowest after those no-shows are taken out of the system. But then, we're still processing enrollments throughout September. So you can see, we went from a negative from projection, and we're already over projection. So we're up 127 students, as of yesterday. So we will expect to continue to see that trend.

It is, again, normal to see these huge swings in September, as students are kind of settling in. We usually see it-- and you'll see on the next slide. We see it a lot at secondary, as students may not have schedules in the system on the first couple of days in school or they're shifting around. And so, we wouldn't be able to count them.

So our September enrollment, this is just broken down by grade level. So you can see, again, there's the September information. That is what we report to the state. And then-- as of yesterday. So you can see, again, the huge difference just a little over a week makes with enrollment in September. So we are, again, over projection, as of yesterday. We expect that to continue to climb a little bit, through the rest of September to our October 1 count. And, as I mentioned, the only grade band that's still under projection right now is secondary, so 9 through 12, high school. And a lot of that can be attributed to schedules changing and movement still within those schools.

And so, this is our four-year enrollment trends. So you can see day one through day four is pretty consistent. And then, there's that drop off, after day four, for processing the no-shows. So our final September numbers, as I said, are always the lowest of the year, and we climb from there. So you can see, from final September to final October, we gain a lot of enrollment. And then, usually, our annual average, it is right around October or maybe slightly higher. So we're expecting that trend again this year. So if I had to predict, I would say we will be right at projections in October or maybe slightly higher. That's great news.

So what's next for budget? We are-- business services is in that fun time of year where we're working in three different fiscal years right now.

We are wrapping up '24-'25, so we are finishing up our fiscal year end close. That is due to the state November 15. We have a budget board work session, with all of you, November 12, where we'll review the year end-- '24-'25 year end and then projections moving forward.

We are also currently working, of course, in '25-'26, our current year. We're doing staffing analysis, by school and individual classrooms, and that is in partnership and a collaboration with many different departments-- student learning, human resources, business services, all working together to make sure that we're staffed appropriately.

And then, as I mentioned, November 12, we'll have the budget work session, and we'll review all three years. So we'll talk about '24-'25 year end, where we are in '25-'26, and what '26-'27 outlook looks like.

So I'm happy to answer any questions, before we move on to capital.

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

Hearing and seeing none, Jackie.

OK. I'll move to capital. This is the fun one for me. So we're going to celebrate our openings of Evergreen and Tyee High Schools, and we'll talk about some of the other projects that are coming up this year and long-term projects as well.

So Evergreen opened. We had an amazing ribbon-cutting event the day before school started. Lots of students, community members, teachers, staff were there. It was so joyful and amazing to watch everybody walk into that building. We now have students in the building. And I can say, I heard from some of the staff there that students-- there were actually tears in some of the students' eyes, when they walked in the building. So that, to me, makes everything worthwhile. So it is a beautiful building. If-- I think everyone's seen it. But if you haven't, make sure you come to our grand opening, which I'll talk about in a minute.

There is still some work to be done around Evergreen. So if you're on the campus, you'll see, when you walk in the front of the school, the other-- the older building, old Evergreen, is now demolished. And what is there now looks just like a large area full of sand. So we are still doing a lot of construction, throughout this year, on that site. We're putting in another parking lot, which should be done mid-October, maybe end of October. It depends on the weather. And then, we're putting in some more fields there as well. So those will be done by the end of this school year, hopefully, for the beginning of next year.

And Tyee, our other amazing school, opened as well. We had a ribbon cutting the same day. So we had two ribbon cuttings in one day, which was really, really exciting. Amazing turnout here as well. And lots of students, student speakers, community members, were there to celebrate this beautiful school. It is amazing to watch students walk through that school and see the joy. It's beautiful. If you haven't seen it, I would-- one of my favorite pieces of Tyee is the old gym was used as some material in the new gym, right outside. They have some benches made out of it for students, and it's just really, really beautiful. It's a beautiful touch.

Tyee also has some additional work. If you drive by, you can see there's still some right-of-way work being done on the street. That is actually-- some of that is not our work. It is city and some other areas' work to be completed, so we're working with them to get that done as soon as possible. And then, the courtyard will be done, I'm told, by Friday. So I will be there on Friday to see. The city will come and do a walk-through on Friday and sign off on the courtyard area, so that will be available for students, which is great news.

Some other projects that we're working on, transportation building. So we've been talking about the transportation building for about the past year. It was also a bond project. It is very near to completion. We're hoping, within the next month or so, it'll be done. It is an amazing building. It is a modular building. And it came in in 14 pieces, on 14 trucks, and it was put together kind of like a puzzle. So I actually have a video to show of some of the work that was done there.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

You can see-- so we had 14 pieces placed, and they're all placed now. In this video, they're not placed yet. But they're all placed, and we're working on the finishing touches of the building. And it should be ready for transportation, like I said, within a month or so.

Valley View is our other bond project that we've been talking about. And, as we have mentioned, this was also partially funded out of a grant. So it is another modular building that is being put on the Valley View site. It will provide for additional classroom space at that site. It should be done within the next month or so as well-- end of October at the latest. It is, again, subject to weather. Right now, we have great weather, so we're making lots of progress there. And we're also doing a lot of ADA work at that site and just some other site work that you will see, if you go in and check it out. So that should be ready for use, like I said, mid- to late-October.

And, of course, Pacific. If you have driven by Pacific lately, you will notice there is no more Pacific. It has been completely demoed, and construction work is starting on that site. And I have a little, brief video, again, that will show some of the-- well, the progress, from now until when we actually open. There's a lot of little print in here, so don't worry about reading it. But it's just the visual of what is happening on that site and what is to come.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

So this is looking at the old site, right now, and the demo that's occurred.

And this is kind of where we are now. Not quite there.

And this is going through the fall, this fall.

And then, you can see, as we go into winter, we're actually starting construction on the site.

And then, we are fully built. So summer of 2027. Exciting.

What's next for capital planning construction? We are very, very busy right now.

We are having our CFAC meetings monthly right now. So everybody who joins CFAC knew it was a two-year term, so that we can bring-- they can bring a bond recommendation to you this spring. So we are meeting on a monthly basis now, to start really diving into sites. And they are evaluating costs and working towards that March date for a recommendation to the board. We are also doing tours of all the potential sites. So this past weekend, we toured Cascade, Evergreen, and Hilltop, along with Chinook. And we are planning, not this Friday, but next Friday, a tour of some of the other sites as well.

We are continuing to work on critical needs projects. So, throughout the year, you'll see us up here presenting some critical needs. Boilers need to be replaced constantly. Roofs have leaks. So all of those critical needs projects will continue throughout the year.

And just two really exciting events coming up. Tyee grand opening will be October 7, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM, and then Evergreen grand opening will be October 9, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM. So very exciting. I hope everyone can join us there and celebrate these two amazing buildings.

And I will pause for questions. And then, I have a really special video to share. But I'd like to answer questions first and end with the video.

Thank you so much, Jackie.

Directors, any questions or comments for Jackie?

None.

OK. So we received this-- I actually saw the video this morning. Tove sent it to me. And it just made me smile so much that we thought it would be great to share with you tonight. So this is actually a video that was made by Mohamed Shibly. He is a math teacher at Evergreen, and he has been a long-term teacher at Evergreen.

And he actually-- his mom was actually a teacher at Gregory Heights, for many, many years, before she retired. And he was inspired to become a teacher because he went to summer school when she taught there and actually started tutoring some of the elementary school kids. And so, now he is one of our amazing math teachers at Evergreen.

He also, in his spare time, writes and produces music. And so, he has put together a video that I would love to share. He said he was inspired by the new Evergreen building and seeing the reactions of the students and staff walking in. So it's just a really joyful video. I'm happy to share it with you.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Yeah.

I'm 60.

Now, if you rock with me, EHS, I'm going to need you to make some noise

(RAPPING) We rep EHS

We the best, ah

Wolverines, and we say it with our chest, ah

We don't play

We grind every day

Stay persistent and consistent

It's the Wolverine way, woo

We rep EHS

We the best, ah

Wolverines, and we say it with our chest, ah

We don't play

We grind every day

Stay persistent and consistent

It's the Wolverine way, woo

E-V-E-R-G-R-double-E-N

We the leaders

Nobody can see us

Nope

Like Ichiro, hitting home on the leadoff

[WHISTLE]

Green and gold on the jerseys, like a sea dog

[LAUGHING]

Getting PRs in the class and on game day

Evergreen and Winter, we determined it's the same name

Looking at your inner, no beginner to this brain game

What your grades say?

A, A, A

4.0 GPA

Yeah

B's or better living in our DNA

Uh-huh

Seize this moment

What the haters going to say?

Storm-proof, still standing

So stay out the way

We coming through from the roots

Every season

Leaves never leave

We proceed with a reason

Sleeves, like a branch, with their hand out reaching

Grow like a forest, that's the soul of our teaching

Whoo

We rep EHS

We the best, ah

Wolverines, and we say it with our chest, ah

We don't play

We grind every day

Stay persistent and consistent

It's the Wolverine way, woo

We rep EHS

We the best, ah

Wolverines, and we say it with our chest, ah

We don't play

We grind every day

Stay persistent and consistent

It's the Wolverine way, woo

Students known by name, strength, and need

Uh-huh

Future-ready

Best get ready to read and succeed

Yes, sir

Beginning, approaching, meeting, or exceeding

Got to put that work in to attain mastery

Beginner's day

We persevere when the path gets tough

Rise through the grind

Yeah, we got it out the mud, uh

Best believe we achieve

Taking no back seat

Nope

Grab the wheel and control your destiny

Be the driver

[INAUDIBLE]

Ain't nobody better

Nope

Welcome all recall

EHS on a sweater

Green and gold

Never let up

Our service is relentless

Legacy is cemented

EHS representing

Whoo

We determined that the service is our purpose

Step up, step out

Don't be nervous

Show courage

On the service, we ensure that you heard us

It's Evergreen

Evergreen

We a team, not a versus

Yeah

We rep EHS

We the best, ah

Wolverines, and we say it with our chest, ah

We don't play

We grind every day

Stay persistent and consistent

It's the Wolverine way, woo

We rep EHS

We the best, ah

Wolverines, and we say it with our chest, ah

We don't play

We grind every day

Stay persistent and consistent

It's the Wolverine way, woo

Wolverine way

Put your paws up

EHS, put your paws up

Wolverine way

Put your paws up

EHS, dance for us

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

Thank you so much, Jackie, for sharing that.

Dr. Van.

Yeah. Thank you. That was great. Appreciate that. First time I've seen that. I wasn't expecting that, so that was great. All right. Thank you, Jackie.

I'd now like to invite Jeb Binns, the board president of the Highline Education Association, to share a labor update and to hear a little rap here, Jeb. Let's see what you've got. No pressure. No pressure.

Before we move to Jeb, can I just, really quickly, say, I am a bit biased, but-- OK?

All right. That's good. [LAUGHING]

Well, Mr. Binns, I would like you to top that.

Yes.

Welcome, Jeb. Welcome.

Yeah. No, I'll probably sing some karaoke, in a couple days, down in Austin. But yeah, can't beat that.

Superintendent Duran, President Van, board directors, great to see you here.

I absolutely cannot top that. That is truly joyous and wonderful. And I also laughed about the math problem, that probably only 20% of the people in this room actually got the joke. And the rest of us were-- the rest of them were wondering why they just didn't write down 13. Because, you know. But that's another-- that's a whole other story. And there have been lots of folks who have actually gone through and revamped their math curriculum, to ensure that there are no problems that actually have 6 and 7 mentioned in the same breath. And if you don't know what I'm talking about, feel free to Google 6-7 later, but not now, as we go.

So, as I just get on, you know, just to start the conversation, happy to have-- kids and schools and teachers are back, and folks are working and learning and teaching and stressing out about numbers for different levels. And I'm, you know, looking forward to getting some of the balances coming into play near the end of September. It is always challenging, you know, obviously, that those balances don't happen until the 1st of October. But, you know, it's, you know, just kind of working through. And I was sending quite a few emails today, just to hold on a couple more weeks. Hold on. We'll get it figured out. Hold on. We'll get it figured out.

So to go through there-- and I am, you know-- am heartened by the number of paraeducators I saw in the NEO today, New Employee Orientation today. Also realizing that we need a lot more to go through, so that we don't have certificated educators pulled from their planning to cover for one-on-one paraeducators that are needed. Obviously, we need to do the things to keep our kids safe and provide the correct learning activities. But we've got to go through and make sure people can continue to teach their subject and do their work, going through.

I would like to thank the district for re-upping the-- and bringing it back into our consciousness, the protocols for when, and/or if, immigration enforcement comes to our schools. Appreciated the fact that PDF was there. And then, I will also ask for people to actually follow up. Just because a PDF is put and somebody is told and directed to post it in an office, doesn't mean they actually do it.

So I visited about 25% of our schools, and I was very glad that I brought, in my briefcase, an entire set of cardstock copies to hand out to all of the offices that didn't have it posted. So I will give props to Madrona Elementary for having that done. And I will not name all of the other schools that didn't.

However, every school that I went to now has a copy, and it's now posted in the office because I then took some tape and posted it in a spot that I thought was appropriate for that message. So if you want to put the sign up in your school in the place where you want it, go ahead and do it. Otherwise, I will just show up and post it for you. I have had poster ability skills and things like that, so there we go.

I had, also, opportunities of visiting some schools recently. Had a great time at McMicken playing with some second graders and some addition clash on the floor. They destroyed me, as usual, in most of the games, but that was a lot of fun. Some carpet time at North Hill Elementary School with kindergarteners, which is always a blast. And they were just wondering, who are you and why are you here? And I was like, oh, cool. And then, they're like, what does that mean, you're a president? And I'm like, no, I'm not that president.

[LAUGHTER]

They got a little concerned, to go through. So that was good.

And then, over at Valley View, just kind of looking at the construction projects, it was cute. There was a kiddo who was having a rough day, and then we decided to go stand by the window and look at tractors. And that was pretty awesome. And then, he had a slightly better day after that. And so did I because I got to look at tractors too. So that was a lot of fun.

So I appreciate the hard work. I appreciate the collaboration. We'll continue to do it and continue to meet and get things accomplished because, together, we can do great things, so--

Thank you, Jeb.

All right. That concludes my comments tonight. Thank you so much.

Thank you so much, Dr. Duran. We're going to move to our director's reports.

I'm going to start with you, Director Alvarez.

Thank you, President Van. I'm just excited to see that our kids are back in school. I'm thankful that, this year, I have two already in school. I have a high schooler, freshman, and I have a kindergartener. And so, it's exciting to see the contrast between a high school freshman, and there's not very much difference in a kindergartener, to be honest.

[LAUGHTER]

They both are dealing with brand new, trying to get adjusted, and I feel blessed to be able to see those two.

So I was able to attend last week's CFAC meeting. And the Highline's Capital Facilities Advisory Committee, known as CFAC, we are working towards a bond package recommendation. Bassetti, our architects, provided site information and the analysis for the seven aging school sites. We were able to walk, together, through some of that information and were able to ask questions, get more information. And we each sat at tables, and we had a representative at each of the tables, so they could go more into details and get more information.

And now, we've, like you heard from Jackie-- are getting tours. There was tours last Sunday, and there's more tours coming up. And we got to choose, and we can go to all the tours or choose to go to the specific ones we had more questions on. We were able to discuss challenges and opportunities from each of the sites and dig deeper into more information.

And so, we still have a lot of work ahead of us, but we're thankful to have Bassetti's architects there to answer all those questions. So just stay tuned to see what information comes from that. So thank you.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Espinoza.

Yes. Hi, everyone. So there's a recruitment process happening, for families to join the superintendent's Family Action Committee. The group is called FAC, and it strengthens the connections between families and Highline. It provides opportunities for families to give us feedback on policies, to inform our family engagement, and to keep us accountable to our strategic plan goals. You can apply or nominate someone by October 10, and you can find more details and apply on the Highline website.

I also want to echo just how joyful it is to be in the second week, or the third week, of school now. And I feel like the routine at home, with my family, is set, so I'm happy for that. I just wanted to thank my son, Ashuni, who's here with me. It really is an effort of an entire family, for people to volunteer to be on the board of directors. So I want to thank Ashuni for being here.

Thank you so much.

Director Holien.

Thank you, President Van.

There's been a lot of talk of capital improvement projects. Pacific, we already just watched a little video of it, but work is well underway. Groundwork has been, pretty much, covered. It'll be really nice, once-- that road right next to it will be perfectly nice and clean and paved. The new building will be all electric, include solar panels, charging stations. And, also, one cool thing is it's going to incorporate geothermal wells, which is about 40% to 70% more efficient than conventional systems. I thought that was really cool information that I read. But yeah, that's all. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Vice President Tidholm.

Yes. Hello, folks. Tyee High School is going to host its community grand opening on Tuesday, October 7. And, just two days later, my very own Evergreen High School's community grand opening will be that Thursday, October 9. The public is invited to drop in anytime between 4:00 and 7:00 PM-- 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM, to clarify-- for self-guided tours of the new building. Super excited. They are amazing. Our babies deserve all of the good things. Our babies deserve nice things. And I just-- I am so happy for them.

I also, as Dr. Duran noted, got to visit, today, Glacier, Innovation Heights, and HVA. It was really great to see the babies starting their years off great. Like, the hallways were so insanely quiet. I was surprised. They were going to class, for the most part, and behaving themselves quite admirably. I'm very proud of the schools and everything they're doing.

And, again, happy Hispanic Heritage Month. On that note, I had a little bit of a flashback from the last meeting. We're not going to go through that again. They're phonetically taught the Spanish in the mariachi because literacy is a priority of mine and the district, as we all know. Just wanted to clarify that.

And yeah, it's just really great that the babies get to learn these songs, like their dual-language programs that we have-- super proud of that-- and that they get to learn the music and the culture. Like, my son, being in the mariachi, and him singing the songs and coming with his little guitar, so proud. Especially in a country where-- I mean, Spanish was spoken here well before English was the norm-- so let's not forget that-- and where a nice little chunk of the country was, in fact, Mexico, before it became the United States.

And yeah, it's just great to be able to support our community. And just another friendly reminder that nobody is illegal on stolen land. And that's all that I have.

Thank you very much.

And my report. I don't have any kids in the district, but I do have nieces that do go to our schools. And my sister-in-law came home one day and showed me a picture of my niece, my two nieces, and Dr. Duran. And I sent-- I went to my niece. I said, do you know who this guy is? And she goes, no. He just wanted to take a picture with me. So thank goodness their mom was with them and she knew Dr. Duran. So it was really great.

It was wonderful because she started-- she transferred schools, since she moved during the summer. And she was really excited, just saying, Uncle Joe, met some new friends. Just feels really good. So to have her start in a new school, with nobody she knew, she felt great. So I just greatly appreciate that, just on day three. So I'm looking forward to hearing more stories from her and my niece that is a junior at one of our high schools. So looking forward to hear-- to live through them now versus my own kids.

You know, two of our educators were named Premier All-Star Educators for 2025. Congratulations to Beverly Park Elementary Fifth-Grade Teacher Maddi Hundley and Glacier Middle School Counselor and Coach Priscilla Ponce. Both were honored courtside at recent-- at the recent Seattle Storm game and received \$1,000 for their schools. So congratulations to them for that.

And then, last but not least, looking forward to working alongside board directors at our board retreat on September 7 here. So getting some more work done. So that's it. That concludes my director's updates.

Adriana is going to move to our public testimony here. On behalf of our board, we sincerely-- and appreciate you taking the time to join us and sharing your thoughts this evening. You'll notice that our norms and guidelines are displayed on the screens for your reference. Please remember that you are addressing the board and there may be students present or watching who are listening carefully to what you're saying. Please note, while the board is unable to respond directly to your testimony during the meeting, we value your input. And thanks again for being here and speaking with us.

First up is Melissa Ebbeson.

Hi. I have a quick question. There's a tiny human here who would like to testify or give their statement. Is it OK if I give my moment to him and then come back to me, so he can go to bed early and be ready for school?

You do have to-- it has to fall within the two minutes, but yes.

OK.

[INAUDIBLE], and I'm almost seven. And I'm in first grade at Mount View Elementary. What I like about Highline is that everyone is teaching or listening or writing and other things. And another thing is that it isn't-- everyone isn't doing stuff like hitting or punching.

Thank you very much.

OK. The last line is, please vote yes for the school levy.

[LAUGHTER]

Thank you very much.

Shoot. Now, I've got to go quick.

Is that OK?

Sure.

Can we just do that?

When it is her turn, yes.

OK.

All right?

Next up is Ashley Hagenmayer-- Hagenmayer. I apologize.

I'm Ashley Hagenmayer. I'm a parent to four elementary school students here in Highline, and I am also the co-secretary of the Highline Special Needs PTA. And we would like to invite the community to a free and public candidate forum for Highline school board candidates. Partners with the SNPTA include the League of Women Voters, Seattle-King County, American Association of University Women, and King County Library System. All are nonpartisan groups.

The forum will be held on Tuesday, September 30, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM, in the second floor conference room of the Burien Public Library. All candidates are invited to attend. If a candidate cannot attend, they are welcome to send a representative to introduce the candidate and to leave campaign materials. The forum will be recorded and accessed on the League of Women Voters' Seattle-King County website. Our SNPTA community and partners are doing this to give the voters an opportunity to learn about all school board candidates, so they can be informed voters.

Thank you very much.

Alex Myrick.

My apologies. Sorry, Alex. I skipped one name here.

Margaret Sackett, you're next.

My name is Margaret Sackett. I would like to remind you that today, September 17, is Constitution Day. I hope that all the schools in the Highland School District took time to remember and honor the Constitution and taught at least a little bit about it in the classrooms.

In case you haven't heard it for a long time, I would like to read and put on record the preamble to the Constitution. "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

I recently asked a fifth grader in this school district if she knew what the Constitution is. She admitted that she had never heard of it, hadn't had no idea what it is. This is reprehensible. I told her, in simple terms, that it is the rule book for our nation, and that, on September 17, all schools should teach at least a little bit about it. I checked today on the report from her seventh grade sister is that the school did nothing for Constitution Day.

One suggestion for teaching during Constitution and Citizenship Week would be to have the spelling lists-- and I hope they still teach spelling-- contain words like constitution, freedom, peace, liberty, executive, judicial, legislative, amendment, and many others found in the Constitution.

Another suggestion is to have the students take, for fun, one of the several US citizenship tests, which all persons desiring to become naturalized citizens are required to take.

For those who might be interested in obtaining free copies of the Constitution, many sources are available and a quick online check will lead you to them. A few are US Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Federalist Society, and, thanks to Charlie Kirk, Turning Point USA, it is also available online to print your own copy.

I hope you all enjoyed Constitution Day. There is still time to celebrate it during this week, also known as Citizenship Week. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

So I just wanted to do a quick point of clarification. On just looking at Robert's Rules of Order, in regards to ceding time, since the time was ceded, the speaker can't come back up to speak. So I just want to confirm on that.

OK? So you're not able to cede your time to Melissa. OK.

And then, we're going to move on to Alex Myrick.

Good evening, directors. I appreciate Ms. Sackett's observation of Constitution Day. Having sworn an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, I am thankful that we live not in a pure democracy, which can turn into mob rule, but in a constitutional republic, which protects the rights of the individual and the minority.

In the interest of accountability and building trust, the Highline District needs to have more transparency. Parents are the primary stakeholders in the education of their children, but your curriculum suggests to impressionable elementary children that they may have been born into the wrong body.

When they act on this misinformation, the district policy directs staff to conceal this from the parents. The children are then set on a path towards dangerous medical experimentation. In previous testimonies, I have cited peer-reviewed research documenting that these interventions are not helpful and are, in fact, harmful. Last week, I spoke with two detransitioners, who described undergoing hormone and surgical intervention as teenagers, without being told the side effects and the need for lifelong hormones. This is wrong.

I've attended over 50 board meetings in this room. I've watched you vote to spend hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars, with no public discussion. The superintendent publishes a list of recommended motions. They are made and seconded, then passed unanimously. We had two directors who occasionally asked respectful, relevant, and important questions. They were bullied relentlessly and hounded out of office. We need transparency.

Thank you for your attention. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Thank you very much.

Patricia Bailey.

Good evening, Highline School Board. I'd like to draw your attention to an issue I have observed in my neighborhood in North Burien. The parents with whom I am acquainted, my immediate neighbors, appear to be satisfied with Shorewood, the local Highline elementary school. However, they are unhappy with their middle school assignment. They begin to plan their children's escape from Highland School District long before their children reach middle-school age.

They appear to be willing to do whatever is needed, suffer any kind of expense, and undergo immense inconvenience, to enable their children to avoid attending Cascade Middle School. Some enroll their youngsters in Summit Atlas, the local charter school; the small minority opt for homeschooling; while others choose the expensive private schools. Still others are willing to undergo the hardship and uncertainty of putting their children on a ferry to attend Vashon Island schools.

Admittedly, I only know of 12 to 13 children whose parents have chosen this direction, but avoiding the Highline Middle School is the unanimous goal of the close neighbors that I know. These parents want a more traditional, rigorous, academic approach, as well as respectful and orderly student behavior.

As stated in my previous testimony, these problems will only be solved in close consultation with the Cascade Middle School teachers. Their input needs to be fully valued in solving this serious situation, so that they can maintain order and teach their content areas. It is the teachers, in collaboration with the principal, who need to be consulted for solutions. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Next up is Andrea Haisch. Andrea.

Thank you. Good servants. Hello. Good evening. My name is Andrea Haisch, and I am a kindergarten teacher in the district. I just had the great pleasure last week of welcoming my 11th group of kindergarteners to school, and, as Dr. Duran mentioned, it is a buzzing and wonderful time.

But I'm here to thank the board and the cabinet and our superintendent for your continued investment in our kindergarten Jump Start.

So for those that aren't aware, Jump Start takes place three days in August. It's for about three hours in the morning, where students get to visit their school, they get to practice routines, they get to meet some of their classmates that they're going to be with the entire trajectory of their time in Highline, and-- a lot of their favorites-- they get to experience breakfast and recess, which we know is a very exciting part of kindergarten.

But we hear from our community, year after year, that this program has helped students be comfortable and confident in their transition to kindergarten. You know, for a lot of our students, if they have gone to daycare, preschool, they're, like, the big dogs. And then, they come to elementary school, and they are, you know, half the size of some of the students.

And so, I just want to emphasize-- I don't know how much it's talked about. It's just three days out of the whole year. But I want to emphasize and thank you for your investment in this program. I know that some surrounding districts have, unfortunately, cut this or abbreviated it even more, and I'm here to advocate. And, please, think about these five-year-olds, and sometimes six-year-olds, that come to our schools, who greatly benefit from these three days.

Thank you so much. And go kindergarten.

Thank you very much.

Chris Clayton.

Hello. My name is Chris Clayton, and my daughter is a middle schooler, sixth grade, at Pacific Middle School North, this year. And we've been in the district for a couple of years. Didn't have any problems at Des Moines. But the biggest issue I'm here to talk about today is the transportation issue in which we've had.

It's been three weeks of unreliability, tardies, and complete absences from first period, which, I mean, that's a whole hour of missed time. And we are some-- we're a family that prides itself on attendance. My daughter's past couple of years at Des Moines, perfect attendance, because we truly enjoy going to school and want to be there.

But with no access to get her to school, I want to know that we have the reliability to get the kids to school. Because, as of three weeks in, I've got at least three absences, four tardies, and that's just from the bus schedule. Because she's at the bus stop on time every day.

And the new thing was to add an extra bus earlier. Well, the extra bus stop does not come to the original bus stop, and she has no access to get to the earlier bus stop, which is also hindering her getting there.

I would like to know just-- moving schools is a big plan, and I-- how was this not thought out beforehand? Who will fall on the sword? Because this is a big deal that a lot of kids are handling and not getting to school on time and stuff. And I knew she was going to the temporary school when she was in fourth grade. So, I mean, that's two years of time to think about this.

And we want to trust you with the kids, but how can we not trust you with-- how can we trust you with the kids, when we don't know where they are? And I understand not promoting cell phones in schools. I understand that can be a hassle. But with this unreliable transportation issue, some means of communication between your child is necessary. And my daughter had softball--

That's it. [INAUDIBLE] come and speak to us.

Next up is Heather Ford.

Hello. My name is Heather Ford, and I am the parent of a sixth grader at Pacific Middle School's interim site. I would also like to emphasize just how much of a problem the district transportation is, even with the recent adjustments made. This requires your urgent attention and resources to fix it.

Despite numerous calls, with assurances of improvements and thanks for your patience, my daughter has been to class on time once in 11 days. She continues to wait at an unsafe stop, for up to an hour, to sometimes get to the last 10 minutes of class. How is she supposed to pass, much less excel, at this class, when she's prevented from attending?

A chaotic first week is forgivable, but, the following week, they were picked up 53 minutes late. That is 25 minutes after class began, and they still had a few more stops and a drive across town to go. Just yesterday, the last bus left Pacific at 4:10, one hour and 35 minutes after dismissal. That was a 90 degree day, by the way.

The bottom line is, this is not working. We know somebody messed up badly in the planning. I'm not interested in pointing fingers. We need a long-term solution now and for when the weather starts to get really bad. If this routing program we use isn't efficient, we need to replace it or grab a map and get creative, at this point.

Transportation has said that charter buses are not available to help us. Have we looked into King County Metro, even a tour bus, something? The district has an obligation to get these students to class. We can look at revising the bell schedule, to make advisory the first class, so that kids aren't missing core classes, at least, when they are chronically late.

This is an embarrassment. Our children are being denied hours of education. They deserve safe, reliable, and timely transportation, and what they have at present is beyond unacceptable. My daughter sent me a text. Mom, I just want to cry.

Thank you very much.

Vincent Gibbard Kline.

OK. Megan Gibbard Kline.

Hi there. I'd like to cede my time to Hailey Matsui, who is a neighbor of mine in Burien.

Hello. My name is Hailey Matsui. I am a proud, third-generation Burien resident. I grew up in the Highline School District. My grandparents worked for the schools. My mom worked for Shorewood. So I grew up knowing that our community doesn't just talk about caring for our kids, but we show up for them.

And right now, my spouse and I are in the conversation-- a very personal conversation-- about whether we want to have kids and if we want to stay here. And I'll be honest that the health of our public schools is one of the biggest factors in this decision. So, unlike many families in Burien, private school is not an option for us, and I don't want it to be. I want to raise a child in a community where every student, not just the privileged few, have access to good and comprehensive education.

And it feels like we're at a turning point here, with the levy, which makes up 15% of Highline's budget. And it's obviously not just a number, it makes a huge difference in whether students have access to paraeducators in their classrooms, mental health professionals when they're in crisis, and programs that prepare them for schools and careers. And without this funding, every school and every student will be affected.

And it's not just-- or, it's not a new tax, it's a renewal, that is at a lower rate than voters approved four years ago. And these funds cover such essential things-- and I loved seeing the video of the mariachi band-- things like that, that make students want to go to school and want to get better grades and want to participate. And it not only strengthens our schools, but, also, our neighborhoods, our property values. So I urge everyone to vote yes on the levy renewal.

Thank you very much. And there's one additional name for public testimony this evening. They called and signed up by the deadline, but they were accidentally left off the agenda. So I would like to call Ki Buckner. Please come up to the podium, please.

Hello. My name is Ki Buckner. I'm a SeaTac resident, and Hailey kind of hit all the points that I'm going to be kind of following up on, but I think-- I've been a resident of SeaTac for five years. I am a person who has voted yes for this levy historically.

And I'm just here to continue to show my support verbally for it because, as Hailey spoke already-- and something that I'm thinking about is investing in a family here, and I can't invest in a family here if I'm not really confident in those school systems that my kids might be growing up in. So I just want to just be vocal about the fact that I support it, and I will continue to support it. This is where I want my tax dollars to go. So that's all I've got to say about that. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

That concludes our scheduled communications. We're going to move to our consent agenda. Remember that 6.3 was removed from the consent. So can I please have a motion?

I'll make a motion to approve our consent agenda.

Any second?

All those in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed?

Hearing and seeing none. Thank you very much.

And then, the item that was removed from the consent agenda. That was the 6.3. This is the personnel report. Can I please have a roll call? Or can I please have a motion to approve?

I will move to approve 7.3, the personnel report.

I'll second that.

And, just to clarify, that is 6.3

Oh, I'm sorry. 6.3. 6.3, personnel report.

And I'll second 6.3.

All those in favor?

Aye.

We need to do a roll call vote first.

Aye.

OK. Now, we're going to do a roll call.

Yes.

Director Espinoza.

Yes.

Director Tidholm.

Yea.

Director Holien.

Yes.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

President Van.

Abstain.

This motion passes, 4 to 0-- or, 0-- 4-0 to 1.

Thank you. We're going to move to our action items. This is 8.1, motion to approve revisions to board policy 3210, non-discrimination. Any questions or comments?

Holly.

Thank you. Can you just clarify why we are revising this and what the revisions are, in a consolidated explanation? I don't want to wear you out, but thank you.

I can.

So House Bill 1296, which passed the legislature last session, added in-- sorry; I've got to flip to my right papers here-- added in a couple of additional protected classes to the non-discrimination-- to the standard non-discrimination clause. So we have added ethnicity, homelessness, immigration or citizenship status, and neurodivergence. And, again, those are all required additions, based on legislation that was passed last session.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Any other questions or comments?

Hearing and seeing none. Can I please have a motion? Thank you, Holly.

I move the Highline School Board approve the revisions to policy 3210, non-discrimination. May I get a second?

I second.

Roll call, please.

Director Holien.

Yes.

Director Alvarez.

Yea.

Director Espinoza.

Yes.

Director Tidholm.

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes, 5 to 0.

Thank you.

8.2, 8.3, and 8.5 were moved to consent, and 8.4 is going to be postponed to our October 1 meeting. So that concludes our action items.

We're going to move into our intro. And first one up here is going to be Jackie. We're going to have a presentation.

So 10.1, this is motion to approve Resolution 13-25, declaring a surplus a residential parcel located at 18330 4th Avenue South Burien.

Jackie.

Hi. Yes, this is a resolution to declare a surplus of a property that is about an acre in Burien. The reason we surplus, and we ask to have properties in particular surplussed, is when they're no longer needed for educational purposes. This property has not been used for educational purposes. It was purchased a while ago, and it was not used for district purposes at all. So we are asking to have it surplussed. And then, I can answer any other questions you may have.

Thank you.

Any questions or comments? We still have time to-- If you guys come up with anything while you're over dinner, please email Dr. Duran and Jackie.

Yeah.

This is pretty much looking from a school district standpoint of just trying to be a little bit, I guess-- I don't know if fiscally responsible would be the right term, but sort of cleaning some things up. Is that accurate?

Correct. So we-- as a district, we own many parcels of land and property, most of which are used for educational purposes. This one in particular hasn't been because we were unable to purchase the surrounding properties. And so, now, we cannot use it for educational purposes, so we'd like to surplus it, and possibly sell it, moving forward.

Great. Thank you.

I have a question.

Go right ahead.

So we would be selling it now or in--

So the-- we have-- the policy in order to sell land is-- the first step of that is to declare it as a surplus property, that we do not intend to use it for educational purposes. And this land isn't something we'd be able to build on. It's only an acre, and it has other residences, residential properties, surrounding it. And so, we wouldn't foresee, in the future, being able to build on it at all.

Thank you very much. Any other-- any other questions?

I don't have any.

Thank you.

Thank you very much.

10.2. This is motion to approve revisions to the salary schedule between Highline School District and substitute guest staff. Any questions or comments?

Hearing and seeing none.

We're going to move to our last intro item, which we do have a presentation. Steve and Claire. This is motion to approve purchase of 11 replacement school buses, Tier 1 fleet replacement.

I just want to talk a little bit about the three different kinds of buses that we have. We have electric buses, we have diesel, and we have propane. And Claire's going to share exactly how many buses we have in each of those three categories, as well as what our purpose is, to ensure environmental responsibility.

I apologize. I missed the question. Could-- was there no question? It was just the prompt. OK. Well, I have some good notes here. So currently, we have 98 buses. 66 of those buses are diesel, 15 of those buses are propane, and 8 of those buses are electric.

And then, I will read this. So transportation and foundational support is taking a balanced approach with our fleet. Diesel remains necessary for our largest and longest hauls, where other fuels can't yet meet the range or refueling needs. Propane, which produces fewer emissions and lowers fuel costs, is where we see growth in the medium range, and we plan to expand its use over the next five years. Electric is best used for short trip in city routes, and the mixed use of this allows us to service trips within our service area, field trips that extend out of district.

And then, a part of our operational planning is to evaluate environmental impacts. And that is something that is necessary, and planning for that with our new director, who started Monday, will take place and will be very important and pivotal in the finalization of our five-year plan. And when we finalize those details and have scope into how we're going to proceed with that, I will bring that back to the board.

Thank you. Any questions or comments?

I do have one question, Claire. When I'm looking at the cost, what exactly does the OSPI '24-'25 supported price with tax mean? Is that the cost per bus?

I'm sorry. Are you looking at the BAR?

The depreciation status.

Hang on. I might not have that one.

We're going to get that--

I'll get you that.

--question back to you. It's a complicated question and a mathematically complex answer. So we'll get that to you. But we don't have-- I don't want to try to do that--

OK.

--on the podium.

Yep. No problem.

Thank you.

The impetus of that question is the thought behind why the balanced fleet, which you already said, how are you-- how is that determined, whether or not to purchase two more electric buses--

Sure.

--and then nine more propane?

Sure. I can provide a little bit of insight into that. Currently, we don't have the infrastructure to maintain electric buses in-house, and that's a consideration. It's something, again, I think, with-- we have the right team to evaluate that need, to prepare in a five-year plan, and then provide those details back to the board, of how we plan to approach that more effectively.

Awesome. Thanks, Claire.

Thanks.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Espinoza.

Yes. So I just wanted to thank you for that informed BAR that you provided and appreciate hearing about the balanced approach to the diesel, propane, and electric. You talked about five-year plans and all of that. I think it's really important to consider growing our clean energy, our electric fleet, and I'm speaking to this in perspective of being part of the Highline community and living in some of the areas in King County which we experience the most toxic pollutants. So, as much as we can as Highline, support a transition into cleaner energy sources.

Absolutely. Thank you.

I believe that's the remainder of the questions.

OK. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

And that concludes our intro items. We're going to move-- any calls for additions to the upcoming consent agenda?

Hearing and seeing none. Can I please have a motion to adjourn?

Make a motion we adjourn.

I will second.

All in favor? Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Thank you. Oh, yes.

Any opposed?

I don't hear anybody. Thank you, everybody. We are adjourned.