

Highline Public Schools | School Board Regular Meeting - November 12, 2025

Good evening, everybody. It's 6 o'clock, so we'll get started. All right, Director Tidholm is right there, so we'll get started. Welcome, everybody, to our regular school board meeting. Sorry here. We'll get started. It's November 12 at 6:00 PM. Can will please stand up for a pledge of allegiance?

Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez?

Yay. I mean here. [LAUGHS]

Director Espinoza?

Here.

Director Holien?

Present.

Vice President Tidholm?

Present.

President Van?

Here. And to the left is our superintendent, Dr. Ivan Duran. Thank you. Any calls or changes or additions to tonight's board meeting agenda? OK, hearing and seeing none, we're going to move on to our acknowledgment and appreciation. With that, we're going to start with American Education Week, and Director Holien is going to speak to the proclamation. So we'll have Jeb Bins and friends come on up after that.

Hi, everyone. Whereas Public Schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility, and equality, and whereas by equipping young Americans with both practical skills and broader intellectual abilities schools give them hope for and access to a productive future and whereas education employees, be they substitute educators, custodians, teachers, bus drivers, librarians, clerical workers, or food service professionals, work tirelessly to serve our children and communities with care and professionalism.

And whereas schools encourage community, bringing together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders and elected officials in the common enterprise, now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim that the week of November 17 to the 21st of 2025 is American Education Week in Highline and further encourage all citizens to extend their commitment to public education and to the future of our children by supporting our community schools through the contribution of their time and energy. All right, Jeb, come on up, please.

Let's see. Figure it out. There we go. Excellent. Hi, Jeb Bins, HEA President. On behalf of my members, certificated folks across the district, we appreciate the acknowledgment of the hard work that everyone does day in and day out for our kids on the school days, on the holidays, on the weekend days, on the vacation days, and all the things that they do. So for that, thank you very much for recognition. We appreciate it, and we look forward to jumping up on stage and taking a photograph with y'all.

Thank you very much. Come on up.

Thank you, Director Holien. Thank you, Jeb and friends and family that came up here. Next up is our Native American Heritage Month, and Dr. Espinoza, [INAUDIBLE], and [INAUDIBLE], Ortiz and John Reimer, come on up after.

Whereas Highline is located on the ancestral land stewarded since time immemorial by the Salish people of the Duwamish Green, White, Cedar, and Upper Puyallup Rivers, many of these giving birth to the contemporary citizens of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and whereas the members and descendants of tribes around the United States also reside within the Highline community and whereas Native American contributions and values have shaped the social, political, environmental, and economic fabric of the state while also enhancing freedom, prosperity, and cultural diversity.

And whereas state law directs school districts to establish a government-to-government relationship with tribes in order to enhance and formalize our working relationships with the tribes through collaboration and consultation and whereas state law RCW 28A.320.170 mandates the teaching of tribal history, culture, and government in common schools, which will contribute greatly to public school history curriculum and enhance cultural understanding, and whereas the state of Washington has designated the Friday immediately following the fourth Thursday of November as a state legal and school holiday known as Native American Heritage Day.

And whereas Highline Public Schools joins the state of Washington and other states across the nation in celebrating Native American Heritage Month, honoring the unique heritage of this continent's first people and reaffirming the commitment to respect each tribe's sovereignty and cultural identity, and now, therefore, the school board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim that November 2025 is the Native American Heritage month and November 28 as Native American Heritage Day in Highline. And we urge all Highline citizens to join them in this special observance.

Terri, would you like to say something?

Thank you, esteemed board directors and Superintendent Duran. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] That's how you say, "Hello," and, "How are you?" in my tribal language. I'm a citizen of the Pueblo of Acoma from New Mexico, and it is an honor every day for me to be able to serve in my capacity as a Native education program manager and to serve alongside of all of you and continue our ongoing commitment to all of our students in Highline, making sure that they graduate prepared for the future that they choose and particularly having a special acknowledgment such as this for our American Indian and Alaska Native students and our families who have often been the most historically marginalized, invisibilized, and therefore harmed.

We know that we still have a lot of work to do, but we have made some great strides in improving our attendance rates, improving our graduation rates, and our assessment scores for our Native students, and that is no accident or coincidence. It has everything to do with our Highline promise and the way in which we show up every single day to serve our students and families.

So thank you very much for this important acknowledgment, those expressions of self-determination of all of our people but also acknowledgment of an agency as powerful and as responsible as ours is to the sovereignty of our tribal nations, the citizens and descendants that are in our public schools. It's powerful, and it's truly, truly meaningful. So thank you very much for everybody here tonight as well and everybody online.

Thank you very much. Come on up for a picture.

Alongside the recognition showcase tonight we have many more throughout the month of November. We invite you to visit our Facebook page to explore these additional recognitions, yesterday, Veterans Day. November 11th through the 15th is National School Psychology Week, and November 22 is Substitute Educator's Day. So please check out our Facebook page, and check out these additional recognitions. We have a school presentation this evening. I'm going to have Dr. King come on up for introductions.

Good evening, Dr. Duran, Board President Van, prestigious members of the board, Kevin King, Instructional Leadership Executive Director. As this is my first time with the privilege of addressing you, I do want to take just a moment to say thank you for your leadership. It is also my honor this evening to introduce several leaders who are living and breathing and leading Highline's promise. So without further ado, please allow me to introduce Rick Wisen, KeyAunna Johnson, and other members of the Beverly Park Elementary School team to tell you about the great work that they are leading.

Hi. School Board President Van, School Board Directors, and Superintendent Dr. Duran, thank you so much for this esteemed opportunity to be able to speak with you this evening. We got lots to share. We got 10 minutes, I've been told.

So I just want to take an opportunity to really just share with you a little bit of the fabric that makes up Beverly Park and some of the really great program we have and just also to be able to just have some opportunities to hear from some other people. And so we're going to be having an opportunity-- we do have some folks from Beverly Park here, so will you please stand and be recognized? They show up every day and living the promise.

Speaking of which name, strength, and need and a feature they so choose-- that is what healing is all about. I've been in Highline for close to three decades as an employee, as a servant, I feel. And I just live this and breathe this and know that the work we do in this district is extremely special and slightly unique in some ways.

And as typical, everything we do is grounded in the pillars of which that we're focusing on. So culture of belonging and innovative learning, bilingual and biliterate, and future-ready are also those really foundational pieces that help the promise come true. And so today we're going to talk a little bit about what that looks like.

So thinking about our promise at Beverly Park, so we went through a mission statement revision last spring, and we just kind of came and thought, we had a lot of words. We had a lot of really big, long vision statement. We realized that it's really about safety, motivation, and respect. And those are the three key pieces of our promise that we want to live with every day and work on every day to help support our students be in the best possible environment and have the conditions ready for them to be as successful as possible as people first, learners second.

So this is-- and I'm going to talk to Ms. Johnson to come up. She's talk about some of what those elements are that have helped our school get better.

Yeah, so we are Beverly Park Eagles, a small but mighty and vibrant community of learners that SOAR. That's our school mantra. We SOAR. So to SOAR means to show respect, take ownership, be accepting and responsible community members. In our school, when students are caught SOARing, they are recognized by adults and peers with Eagle Pride tickets on a daily basis.

On a weekly basis through morning announcements and on a monthly basis through assemblies, students are celebrating for exhibiting key character traits that we focus on as a community. These consist of empathy, curiosity, fairness, advocacy, collaboration, justice, resilience, showing our best selves, affirming dignity, exhibiting confidence, and being courageous.

These are traits we believe all responsible contributing members of our community and larger society should possess, no matter what future they choose. Our student support teams develop plans based on student strengths as the foundation and the launching pad to effectively addressing their social, emotional, and academic needs, which you'll hear more about a little bit later. When it comes to our Highline promise, we at Beverly Park are affectionately known as the School With the Heart, and we do our best to deliver. Thank you.

OK, and this is Mahir. Mahir is a first grader, and he's amazing, brilliant. And school's fun for him. And you go to class, and you listen to the teachers. And you listen to your parents. But he loves emotions. That's our social emotional focus. He loves the alphabet, and he loves shapes. And so he's a special part of our school, one of 372.

All right. And so we have as a part of our annual action plan three real key areas that we're really focusing on clarity, teacher clarity, student engagement, and social emotional learning. Those are the three things that we're really focused on. And so for teacher clarity, that's thinking about the standards that we really want to focus on within planning, and it's thinking about through line and the alignment with assessment so we can really monitor student growth.

For student engagement, it looks like students having the opportunity to be in small groups, it has an opportunity for students to have voice and choice in what they're learning and have opportunities to see themselves within the learning, so the cultural responsive. And then social emotional learning is really thinking about the opportunity to know who you are, the identity you bring, be able to share that identity with others.

It's the opportunity to engage in some social emotional learning during morning meetings at the beginning of the day and having touch points with staff in general over the course of time. And so those are different facets of our annual action plan that we live and breathe every day.

And this is Tearson. So Tearson is also a first grader, and he just exemplifies-- he has no teeth right now, but we're working on that. Those will come. But he also just brings every day-- if you ever want to get Tearson to read, you must talk about monster trucks because that is what-- for him is what matters most. But we figured that out, and it works.

But one of the things I wanted to take just a moment to talk about-- we have a couple different real key strategies that we're working on. And these are really focusing on sense of belonging and innovative learning, but they're really in tandem. So the first one is academic parent-teacher teams. So we have been working with WestEd organization-- and it's an outside organization-- to provide a grant for us to be able to have a possible structure that we talked about last spring around where students can come in and their families can come in, and we can focus on some fun things but some relatable things that are as much about being a parent as also being a student in terms of how we build that family connection.

And so we created a purpose where we wanted to be able to serve students that were receiving multilingual services and students who were receiving special ed services. So those identified group of students were being duly served was where we really wanted to focus our time and energy. So we invited them in, had meetings.

They played *Jenga*, talked about social skills and setting goals at home, essential oils if you're familiar with that, aligning how the-- just finding a way to bring out the emotions, the positive emotions, and also that sense of just being able to relax and be calm. Those are some of the areas around our interaction or our academic parent-teacher teams. And so I have Betty Hernandez, who-- Rodrigo is her son. He's a third grader at Beverly Park, but I asked her just to come up for just a second.
[INAUDIBLE]

Thanks for inviting me to say here. And so I think be a part of the APPT-- so it was a good experience for myself but not just for me. It's for my family and also the opportunity to be engaged with other parents, with some kids with IEP and how we can meet each other, how they are doing for supporting their kids and how we are doing to support our kids and be able to have that interaction with the teachers. It's very unique and special for us because-- so we don't have multiples opportunity to be in a collective meetings, so I think it was so unique for me to be able to say what I want to have for my child and also having some-- so just different-- thinking about some approaching.

So I've been telling them like that, so I know that for being a parent, I'm the most person who will be interested in the developing and the skills that my child can get. So I don't have the tools that you have as having-- so a teacher degree. So if you can be able to pass it to me and I can be able to consciously are thinking about that, so I'll be supporting better my kids.

So I know that he spends more time with me, and he's going to be with me. But if at least those five hours or the time that you spend with my kid, you can do it with so passion and just thinking about how much change you can make with my child and other kids, so in your classroom, so it will be so much-- it's going to be a great opportunity for my child but not just for my child, for my community because we are going to pass it to other families and replicate it in the community.

Thank you, Betty, very much appreciated and very well said and very true, powerful program that we have established. Just some other opportunities that we have to engage our community-- from our Family Art Fridays, Bingo Breakfast, Arts Corps, heritage celebrations, Soccer for Success, Girls on the Run, Yeti Club. There's lots of different activities that take place throughout the year that just make it a fun place to be. Here's just some visuals of some of those events that we've had. And so it's just exciting, and there isn't a month that goes by that we don't have some way we're engaging our [INAUDIBLE].

So then innovative learning-- I mentioned culture of belonging, but innovative learning, we have also some learning structures for the adults that work in our building that are going to equate to what we're doing with our students. And so I'm going to have Ms. Melinda Freeland talk about-- our instructional specialist talk a little bit about what [INAUDIBLE].

Thank you so much. One way that we think of how we build our continued collective efficacy or effort working together is investing in all the people that support our students around the school, and a need we saw was among our classified staff. A lot of times, classified staff, when they enter in a position, it's with little to no training, and they are the ones that work with some of our most neediest students. They are there seeing them in the lunchroom, in the hallway, at lineup. So we thought, how can we reposition so that all of our adults are viewed as esteemed teachers and learners that they are, and how can we support them in our community?

So one change we've made is we've built a team meeting time on Fridays for ongoing professional development, problem-solving, data analysis, and a collaborative community. We've named ourselves the Reach team because our motto is we help students reach every achievable dream, and we know that our work together is what is producing that impact. And we have seen it in our results with our students with IEPs, for our multilingual students, for their sense of belonging, and then also for our classified staff's sense of belonging. We've seen a dramatic increase in both measures.

Another way that we're continuing to build on that structure is we've rescheduled our daily schedule. So now classified staff on Wednesdays-- their day starts at 8:00, when we have our regular staff meeting and professional development. Before, they weren't a part of those teams, but by repositioning their work hours, now they're able to be at the table learning alongside their certificated colleagues and collaborating together as we look at student data.

That's been able to continue with our professional learning communities on Fridays, allowing everyone who supports every student to have a voice in what the data is saying, what adjustments we're making as a school, and how we problem solve to better support each of our students. Thank you.

And this is just a snapshot of our WIDA data, so language acquisition and progressing and proficiency. And so from last spring, our averages are higher than the state district average in terms of progressing and also proficiency. You can just kind of see that's a measure and, I think, a testament to the work that the Reach team has been doing intentionally.

And then some other celebrations-- so our iReady data last spring really showed a significant amount of growth, especially at fourth and fifth grades, 140% of our growth in fourth grade and 144% in terms of the typical growth for fifth grade. So we really own that. We name that as a part of our PLC structure and being very close to where our students are and knowing where they are in academics, a stretch growth also.

So that's not just the typical growth but, in addition to that, grades one, four, and five, 30% growth there and overall placement from 21% at the beginning of last fall to 46%, so significant growth that we're really proud of. And with students with IEPs, 50% of those students made their stretch growth, which is annual growth. So we have a lot of work to do. We know that. But it is definitely something that is a testament to the work we have and the team we have at our school.

And then back to our why. So this is Ollie. Ollie is a kindergartener, and he's brilliant. And he's also great, and everything we do is about tomorrow morning, when Allie shows up at 9:15, two years, five years, 10 years. He is a member of the class of 2038 graduating seniors from Highline Public Schools, hopefully, and so we're just really proud of the work we do in our school and everything we bring to live the promise. Thank you.

Thank you so much for that. Directors, any follow-up questions or comments?
Director Alvarez?

Buenas noches, Director [INAUDIBLE].

Just thank you. Just hearing just our senior class of the 2038, it just-- I don't know, it just sparked some kind of just-- because I have one, too, that's going to be graduating in that year, and it just-- I can't even believe at times. But seeing the growth that year-plus, it's impressive.

And I see the amazing work that your staff and your community is, and having Mama speak about all the work that's happening and seeing, I think, her as a teacher and wanting to get the expertise from the teachers being passed on so she can continue the growth, I can see why the jumps are being made, because parents are being valued and seen as teachers. So that's amazing, and I'm wondering, how do we replicate that right across the whole district?

But also, thank you for all the work that you've been doing. I know that having-- I know that you've been there at that school for a little bit already and seeing just the growth in that amount of time as well. So thank you for all the work that you do for your staff because I think leadership does make a difference, and so just thank you to you and to all your staff for all the work that you're doing. Thank you. No questions, just a lot of gratitude. Thank you.

Thank you. Director Holien?

I have one. I do want to say, thank you very much for coming here today and speaking about how awesome Beverly Park is. I have one question. When you were talking about the innovative learning in the efficacy within the staff, how did you manage to work out the scheduling to have that all work together? Because I think that would be something that could be also replicated across the district.

Yeah, for sure. So we looked at what the daily schedule is at Beverly Park, 8:45 to 4:15. So our classified staff were at seven hours, would work 8:45 to 4:15. Well, we decided we would sacrifice coverage at the end of the day, meaning all hands on deck. So every certificated staff member in the building would help with dismissal from 3:45 to 4:15 and put that time back on the top of the day and have those paras come in at 8:00.

So it was really just about prioritizing learning and collective efficacy over coverage. That's really what it breaks down to. And when we wrote it all out, it all worked out, and though on Wednesdays it can be a little tight at 3:30 when we have even our one-to-ones-- and all of our paras are with us in the morning. So we all go out and cover all of our kids and make sure everybody's safe and everybody gets home. We haven't had any mishaps. It's been all good and gravy. Thank goodness. But it really does work. It matters how you look at the time and what you value, and we decided that collective efficacy was what we were going to value this year.

That's wonderful. Thank you very much. Thank you. Dr. Espinoza?

Yes, thank you. [SPEAKING SPANISH]

So I'm really happy to hear about the Reach team. And I know you said that you reorganized the Wednesday time so that they could join-- so everyone could join the all-staff meeting in the morning. What's one of the outcomes of that? What's something that has happened by having you all work together?

That's a great question. Well, first off, the data that showed our kids making exponential growth, particularly our students with IEPs-- we redid the support schedule so that kids were getting double-dosed, and we trained our classified staff to be that second dose. We are so privileged at Beverly Park to have classified staff that are truly teachers, that invest with connecting kids, that state their learning targets, that make adjustments and differentiate during their lesson and stay focused on the instructional goal for that time.

So that provided an additional double-dose towards all the skills that our multilingual learners and our students with IEPs. So because we saw that huge increase within our academic instruction last year, that also is what led to some of the decisions of prioritizing the collective efficacy for all of our staff this year in thinking that if we branch that out-- because before, it was instructional paraprofessionals who were able to step outside of their class on Friday mornings, so supporting kindergarten, supporting recess, supporting in the library, and then instructional staff-- it's a little easier for them to step out than a paraprofessional who's assigned one to one or working with students within a classroom setting.

So by shifting that, now we're able to position all of our classified staff and onboard them to the training that we have been doing to have that quality of teacher efficacy and knowledge within our building.

Thank you.

Thank you so much. Vice President Tidholm?

Yeah, no questions but a comment. First of all, thank you for presenting as well as the mother that came and your baby. I see you in the back, honey. I really appreciate engaging and including the paras-- I think that's really important-- and also the parents and recognizing that partnership, not only for the schools, but it sounds like the parents and your community do a pretty good job as well.

I know a lot of the time it's really easy-- I'm a parent myself. It's really easy to look at what's going on with my children and their scores and to look at what's happening in the schools and why are my children not succeeding potentially but also having to recognize that it does start at home. And like the parent there that spoke noted, she spends most of the time with the child.

The child's at school a few hours a day, so really recognizing the importance of the partnership and obviously holding the educational institutions accountable but also holding my children accountable and myself accountable for what I'm doing to contribute into furthering to partner with the school. So I really appreciate that aspect and what you guys are doing, and like Director Alvarez said, I'm really just interested in how we can potentially expand upon that within the district.

Thank you so much. And I had the great opportunity to join you last week. I came in for an hour visit just to walk through the school. Rick, the school is amazing, the staff, just how engaged they are from our paras to the teachers. You shared with me that when you have your meetings on Wednesday mornings your paraeducators show up on time, ready to go, right alongside your teachers. So that brings the unity.

And that speaks volumes. Looking at numbers, that's one thing, but something that you and I had talked about was your inclusion, making sure that those students are part of the classrooms and that they are seeing they're valued. And in the four classrooms that we were in, it was amazing to show-- to see those students be active participants. And the paras were there right beside them. Some had to take a two-minute break. But they re-engaged, and that was really great.

Director Alvarez, I think you were talking about, how do we-- or how do we implement that across the board? So you're three years into Beverly Park. How would you implement something across the board, knowing that you're also getting your doctorate? You know you're going to school for that, so that's awesome. So that could be something that you could implement. So how would you help our other schools reach those numbers but do what you're doing?

I think I'll just speak to the structure. I feel like more than anything it starts with trust and it starts with knowing who your people are. And I think it's about taking the time to get to know those people, so name, strength, and need. And also allow for voice and build a structure.

One of the things that we-- when Ms. Johnson and I came in is we heard a lot about-- it's like the paraeducators are over here. Certificated staff is over here. And we're thinking about, how can we bring this together? Power of all of us is the strength for all of our kids, and so we started thinking about what are the different structures that we had in place. And we knew we needed to make a change.

So working on the technical aspect of the schedule was one thing, but it really was more about the vision. We sat around at the beginning of this year as a big 52, 55-member staff in a big circle in our cafeteria, and I asked the question, who here is not a teacher? And some hands of paraeducators went up. And I said, that's not OK. I asked it, like, five times, and finally the hands came down because really everybody is a teacher.

Everybody has the capacity and the determination and commitment to support all of our kids at our school, and so it took the opportunity to open up the doors a little bit to have the conversations to see, what does that need to look like and sound like? And then what can we do in the technical aspect to be able to make it happen?

So we are-- just like any other school, there's a lot of hard work we're doing, and it's not perfect. But I will say that the commitment and resiliency of this staff is none other. So I'm super proud of them all, and you're more than welcome to come and visit the spirit of Beverly Park anytime you'd like to.

Thank you so much. Can we give them around of applause?

Yeah, thank you so much, and that concludes our acknowledgment and our appreciation. Next up is our superintendent's report. Dr. Duran?

Awesome. Thank you, President Van. Yes, I want to thank everyone for being here this evening, especially Principal Wisen and his team from Beverly Park for the great work that they're sharing. One thing I just really appreciate is the asset-based language that I heard today from talking about students being brilliant, finding out the interest of students, thinking about how you're going to problem-solve collectively, the collective efficacy.

And I really appreciate the value that was named around learning versus coverage and really making decisions in order to help your paraeducators be part of the overall school program and learn so they can better serve our students. So thank you for your work that you're going. It takes a lot of courage to lead in that way, and I know it takes a team to be able to lead in that way. So thank you for your work that you're doing.

So I want to start off with information about our levy. So with 63.36% voting yes, as of today, our Highline Education Levy is on track to pass with overwhelming community support. Yeah, that's just wonderful. I think it's a really powerful statement of trust from our voters, and it also just shows that our community believes in our schools and the values that guide our work, so really, really grateful that's happened.

This measure continues local funding that supports school and classroom staff, student safety, and educational programs that are not fully funded by the state. Levy funds ensure that every student has access to quality education, safe learning environments, and the support they need to succeed. We're really deeply grateful to our voters and our community for investing in our students and our schools over the next four years, so really great celebration.

On Monday, November 3, there was no school for students, so we had a district instructional day so our school leaders, teachers, and paraprofessionals could spend the day engage in professional development. Middle and high school staff spent the day at Mount Rainier High School and elementary staff at their schools.

The focus was on literacy and inclusion. One of the grounding beliefs for inclusion is that inclusion is a practice and not a place. Having all instructional staff come together for learning and collaboration that is specifically centered on supporting students to receive an education services is an important step in creating school communities that meet the needs of all of our students.

We know this is hard work. It's not just about changing how we teach. It's about changing how we think. Our expectations and beliefs about students shape everything that we do, and our educators believe in every student's ability to learn and succeed. This work starts with us, and we will keep doing it together because it's the right thing for our students.

I would now like to invite Jeb Bins, the president of the Highline Education Association, to the podium to share a few remarks and publicly thank you, Jeb, for all your work behind the scenes with the levy and other parts of the elections. Thank you, Jeb. Good to see you.

Good to see you. Thank you, Dr. [INAUDIBLE] and board. Appreciate you all. And I was going to go through-- I was like, hey, Sean, what should I talk about? I think I'll talk about the levy. And all of a sudden, you let off the levy, so that was pretty exciting.

The team working in the background, Yes for Highline, did a phenomenal job. I'm honored to be a part of that group and very happy that my members came out and doorbelled and did all the good things to ensure that that's there. It is challenging when 15% of your budget is tied up to a levy. I think that that's something that we will continue to press the state on. What is this concept of what is education funding, and how do we do it correctly? And how do you go through and you take allegedly progressive majorities in the state house, and how can we actually go through and make some positive revenue changes going forward?

I often get into funny conversations with legislators who will not be named when they go through, well, we have the majority. Yeah, so take some swings. But you want us to have the majority, right? I want you to swing. So it's easy to strikeout when you don't swing, and it's a little harder when [INAUDIBLE] the ball [INAUDIBLE]. So we'll see how that-- we'll see how that comes through.

As we start thinking about getting into the winter months and we start thinking about food instability, we start thinking about governmental instability around funding of SNAP and funding for kids, it's important and imperative that our community is out there providing what we can for folks. I'm proud to say that the Highline Education Association contributed \$2,000 to local food banks, and I distributed those checks this week to groups that are-- groups that are doing good things for people.

And we need to be mindful of that. Speaking of doing good things for people, I'm looking forward to the Winter Warm Up on Friday for the Highline Schools Foundation's big fundraiser and happy that our association is a sponsor again of this event and looking forward to that and raising some good money and forcing up some bids in the silent auction. I took home quite a bit last time, but I'm hoping to force up more bids than take home less. My wife told me I have enough stuff, so I appreciate that as well.

We also mentioned-- you mentioned the, on November 3, Literacy District Initiated Day, from a secondary standpoint, a really positive-- and I didn't hear a ton of feedback on the elementary side, no shade-- I just didn't hear that feedback-- from a secondary side, some good feedback, some of the better IEP training they've had in years. So that's really nice to see, and that's a positive [INAUDIBLE] be nice to make sure that we continue that across the system.

We appreciate the concept of inclusion and also understand that inclusion is difficult. It's not easy. And I don't think that we can also go through and indicate that any one cohort of students is identical to the next cohort of students, sort of like that idea of why you wouldn't compare test scores from one group to another, because every kid is different, so the same thing as we take a look at that and only can also hope that our neighboring districts are serving children well and are creating the appropriate student-focused and centered IEPs that when kids transfer into the district we know how to serve our students in a rapid manner versus not in a rapid, making sure that we can do that.

So that's something that we'll continue to-- we'll continue to focus on, so an odd truncated week with yesterday being off but also a grateful week. And I've been recently pleased with the four o'clocks. So I'll talk to you all later.

Thank you, Jeb. All right. That concludes my comments for tonight. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Dr. Duran. We're going to move on to our director's reports here. And just before we get to individual reports, I just want to share with our directors, with WSSDA coming up, we will be attending the Washington State School Directors' Association annual conference next week. It's Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

This is a conference and professional development opportunity, so no Highline business will be conducted. We will be working with other school board directors across the state, being able to partner and collaborate and just share what's working and what's working in their district, so looking forward to seeing all of you there and just being in the same space with other directors. With that, we're going to start with our board directors. Director Holien, I'm going to start off with you.

Thank you, President Van, I do want to say thank you for the presentation, again, Beverly Park. Earlier on, in mid-October, October 15, there was a Mount Rainier High School-- they hosted a Little Rams Night where they welcomed future Mount Rainier students to watch a volleyball game.

The players actually personally invited the students by visiting the elementary schools during lunch, and over 100 elementary students attended that, such a really cool introduction to high school, if you will, even though they are elementary students, but something to look forward to. There was a ton of fun with face painting and food, and it just builds a better connection between Mount Rainier and the feeder schools.

The one thing I wanted to-- another thing that I wanted to add is that a lot of the fall sports are ending, and all of the work that it takes in the classroom and on the field or court does not go unnoticed. So congrats to all the fall athletes.

Thank you so much, Director Holien. Dr. Espinoza?

Yeah, I'm feeling really thankful these last couple of days, and I just wanted to extend my gratitude to all of you for supporting my time here on the board ever since March. I want to share that it was really quite beautiful to hear what Beverly Park is doing with their academic parent-teacher groups-- academic parent-teacher teams because I attended APTT at Madrona about a week and a half ago. And I saw their version of it, which was really wonderful to hear also about how much time our students spend at home with us as families and how much they spend with their teachers.

And it's really a relationship that needs to work mutually, and there needs to be a lot of trust and respect and communication. And so I appreciated hearing that. We also attended the APTT at Seahurst for my other child. So I'm seeing all these versions of these meetings emerge, and I really appreciate that. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Director Alvarez?

Yes, the same. Thank you, Director Espinoza. Just hearing the parents and having their voices here and seeing how-- just her speaking and how valued she felt, just I think that that is something that clearly is working at the school. But in Sylvester, they also had a Sylvester academic parent-teacher night. They hosted their first academic parent-teacher night. More than 40 sixth-grade families joined teachers to learn together and support student success.

The program is a great example of how schools build partnerships with families to celebrate learning together. Big thank-you to the sixth-grade team for creating such a meaningful evening. And as we heard tonight, it is meaningful not just in growing the academics of students but also for our families because they are their first teachers at home. So thank you to the sixth-grade team for making that happen. And I'm also thankful-- having the levy passed, this also supports the learning of our students, so thank you to our community for our levy and for us still believing that our district is going in the right direction. So thank you again.

Thank you very much. Vice President Tidholm?

Yeah, also super excited to see the election results, happy that our community showed up and voted and we got this levy passed amongst other election-- or other seats. I'm sorry. Just within the county, the district, and everything, happy to see that the community spoke. They showed up and put their votes in.

Mount View Elementary also hosted their fall carnival last month, which was organized by their PTA. Lots of families and teachers volunteered their time to help. Hundreds of families came out to celebrate. They had games, prizes, food, face painting, all kinds of fun stuff, just super fun, welcoming event. They brought the school community together. And that is all I have this evening.

Thank you very much. With that, it's been a while since our last board meeting. A lot has happened. So I had the opportunity to go to Des Moines Elementary School to participate and observe Girls on the Run. It was an awesome evening or afternoon. It was two hours, and I was accompanied by Mayor Buxton and Senator Claire Wilson.

And this was around our staff. We had volunteer coaches doing an amazing job blending physical activity, lessons on managing emotions, building friendships, and just showing empathy. Girls on the Run-- they're in 13 of our schools, so it is impactful. It was really great.

After the event, I did share with Dr. Duran that I did run. I did a couple laps, and I didn't-- I was good. So I didn't pass out. It was a lot of fun to be there with them and just to show, and I appreciate them being out there and giving the girls the space to just be themselves and give them some tools. So that was great.

In addition to that, this past weekend had the honor to be part of the Success Foundation and their Garden Gala. Dr. Benitez was there with me. We were able to partner with our business community, showcasing true partnerships, and one that we shared was with CHI Franciscan and Tyee High School and how businesses and our schools can work together and give pathways and giving our kids opportunities that they may not know that it's out there.

So it was a fun night just partnering with our businesses and just getting to know them and just opening doorways. And thank you so much, Dr. Benitez, for being there and me reeling you up there on that stage to share the story, so.

And like I shared earlier, I was at Beverly Park with Rick. It was awesome being out there. And then I jumped over to Highline High school, where I got to be part of the leadership class. And Clint was sharing with me just the arts that have grown there, from choir to piano to our orchestra, mariachi, just everything that it's growing from there. And I am so amazed.

He also threw a curveball at me and brought me into their college, in their classroom, their political science 101. And those students threw a couple questions at me, and they were good. They were great questions, and they caught me off guard. But I was able to stay on top of that.

One of the great things about Highline High school is that, like I shared with you, they're getting a head start on college and career through hands-on also computer programming course and partnership with Eastern Washington U. This is where our students can earn both high school credit and college credit all in the same day.

So this is one of many of the dual credit opportunities we offer in our schools to prepare them for the future that they choose. Programs like this support our secondary redesign work, giving our students more relevant, rigorous, and real-world learning. So we have a video. I would love to get that shown here. We're going to-- let's see if this work in action.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- I like computer programming because it's very project-based. You have to create something that's very real. It's not just something you turn in and forget about. You create something that works, and it's really interesting to be able to build that.

- The Eastern Washington programming course is a dual credit opportunity for high school students, so they earn high school credit and college credit through Eastern Washington University. It's a really good opportunity for students to interact with a programming course and do it at a college level.

- You get some of that same rigor that you get from an actual college course, but of course you have the more stable support of a high school environment. It definitely gives you more agency. There's more work to do outside of class. You have to take it upon yourself to take the initiative, so I think that's an important thing to learn before you go out into whatever career or college you want to go to.

- Within our computer science courses, they learn industry-recognized skills. They use industry-recognized development environments. It gives them an idea of the possibilities of some of the careers that they could have, and they also build some of those employability skills while they're at it, being able to communicate, teamwork, and critical thinking.

- Even if you don't go into a computer science field, it's always an impressive thing to put on your resume. I know Python. I do computer science. Skills that you can get from this class-- they can be applied anywhere, really.

- I definitely feel future-ready because it's really helped me build my confidence in my own capabilities and made me a lot more independent as a person and as a student. I am a good learner, and I can figure things out, especially with a challenging class like this.

- If you've ever been on the fence about taking computer science, take it. Nothing's stopping you from learning. As long as you got a good group of people with you, a good teacher, you can learn anything really.

[END PLAYBACK]

That was awesome. Thank you so much. And that concludes the my director's reports. And we have scheduled communications this evening. We have one speaker, [INAUDIBLE] Young. [INAUDIBLE] Young? OK. Let's do one more check here. OK, it doesn't look like he's going to be able to join us. And that concludes our scheduled communications for this evening. We had one speaker.

Move to our consent agenda. Any questions or comments in regards to our consent agenda? Here and seeing none, can I please have a motion to approve our consent agenda?

I make a motion we approve our consent agenda.

Can I have a second, please?

I will second that.

All those in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed? Hearing and seeing none, thank you. One action item this evening, 8.1, this is motion to approve Resolution 14-25 for Certification of the 2026 Excised Property Taxes. Any questions or comments on this? Seeing none, can I please have a motion?

I move the Highline School Board approve Resolution number 14-25 for Certification of 2026 Excess Property Taxes.

Can I please get a second?

I'll second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Tidholm?

Yay.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

Director Alvarez?

Yay.

Director Holien?

Yay.

President Van?

Yay.

This motion passes five to none.

Thank you very much. And that is for-- that's it for action items and no intro actions this evening. And we have-- it looks like we have 10 intro items this evening with a couple presentations. 10.1-- this is motion to approve the 2026 legislative agenda. Can I have Holly come on up, please?

Good evening, everybody. My name is Holly Ferguson, Chief Policy and Strategy Officer, and I am here with our annual legislative agenda. We create a legislative agenda each year. We do track and react to bills throughout session even if they're not on the agenda, but the legislative agenda allows us to indicate to the legislature what our priorities are for the [INAUDIBLE].

You've actually heard about a lot of the priorities already from speakers and during the budget work session, but I will just name a couple of them. We have continued advocacy for moving to a simple majority for bonds. That's important not just for Highline Public Schools but for all 295 districts in the state.

We are continuing what we called last year our Big Three funding requests because last year we saw effectively no movement on these areas. Special education-- we believed last year that we were going to see some benefits come to us. We did not. State continues to underfund special education programs, not just here but across the state. And I want to make sure that everyone is clear. Special education is basic education and must be amply funded as required by the Constitution.

Funding transportation and fixing the transportation formula-- again, we thought we would see a gain last year, but as you heard during the budget work session, not only did we not see a gain in transportation funding. The state cut about 3/4 of \$1 million in Transportation Safety Net funding, a net loss to us and in an area that has been our focus and is desperately in need for additional funding.

And the last one of the Big Three was funding for materials, supplies, and operating costs, which you'll frequently hear called MSOCs mostly because it's a really long set of words to say. Our costs for everything have increased. That's not just here in the school district, my personal budget. The groceries cost more. The gas costs more. Utilities cost more.

The amount we are allocated from the state to fund things like that is not keeping up. You heard this earlier. Insurance alone increased by 22% last year on top of a 20% increase the year prior. That is unsustainable, and yet we are required to have these things.

The state's failure to keep up with these costs results needing to use local levy dollars to cover basic operational needs. And I want to go back to when the state made the, quote, unquote, "McCleary fix" that levies are going to be great. You're going to use them only for enrichment. I don't think anyone in this room or anybody paying attention thinks of utilities and insurance as enrichment for our students.

What has been a little bit newer this year on our agenda-- to focus on state-level literacy needs. It has become clear that Washington is lacking statewide funding and support for the mandatory screening exercises that we engage in for teacher preparation, for ongoing professional development.

I had a conversation with a legislator a few years ago who also will remain unnamed. I said, well, one of the things that we need is we need a day dedicated by the state so that we can focus on professional development around inclusion for all of our staff, not just our certificated staff but, as you heard from Beverly Park, our paraeducators as well. He said, well, that's going to cost a lot of money. But our students need it. This is what's going to help them succeed.

We didn't get that funding. Literacy remains one of our four priorities along with secondary redesign, inclusion, and student support systems, known as MTSS, but we recognize without funding and leadership at the state level, there's only so much that we can do. Depressingly, this is a short session this year, only 60 days. It starts January 12th, expected to end on March 12th.

And generally, that means not a lot of budget work and extremely low expectations, but it is important for us to make sure that our legislators know that we and our students are expecting them to stand up and support the work that we need to do to create the future leaders in this state that we deserve. And it's also important to remind them what the Constitution says, that it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within our borders.

Throughout the session, I'll continue to work with Director Tidholm, who is our legislative liaison, and [INAUDIBLE] to provide updates to you all. If you hear of anything, a bill that's coming down or anything you want information in, please feel free to reach out. Happy to talk with you about that during session. I am setting low expectations, but I'm always going to be hopeful. Happy to answer any questions.

Directors, any questions or comments?

No questions, but thank you for your work, Holly, and hopefully with continued advocacy the state will fulfill their paramount duty to fully fund education.

Oh, Holly, I do have one question.

Yes?

Well, thank you for everything you've shared with us. Just so that I'm understanding, the agenda for this upcoming session is the same as last session?

It's the same as last session with more inclusion of literacy, and then what we've done is-- every year I try to go through and refine the language that we're using so it's a little bit more targeted. So you'll see words in this year's that I don't think you saw in prior years, words like "inadequate," "violating our constitutional mandate," things like that. Because we really need people to understand that this isn't us just saying, please give us more. This is their obligation, their responsibility.

Right. OK, thank you. And then just to follow up, because it's the first time that I'm--

Yeah, absolutely.

--in this seat, yeah, so what's the process like to get to that agenda, the collaborative piece of it with staff perhaps, voice or family voice, student voice?

Yeah, so this year, because we relied so heavily on last year's agenda, what I did was I took-- [INAUDIBLE] too many of them but looked at leg agendas from state agencies, talked with our lobbyists, talked with the districts that we partner with-- namely North Shore and Seattle are our primary partners-- and recognized that across the state-- oh, and OSPI's legislative as well-- to recognize that across the state those Big Three funding items are retaining their importance across the state.

So really just wanting to stay aligned with our agencies and our local districts so that we are presenting a unified voice in Olympia. I know Dr. Duran went down a couple times last year with some other superintendents, and it's really valuable and important for them to see that we are standing united, 295 school districts, asking for similar things.

Right. OK, thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you very much, Holly. 10.2 and 10.3 are going to be a joint presentation. Have a great evening, guys. Thank you so much for being here. 10.2-- this is motion to renumber and revise Board Policy 92-71, Sale of Real Property. And then 10.3 is motion to repeal Board Policy 92-73, Rental of District Property, and renumber, rename, and revise Board Policy 92-72, Real Property Management. With that, Steve? I also have Holly on there, so [INAUDIBLE].

It's going to be a joint presentation.

OK, I love it.

So President and Members of the Board, Dr. Duran, excited to be here talking about some policies related to our use of school district property. This really puts at the core of this. And just a quick parenthetical comment-- I'm glad that you're on our side, Holly, on the legislative agenda. [LAUGHS] You go. That was great.

But back to leases. There are four big buckets for property use, and those buckets include our rental and use of our school facilities. Those can include license agreements. They can include leases, and they can include the fourth bucket, which are interlocal agreements.

We're familiar with all four of these buckets. The facilities use are managed largely by administration. We have a website, a form, a process for community groups to access our buildings. We have license agreements, most recently the big license agreement for use of the salmon Creek facility with WSU.

We have leases and we envision perhaps more leases in which we would surplus property, and that is a board decision to surplus a property and then lease it to a third party. And then we have interlocal agreements, which are a special category of use with other government agencies, and those also require board approval and board action.

The policies that we're about to talk about under 10.2 and 10.3 lay the foundation for a compliant use of school district property agenda, mechanism, scheme, and Holly's going to talk about how those mechanics will work.

All right. Thank you, Steve. So the technical portion of this presentation, item 10.2 is renumbering and revising current policy 92-71 on sales. Renumbering it will bring it into the WSSDA numbering system. As you've probably heard me on this before-- I'm like a broken record-- we do like to look at the numbering system because it gives us a point of reference when we're doing updates.

The main revision with this one, this policy tracks state law precisely. What it's missing is a section about charter schools having a right of first refusal to purchase or lease a building. That is required by state law. It was included in the charter initiative that was passed by the public 15 years ago. That was not in place when this was last revised in 1996. That's the big change in 10.2.

I can go on to 10.3? 10.3 is a triple, a renumbering, a repeal, and a revision. We're recommending repealing 92-73-- it's redundant with the changes that we made-- to 92-72 around uses of real property. 92-72, as revised, covers leases and rentals and, as Steve mentioned, clarifies that the board is the one that has the authority to rent or lease our surplus property that was missing in our prior-- or hidden in our prior policies. We really wanted to clarify the board's role. And then again, renumbering this one also brings it into the WSSDA numbering system. Happy to answer any questions.

Thank you so much for that. Directors, any follow-up questions or comments? I don't hear anything. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Thank you.

We're going to move to 10.4, motion to approve the interlocal agreement number 01-25 with King County regarding the school impact fees and programs. Any questions or comments? Hearing and seeing none, 10.5, this is motion to approve Puget Sound Skill Center's Perkins grant application for the 25-26 school year. Questions or comments on this one?

Just a question. This is just a renewal? This isn't any new funding. This is just a regular renewal.

That is correct.

Juan, you want to say something? I saw you stand up there.

[LAUGHTER]

Since it's Juan, let me think about that now. OK, no, just-- [LAUGHS]

Thank you so much. [LAUGHS] 10.6, this is motion to approve the Highline Public Schools Perkin grant application for the 25-26 school year. Any questions or comments on that one? [INAUDIBLE] 10.7, motion to approve [INAUDIBLE] budget suite contract? I know we had talked about this earlier at our budget meeting, our budget session. So any questions or comments? This is intro, so if there's any questions, Dr. Duran, Jackie will be able to answer those.

Yes, I do have a question. So that amount is for four years?

That is correct, [INAUDIBLE] through 2029.

Any other questions or comments on that? 10.8, this is motion to approve the capital-- or a motion to approve the project construction management, PMCM, services contract for the Southern Heights Replacement Project. It looks like this is going to be with Vanir, Vanir Construction Management. Questions or comments?

I have a question. I brought it up to Jackie previously. Could you further elaborate what the potential use would be for the site if we do have any potential ideas? And also, where are the two schools that used it prior to the fire? Are they going to ever go back in there, or what is that plan?

So right now we are rebuilding the administration building, which burned down, and then repairing the two classroom wings. So when the fire occurred in the summer of 2024, we relocated Innovation Heights Academy and Highline Virtual Academy to the original Beverly Park building and did some significant renovations and remodel in about six weeks in order to move them over there. Right now, they are both there, and as we rebuild Southern Heights, we're going to evaluate space needs for many of our programs, not just for those two schools, and evaluate that as we rebuild the site.

Great, thank you.

Thank you so much, Jackie. 10.9, this is motion to approve the final acceptance and project closeout for the South Central Admin Building, CAB, the South Roof Replacement Closeout PO number CP230073. Any questions or comments on that? A lot of head nodding, so that's a no.

10.1, this is our last intro item, motion to grant easement to the Southwest Suburban Sewer District at Evergreen High School. Any questions or comment? Thank you. There's no questions or comments. That concludes our intro. Any calls for additions to the upcoming consent agenda?

Hear and see none. Directors, I do want to have just a quick point of privilege here, please. So with the ballots still being counted and certified, this could be my last time addressing you from this dais. So I'll have to read this because if I look up, I may lose it. So whatever the outcome, what I'm about to say holds true to the heart of my core, whether I return or not.

Directors, it has been an absolute honor to serve as your chair for this past year. We've weathered a lot together, challenges, tough decisions, and moments that have tested our patience and our courage. And yet, through it all, we stayed committed to doing what's right for our students and our community, and I am deeply proud of the work we've done together and the growth that we've shared.

I feel truly blessed to have gotten to each-- gotten to know each of you, not just by name but your strengths, your values, and your needs. You've each brought something meaningful to this table. Please keep leaning into that. Keep doing the hard work. It matters more than you know.

Dr. Duran, you are the rock that grounds this district. Keep living that promise. Keep guiding your team and our schools with integrity and purpose. Stay true to who you are. Your heart and your passion for our students and staff have always been in the right place. Thank you for the early-morning calls, 3:30, 4 o'clock in the morning, the late-night conversations, and the honest reflections about life, leadership, and the kind of future that we want for our kids.

To the cabinet and central staff, these last 10 years have been a journey and one of learning, growing, celebrating, and tackling tough realities together. I've watched this district evolve. I've grown right alongside with it.

You've welcomed me not just as a board member but treated me as the average Joe, and I'm truly grateful for the space to share both our work and also the opportunity to share my moments, with my own family's life along the way. For that, I owe you my deepest thanks.

And to our incredible school staff, from principals to our teachers, our paraeducators, office teams, custodians, nutritional service workers, bus drivers, and everyone in between, you are the heart of this district. You are the daily connection to our students and the reason why they feel seen, supported, and loved.

You show up every single day, even when it's hard, and you give your best to children who need you more than they may ever say out loud. Please know your work matters. Even when you're being questioned or criticized, even when the metrics don't reflect what you see and feel, you're making a difference. Some of the most powerful things you do can't be measured by a scorecard or a spreadsheet or grades. They live in the moments of encouragement, kindness, and belief that changes a child's life forever.

And I can't forget about our community. Thank you. For the past 10 years, you've stood with us. You've approved bonds and levies that built and repaired our schools, created opportunities for our students, and strengthened this district for the future. You've supported us through COVID, through the uncertainty, the fatigue, and the rebuilding that followed. And you stayed with us through the myriad of political storms that came our way.

Your belief in Highline and public education has meant more than words can express. We are here today because of your trust and your partnership. With the election and certification still to be determined, I want every person across this district, from the boardroom to the classroom to the buses and the cafeteria, to know this-- I am proud of you. I'm thankful for you. I will always be cheering you on.

Thank you for showing up. Thank you for fighting for our students and what's right. And thank you for believing in this community and what Highline can be. So with that, thank you very much, and can I please have a motion to adjourn?

I'll make a motion to adjourn.

Can I please have a second?

I will second that.

All in favor?