

Highline Public Schools | School Board Regular Meeting - March 18, 2026

Good evening, everybody. Welcome to our regular school Board meeting. Today's Wednesday, March 18. Can we have everybody stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance? Thank you, everybody. Roll call, please.

Director Alvarez?

Here.

Director Espinoza?

Here.

Director Holien?

Here.

President Van?

Here.

And Director Tidholm has an excused absence. And to my left is our superintendent, Dr. Duran. With that, any calls or changes or additions to our Board meeting agenda this evening?

I'll ask the directors if they don't have any questions regarding Action Item 8.1, and Action Item 8.2, and Action Item 8.3. If there isn't any questions, I'd like to move those to the consent agenda.

So that's a motion to move Action 8.1-- this is to move Microsoft infrastructure license renewal. 8.2, this is to approve the Sylvester Middle School Emergency Corrective Action-- 100 Building Flooring Remediation. And 8.3, motion to approve the final acceptance and close-out of CP240095 lighting and construction upgrades at Central Admin. Can I please have a second?

I would love to second that.

Roll call.

Roll call, please.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

Director Alvarez?

Yea.

Director Holien?

Yes.

President Van?

Yea.

This motion passes four to none.

Thank you very much. Moved here. With that, we're going to move on to our acknowledgment and appreciation this evening. Can I please get Dr. Grubb to come on up? We're going to honor our School Retiree Appreciation Month. With that, Dr. Grubb. Actually, I'm going to get Director-- or Dr. Espinoza to read-- oh. Director Holien. There you go. You're on.

Thank you. Whereas Highline Public Schools in the Washington State School Retirees Association recognize educators who have retired from active teaching administration or a specialized field of the teaching profession, and whereas Highline Public Schools in the Washington State School Retirees Association educate and assist retirees in meeting the special challenges they face after retiring and improving their general welfare, and whereas Highline Public Schools aids in advancing education by supporting high standards of education, and thereby strengthens the status of the teaching profession, and whereas Highline Public schools promotes group and individual involvement in charitable projects and activities and maintains interest in participation in educational and community activities, and whereas Highline Public Schools supports and encourages retired educators to remain active in the education profession through volunteer activities associated with learning, now therefore, the Board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby proclaim March 16 to the 22, 2026, as School Retirees Appreciation Week in the Highline Public Schools, and urge all citizens to join in this special observance.

Dr. Grubb?

Let's try it that way. President Van, Members of the Board, Superintendent Duran, tonight I do want to recognize an amazing group of people, our retiring educators in celebration of School Retirees Appreciation Week. Could I ask that the retirees that are in the room, could you stand for a moment? I'm going to ask you to come up in just a moment. But let's-- want our retirees to stand. And thank you. And let's give them a round of applause.

Please have a seat, and we'll come back to you for a photo here in a moment. But I want to just say a few words. Each of you have a career in public service, which means you showed up day after day, knowing that this work was important, even when it was hard, exhausting, or maybe involved a copier that absolutely refused to cooperate. [LAUGHS] You taught, supported, organized, cleaned, counseled, coached, fixed, and somehow made it all look doable, all in service of the Highline promise.

William James once said, "The best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts us." That is public service in a nutshell. The impact of your work doesn't end today. It walks across graduation stages, it shows up in workplaces, and ensures that our world is, in fact, a better place. Because of you, students felt seen, families supported, and schools became more than buildings. They became communities.

As you move into retirement, your legacy is secure. You've made lasting differences, and you've more than earned whatever comes next, whether that's travel, hobbies, naps, or all three. Highline made a promise. You kept it. Thank you for your service, your dedication, and your sense of humor along the way. And congratulations on a job incredibly well done. Congratulations.

Congratulations. You guys come on up.

Retirees, come on up for a photo.

We have a community partner here this evening. Lita O'Donnell, our Director of Family & Community Partnership, will come on up for an introduction.

Good evening, Board President Van, Directors, and Superintendent Duran. It's my honor to recognize Team Read, one of our district's valued community partners. Team Read's mission is to propel young students to become inspired, joyful readers, and teens to become impactful leaders ready to succeed in school and life. Tonight, we are privileged to be joined by Ebony Pattenaude, Team Read's Executive Director, who leads this powerful, dual-impact model with purpose and heart. Please join me in welcoming Ebony.

Thank you. President Van, Directors of the Board, Dr. Duran, on behalf of Team Read, I'd like to thank you for your recognition of our work and impact in Highline Schools. Yes, my name is Ebony Pattenaude, and I am proud to serve as the Executive Director of Team Read. We are honored to partner with Highline to deliver one-on-one tutoring to elementary school students, developing literacy and social emotional learning skills, while high school reading coaches gain significant work and life experience that helped prepare them for their future. At this time, I'd like to introduce Team Read's Training and Program Manager, Kelsey Bleckner.

Thanks, Ebony. And thank you to the Board. My name is Kelsey Bleckner. I'm the Training and Program Manager, and I've helped to oversee the program here in Highline for about four years now.

Team Read has been a part of Highline since 2016. And during that time, we've partnered with Hazel Valley, Bow Lake, and Midway Elementary Schools. And we've hired teams from across the district, including Highline High School, Evergreen, Tyee, Mount Rainier, among others. And together, we've supported about 500 young readers and employed about 500 teen coaches.

Teamwork is grounded in a dual mission, supporting both the elementary school students and the high school teens. 2nd and 3rd graders who are reading below their grade level are referred into the program by their teachers to receive additional reading support from a trained team coach.

And the students are benefiting not only from individualized reading support, but also building their confidence and positive relationships with their team coaches. And at the same time, the high school teams have access to a meaningful paid job opportunity where they can make an impact in their community. And with that, I'll hand it over to Ms. Nicole Leisy, who is our site coordinator at Bow Lake and a 2nd grade teacher.

My name is Nicole Leisy, and I am a 2nd grade teacher, as well as the site coordinator. And I've had the wonderful opportunity of working alongside Kelsey, as well as the coaches, the high school coaches that are working with our students.

This has been a very unique experience. Not only do our students get paired up with a reading buddy who supports them with phonics packets, reading skills, fluency, and comprehension, but they also gain a mentor who boosts their confidence and independence.

I had the opportunity of talking with some of the teachers as well as parents about this program, and they said, "I am so happy with the extra support they are getting in Team Read. I have especially noticed the improvement in their fluency. One of my students has significantly been behind, and is now approaching grade level, and I have seen a huge difference in his reading due to Team Read."

Another teacher said, "It has made a huge impact on my students. One of my students has gained a lot of confidence and independence." I also had a parent come to me to say, "Thank you so much for all the support. Since starting Team Read, I have noticed a huge boost in confidence for my child. They now read signs when we are driving and want to read at home, which they never used to before."

As a 2nd grade teacher and having some of my students in this program, I've seen a huge growth in their reading skills, their confidence, and their independence. And that's thanks to Team Read and the coaches that we have. Now I'm going to pass it on to one of our determined and very helpful coaches, Yasmeen.

Hello. My name's is Yasmeen Abdi, and I'm a freshman at Mount Rainier High School, and I work for Bow Lake Elementary School. The quote "Rejection is a redirection, a course correction to your own destiny," deeply resonates with me. In May 2025, I applied for my first ever job, and I was rejected. This quote like-- sorry. And to be honest, I deleted those emails and any other emails associated with them, because I was frustrated. I couldn't believe someone would reject me.

But then that quote really changed my perspective, and I started looking for more opportunities, and I found Team Read. Immediately, the way Team Read structured their program so it could both benefit children and high school students, children by improving their literacy, and high school students like me improving skills on communication, collaboration, patience, and-- and flexibility will help them gain future employment, help them for college, and any other-- even if they want to have a teaching career, it'll help them gain experience for that as well. And I want to thank you for having us here today.

Thank you so much. You want to come on up for a picture? Photo? Come on up. OK. Thank you so much for that. We have a great school presentation tonight. Can I please have Vanessa Banner come on up for Pacific Middle School?

I've got to get the clicker ready. Good evening, President Van, Members of the Board, Superintendent Duran. Thank you for having us here tonight. My name is Vanessa Banner. I'm the proud Principal of Pacific Middle School. Tonight, I have with me our Assistant Principal, Maria Martin; our Instructional Coach, Nikki Dunbar; our Multi-Language Specialists, Katie Ragsdale and Katie Derrah. I also have our Dual Language Spanish Language Arts Teacher, Ms. Zahira. And I have two amazing students in our dual language program, Cassandra Estrada and Valerie Beltadon.

Highline's promise is making sure that every student in Highline Schools is known by name, strength, and need, and graduates prepared for the future they choose. Pacific Middle School delivers on this promise through standards-based instruction and grading. This is the foundation of our equity work. At Pacific, we have a shared belief that all students are capable of learning with the right conditions and supports, and we have a responsibility to prepare all of our students for the future they choose.

This school year, we have three priorities that guide our work, and are intentionally aligned to the district's strategic plan and the areas of focus. Priority 1 is centered on academics, focusing on literacy and Tier 2 academic supports in the classroom. Priority 2 is centered on the culture of belonging through MTSS tiered social emotional supports. And Priority 3 is centered on bilingual and biliterate through intentional multilingual supports and dual language.

At Pacific this year, the work we are focused on aligns to Priority 1 is student portfolios. All students have a portfolio for every class that is aligned to grade level standards. This is where teachers provide feedback on formative and summative assessments aligned to the standards. Students reflect on their work, set goals and next steps, and reassess to demonstrate their growth.

In professional learning communities, teachers do student work analysis. This is where teachers analyze classroom assessment data aligned to grade level standards to plan for next steps. Specifically Tier 2 supports, such as differentiation like small group instruction.

Through secondary redesign, Pacific centered our work on advisory. This work has led to students having the opportunity to engage in portfolio days during the semester. This is where students identify two classes where they would like to improve in. Based on student classroom assessment data, teachers provide differentiated supports, such as reteaching, reassessment, and/or extension opportunities.

As we continue through our presentation, you will continue to see the direct alignment of the district's strategic plan and the areas of focus to the work that is being done at Pacific. Next, we have Ms. Dunbar, who will share our literacy work.

Good evening. My name is Nikki Dunbar. I am the Instructional Coach at Pacific, and also a proud Highline parent. Pacific teachers worked hard to design our own agreements around standards-based instruction, including developing our building branded throughline, which describes how each element of a day's lesson is designed from one single point of origin, the standard.

Pacific teachers realize that every day in a child's education is a critical opportunity and cannot be wasted, so it was easy for our teachers to see how they each contribute to developing strong readers. At Pacific, everyone is a reading teacher.

We have a team of specialists who each bring a distinct lens to developing our teachers and paraeducators. We were all classroom teachers at Pacific in the areas of language and literacy. This positions us to support teacher teams to design lessons that embed the reading instruction so that Pacific students are experiencing at least 90 minutes of reading print text a day, and they're getting the instruction to make the most of those opportunities.

Our commitment to standards-based instruction means that Pacific teachers are clear on what students need to learn and be able to do in the content classroom. This allows space for reading instruction to accelerate the content area learning targets.

Mrs. Banner described earlier how our students engage in self-reflective practices to set goals and determine their next steps toward mastery, and we approach teacher growth in the same way. Paired with our culture of standards-based instruction, our teachers engage in self-reflection using discrete success criteria. This includes feedback after learning walks from administrators, district partners, and building specialists. We then use our expertise and resources to design professional development that guides teachers to push their practice within a safety net of support.

This chart shows our data from the Winter i-Ready reading diagnostic. While many Pacific students are scoring two or more grade levels below in reading, students in all three grade levels are demonstrating high growth. This is the ideal quadrant to be in, low performance but with high growth, and means our students are accelerating toward meeting grade level mastery in reading. Next, our Assistant Principal, Maria Martin.

Thank you, Nikki. We've been working on Priority 2 by creating a culture of belonging through MTSS-tiered social emotional supports. We have had the privilege of working alongside district support specialists over the last two years since being identified as an MTSS-focused school. This identification was done in part because of our strong foundational systems and teams that support and meet students' needs across all three tiers.

What you see on this chart is the way in which Pacific has developed and built our teaming structures in order to systematize the instruction, responses, and interventions to all students across our building. We have several methods for measuring our success and impact within our systems. Instructional walkthroughs, advisory walks, PBIS checks, student and family surveys, and of course, the multitude of behavior and attendance data available on platforms like Insight and Synergy. The measurement and data we would like to highlight is our panorama student responses. This is particularly important as it helps to assess our progress around creating and keeping a culture of belonging.

Typically, we may see a fall or drop in data from a spring to fall assessment. But here, we see a double-digit increase in student responses related to particularly the question around-- or the topic around cultural awareness and action.

In drilling down the data, some of these are the questions that students were asked. And it highlights the ways in which adults in our building are delivering information and topics related to different races, ethnicities, and cultures. And as Dr. Duran has quoted many times, student outcomes don't change until adult behaviors change. Our staff are working to ensure that students are feeling represented, seen, and valued, because representation matters.

A 4% increase here may seem marginal, but growth in this area is critical. And we are sensing that the work our staff is doing around the previous slides is directly impacting our students feeling a stronger sense of belonging. We know that systemic change takes time, and so long as we are seeing this incremental change and shift in a positive direction, we will continue our work.

In this specific question around how much our students feel like they belong, it is an 8% increase. Our students are feeling like they belong, and we can't wait to see more gains as we continue to refine and improve our systems of support in both academics and social emotional supports. I'd like to introduce Ms. Derrah and Ms. Ragsdale.

Thank you. My name is Katie Derrah. I'm one of our ML Specialists at Pacific here with Kate Ragsdale. Priority 3 at Pacific this year has been bilingualism and biliteracy through intentional, multilingual or ML supports and dual language. To paint a picture of our current ML program this year, 43% of our student body are multilingual students receiving services in English.

And this has been growing at a fast pace in the past couple of years. Our incoming 6th grade class is projected to be at about 50% ML students. We have two multilingual specialists, four bilingual paraeducators, three Spanish-speaking and one Dari and Pashto-speaking, and one ELD teacher, Ms. Cullen.

At Pacific, all ML students receive services that are differentiated based on their needs. For newcomer ML students who are in their first or second year of English study, they are placed in ELD-- English Language Development-- and ELA, or English Language Arts classes, with our ELD teacher, Ms. Cullen.

Our experienced ML students are supported by individual conferencing with an ML specialist to talk about their goals, their challenges, and their needs for the year. And next year, we're going to be pushing in with ELD supports into the content classes so that they can get help in class.

Supports for all multilingual students include being divided into two cohorts between us two ML specialists to monitor their progress.

We have clustered classes, periods that are supported by bilingual paras based on their needs.

Each ML specialist collaborates with two core content departments to integrate GLAD strategies that support language development.

We have school-wide Tier 1 supports in AVID strategies.

And next year, we are working to integrate more school-wide strategies from the Ellevation platform.

The impact of our program is shown through our WIDA scores in the last several years. In 2024-2025 school year, Pacific had the highest rate of multilingual students who progressed in their English proficiency among all the five middle schools. Between 2023 and 2025, Pacific was-- the number of ML students progressed in English proficiency by 10%. This is ongoing and historical for our school to be the highest when it comes to growth within WIDA scores. And now we'll introduce Zahira Macera.

Hello. Buenas tardes. Mi nombre es Zahira Almejo Lopez. I am a proud Highline Public School student. And now I am the Spanish Language and Culture Dual Language Teacher at Pacific. I would like to introduce two students who have shown so much growth throughout the school year in dual language Spanish.

Hello, everyone. My name is Cassandra Estrada, and I'm in the 7th grade Dual Language program at Pacific Middle School.
[SPEAKING SPANISH]

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

In my experience, the dual language program has had a positive impact on my academic life. It has helped me improve my Spanish and learn how to speak, read, and write better. I also feel like I belong in the program because I know family members and friends who share my language and culture.

Even though this program can sometimes be challenging, this program has helped me learn more about my language and improve in skills like writing, reading, and presentations. Overall, this program has helped me learn about Spanish and get a deeper understanding. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Principal Banner. Directors, do you have any questions or comments?

I just have a comment. Those were some wonderful student speeches. Great job.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

I do have a question for school staff. So you were sharing about your i-Ready, I think, data for winter. And you had mentioned the lower performance, high growth space, that that's the space--

The four quadrants. Yeah.

So that's the quadrant where the magic happens, so we pass. And I wanted to ask, how do you all keep students motivated to acknowledge their growth and to keep on working hard?

Well, the growth mindset is part of the pilot way. And so it is embedded in everything we do as part of our school culture. Through standards-based instruction and grading, we have-- the growth mindset lives within that. So we have students reflecting in their student portfolios when they do their formative and summative assessments. So they're getting feedback from their teachers that helps motivate them on using the rubric of what they need to do next. They reflect, they set goals, and then they have opportunity to reassess.

So we have a lot of systems, the Tier 1 systems that are in place that build on that growth mindset. We also celebrate students every month. We have-- we have a lot of competitions across classes and advisory classes that they compete, and so we keep them motivated. But it is definitely through the growth mindset. Does anybody want to add, or do you-- what do you think? There we go.

And I also want to say gracias. [SPEAKING SPANISH]

And for the staff. Thank you. Thank you for continuing that motivation for our students to continue to learn about, you know, their language and their culture, and to keep it. I always am very supportive of that, because where I grew up, we would get paddled for speaking our own language. And so for having-- from going from one extreme to the other. So I'm so thankful to see that we elevate that and that we support that.

And it has been such a blessing, because for you all who become dual language, sometimes that will get you the job before someone else. So keep up with that language, because it will help you in your future. And thank you to you all for continuing that growth. You know, being in that quadrant and staying in that quadrant takes work, and it takes, you know, that growth mindset. So thank you for keeping our students in that quadrant. Appreciate you all. Thank you.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

I do have a question. And thank you so much for being here and presenting tonight in regards to your innovative learning. In regards to your portfolio days where students identify two classes where they will receive reteaching or reassessment, can you tell me a little bit more about that and how that looks on an average day? I'm just-- I'm inquisitive because that takes additional support and resources that our students need.

Yeah. So it really is aligned with all of the things that we do within our content classes and student portfolios, standards-based instruction, and grading. It's the lift, OK? So students have their portfolios in all of their classes. They're receiving feedback. In advisory, which is where we really did some work to get things in place, is where teachers help them reflect on their grades, their attendance. And then they're also looking at their-- when they look at their grades, they're identifying where they want to go during these portfolio days.

Now, we know middle school kids that sometimes-- you know, I'm going to go reassess in PE. But that's where the advisory teacher comes in and really has that conversation, that coaching conversation. So then they sign up for what class-- because we have them on two days, what class they're going to go to during advisory time. They walk to their content class.

And then that's where teachers have been planning for their lesson. And so looking at the student data and their students, they know who's coming to them. And so they're preparing for small group instruction. That's the re-teach opportunities. They are creating opportunities, if/then charts where students now have the opportunity-- who have been prepared in content classes can come in and reassess.

And then they've also prepared that extension opportunities. And all of this is done during common planning. That is also done during our staff meetings. And so it's very intentional. We do the backwards plan with our professional development to support them with this.

Thank you so much for that. Can we give Pacific a round of applause? Thank you very much. So that concludes our acknowledgment and recognitions this evening. Now we have some empty seats. If you guys want to come on up front, it looks like we have about a dozen or so seats. Please come on up. Please. With that, Dr. Duran, I'm going to hand it off to you for your superintendent's report.

Wonderful. Thank you, President Van. I want to welcome everyone to the Board meeting this evening. March is always a busy time of year for schools and educators, and just want to thank everybody for all you do for our students. I also want to just take a moment to thank our Teamster team members for being here tonight. Many of you know that my father was a lifelong Teamster member, and he would be very proud if he could see what I am seeing right now. So thank you for joining us this evening.

So I visited Highline High School and Glacier Middle School last week with Dr. Espinoza. At Highline, it was great to see students engaging in deeper learning through the longer four-block schedule. Students were engaged and challenged to apply their learning. And one of the classes we walked into was one of our dual language courses where students are actually doing AP Spanish at a really rigorous level. It was really great to see that.

At Glacier, we had a strong discussion with the principal and the multilingual learning facilitator about the school's unique approach to training our paraeducators. Because of their schedule flexibility, they have dedicated weekly time to provide ongoing professional learning for paraeducators focused on effective practices to better support multi-language learners.

Want to do a little quick budget process update for where we are right now. At this time of year, schools are finalizing their budgets for the next school year. Some parts of the school budget are set, things like enrollment and collective bargaining agreements, and some decisions are made at the school level by the principal. This is a complex process with a lot of moving parts.

But throughout it, we are focused on making decisions in the best interest of students. You will see this process play out tonight from Raisbeck Aviation High School, where school-based, level budget decisions are being made based on available resources and priorities.

I also want to emphasize there is also a mitigation process. That's when a school leader can request additional funding support for urgent needs that are not covered in their school budget. But are always more requests than available funding, and there is no guarantee that request will be approved, especially in a tighter budget year like we are in this year. So we ask our schools to work through the established process that has been developed and to be patient while school budgets are finalized later in April.

I don't see Jeb here tonight. Jeb Binns, our Highline Education Association President, normally speaks on-- provides some comment tonight during my time. He had a family emergency come up. He's not able to be here tonight. And this concludes my superintendent's comments tonight. Thank you, President Van.

Thank you, Dr. Duran. With that, we're going to move on to our Director's report. So I'm going to start off with Director Holien.

Thank you, President Van. A couple of really cool things occurred at Midway Elementary. The 4th grade students performed at the Thunderbirds hockey game. They sang "O Canada" and "The Star-Spangled Banner," which I thought was pretty cool. I also want to thank all the strong and amazing women that are inside-- excuse me-- that are inside and outside of our school district, especially my wife, of course, during Women's History month. Thank you. That's all I have.

Thank you, Director Holien. Dr. Espinoza.

Yes. So Valley View hosted a Winter Arts night where families joined students to make winter cards, glitter, slime, and gingerbread-style houses. They read winter stories, and students were able to take home free books at the end of the event.

So Dr. Duran mentioned earlier, I was at Highline High and-- what was the second school? Glacier Middle School last week. I think at Highline, in addition to being in classes where students were reading poetry and learning about historical figures, we also walked into a home ec class where they were cooking fried rice that smelled very tasty.

And then at Glacier Middle School, I just experienced a sense of calmness. It seemed like everything was organized and coordinated well. The team there worked seamlessly, and students felt that. So thank you to those schools for having me.

The legislative session for 2026 ended March 12. Overall, the session was not positive, but we are pleased that the sales tax exemption was approved. This change will result in the district saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales tax for contracts and other services. We are still evaluating the overall fiscal impact of the session, but we are not expecting any additional financial wins, unfortunately. We are regrouping, and we are beginning to think about the 2027 session, and we will continue to focus on our priorities. Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Espinoza, Vice President Alvarez.

Thank you, President Van. So kindergarten registration is open, and so excited that the enrollment is up for the upcoming school year. We encourage families to enroll. We also want them to enroll so they can gain access-- early access to readiness support resources and important information before the first day of school. Families are also invited to join us at our kindergarten welcome event on May 30, where they can learn about the kindergarten and meet the school staff as well. You can learn more and register by visiting the Highline website. I think it's important.

I think it's been several years where we've set kindergarten registration early, so that way they can get and meet and know where their school is at and start getting acclimated with that. So I encourage all families out there to, if you have a kindergartener or even are unsure, please connect, and they can help you.

There are lots of forms to fill out, but it's important for you to connect early so you can get all that out of the way. The more connections you can do with your school will be better so you guys can get used to, and even the first-- even though the first day of kindergarten will still be difficult. [LAUGHS] So with that, I'll pass it over to President Van.

Thank you so much. You know, a couple updates here. Highline's community-led Bond Planning committee is close to a bond package recommendation that will come here before the Board to consider. At their meeting last week, they were aligned on a baseline bond package, and considering-- also considering whether to include one additional major project. The committee plans one additional meeting on March 30 to finalize their recommendation before they bring it to the Board in June.

If you haven't seen yet, go to the Highline Schools Foundation web page and look for the Gold Star nominees. They are listed. I'm hoping that I will see everybody at their Gold Star Bash on March 26 at 5:30 at Highline College. Looking forward to celebrating of our teachers, our staff. There's quite a few groups going to be recognized that evening.

With that, as you know, we're less than a year into the new Evergreen High School, and it's already making a positive impact on students. Students are learning from a safe, modern space designed for how they can learn best. Flexible classrooms, collaborative spaces, and career-connected classrooms support hands-on learning, helping students build skills, work together, and explore future pathways. The new Evergreen High School was made possible by the community support of the voter-approved 2022 bond. So let's see this work in action in a short video.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Evergreen deserves a school that honors the work we're doing with our students. You walk in, and it just feels different. You feel different. You act different. You feel like these buildings really honor the sacred work we're doing here, because what we do with educating children is the most important thing we can invest in.

It shows them how we value them as students, and that they deserve to be in a safe, comfortable place to learn.

We have new technology all over the building. We have new technology in the libraries, in the gym. That's important for moving forward towards graduation. That shows us that they actually care, that they value our learning, and they value the space that we're in. That means a lot.

Most of our classrooms are purpose-built and support flexible learning, but combined with technology and with classrooms for specific careers are allowing our kids to really be focused on what comes next. Their future doesn't start after they graduate Evergreen. Their future starts when they get into Evergreen.

Knowing that our community wanted this for our students and wanted it for their futures has been really impactful. We've also seen a rise in the amount of community members that are involved, who are coming to our sporting events, who are coming to the school wanting to volunteer. And to have our community rally around our young people to prepare them for the future I think is setting them up for success.

This building helps facilitate what we know our students are capable of, and they're capable of great things. The future is going to look like White Center. The future is multilingual. The future is multi-ethnic. The future is able to collaborate in small groups and large, and this building supports each one of those aspects.

[END PLAYBACK]

Thanks to our comms team for that. That was wonderful. With that, that concludes our Director's reports. We're going to move on to our scheduled communications this evening. We have quite a few speakers this evening. We also have a wait list. So on behalf of the Board, we sincerely appreciate you taking the time to join us to share your thoughts this evening.

You'll notice that our norms and guidelines are-- or will be displayed on the screens for your reference. Please remember that you're addressing the Board, and there may be students present and/or watching who are listening carefully to what you're saying. Please note that while the Board is unable to respond directly to your testimony, we value your input. Thanks again for being here with us and speaking to us.

First up is Jacob Savishinsky.

Dr. Duran, President Van, Members of the Board, thanks for the opportunity to speak with you this evening. My name is Jacob Savishinsky, and I have the honor of serving as the Raisbeck Aviation High School Career Center Coordinator. I've worked in Highline Public Schools for 22 years, and I've been at RAHS since it opened in 2004.

I'm here tonight because the Career Center I run is facing a 100% loss of funding due to the current budget shortfall. I understand that times are tough, but this cut will functionally eliminate the entire Career Center program from our school, and I want to share with you just what it is that we will lose if this happens. I want to help you understand what an invaluable resource the RAHS Career Center really is, remind you of the commitment that our district made when it agreed to open this innovative school over 20 years ago, and the promise we make every year to students and families who sign on to the vision of Raisbeck Aviation High School.

You'll hear tonight from other community members about everything the Career Center does, so I'll leave that to them. I want to help you understand that what we offer doesn't exist anywhere else, that these students will have nowhere else to go for these kinds of opportunities. And I want to remind you that it's no accident that RAHS offers such a unique and special program, that it's what our visionary district leadership intended from the very beginning, and that what we have built here for our students is precious beyond measure.

I also want to help you see that in a small school like ours, there is no one else to take on this critical work. Our entire mentoring program, our internships, job shadows, career exploration, visits to aerospace companies, participation in industry events, and the support that goes into them, all of that cannot be sustained without someone at the helm. These and many other programs will simply disappear if this current budget is enacted.

And so I urge you, please, even in these difficult times, find another path. Don't close the door on over two decades of work, and don't make us break the promise that we have made to our students and families. I thank you for your service to Highline Schools, and thank you for your time.

Thank you. Jean Door? Jean Door? OK. Kenji Gonzalez.

Good evening. My name is Kenji Gonzalez, and I'm a senior at Raisbeck Aviation High School. I will be advocating for the continued support of the RAHS Career Center. I come here tonight to represent the views of the students and how the Career Center has deeply impacted my high school experience and influenced my post-graduation trajectory.

Through the opportunities the Career Center has worked to provide students like me, I have completed internships with the Blue Angels at the Seafair Air Show and Horizon Flight Operations. I worked at galas such as the Pathfinder Award Ceremony and Washington Seaplane Dinner and attended field trips to the Alaska Airlines flight training facility, Delta Airlines at SeaTac, and Embry-Riddle in Arizona. These experiences have been essential to shaping and informing my own future in aviation as I pursue a career in military search and rescue.

I came to Raisbeck wanting to become a pilot, and it was the people at the Career Center that helped me find scholarships, meet with mentors, and deepen my understanding of aviation with many enrichment opportunities. It is thanks to those resources that I have become the first pilot in my family. Those same mentors remain close connections, supporting the projects of my peers and the Aviation Career Experience club and training our school's National Aviation Design Challenge team.

I say this to emphasize that the Career Center supports students' goals on an individual level, and that the resources made available to them are key to turning the dreams of passionate scholars into realities. I chose to come to Raisbeck because of its unique, career-oriented focus, and shuttering the Career Center would deny my friends and peers similar opportunities to pursue their passions.

I humbly request the district to support the Career Center so that it may continue to enrich and enhance the academic and professional lives of students. Thank you for your time tonight. On behalf of the student body, I sincerely appreciate your consideration.

Thank you. Nanad Abduljali? Nanad Abduljalil? Mia Baker?

Good evening, Highline School Board Members. My name is Mia Baker, and I'm a senior at Raisbeck Aviation High School. I am here, along with many others, to express my support of funding for our RAHS's Career program. Currently, it's in danger of being cut entirely by next year's budget plan, and I cannot allow such a vital part of our school to be erased.

The Career program is what allows us to have these aviation-aligned projects with the help of actual industry professionals. Students have access to paid internships and opportunities to network within the aviation industry. It is thanks to the RAHS Career Center that it has allowed me to attend the Pathfinders Gala and meet people like Gary Lai, the Chief Architect of Blue Origin's reusable rockets, or John Torode, Founder of Dynon Avionics, who I am still in contact with today.

If you walk up to any student at my school, they can tell you all about their own networking experiences, company internships, or general opportunities, which is thanks to the Career Center. And I'm sure the speakers following me will do the same.

The Career Center is the soul of our school. It is why people attend. It is why the curriculum-- we have the curriculum and clubs we do. Without it, we lose our greatest offer to our students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you. Jeremy Downing?

Good evening, Highline School Board Members and others. I am Jeremy Downing, a senior at Raisbeck Aviation High School, and I am here to show my support for the continued funding of the RAHS Career Center. The Career Center has been around since the founding of RAHS. And as one of my teachers put it, it is in the DNA of the school.

In my opinion, cutting it for the short-term gain the budget is not an adequate trade-off considering how important it is to the school and how impactful it has been for students over the years. I have personally benefited from the Career Center myself, being able to attend the Pathfinders Gala, network with industry professionals, and have a lot of very cool experiences exploring different careers.

However, I feel it would be a better example to speak about someone who the Career Center has had a much greater impact on. Larsen Mendoza is a first-generation student whose family had emigrated from the Philippines around 20 years ago. Coming here, his family was not well off, so going to the school was already life-changing for him.

However, things really took off when he first encountered the Career Center. He got to attend the Pathfinder Gala, and came out having networked extensively with many industry professionals he still consults with to this day.

Later on, Career Center Manager Mr. Savishinsky personally coordinated an event where Raisbeck students got to see a fully functioning electric aircraft. While there, he gained a new interest in electrical engineering and battery chemistry, which set Larsen on the career trajectory he is on today.

Despite Larsen being one of the best examples, his story is not unique at RAHS. Similar stories can be found all around the school. People come to Raisbeck for those unique opportunities, opportunities the school was specifically envisioned to provide. This is why I believe we shouldn't cut it. I think one of my classmates put it best. Taking away the Career Center is taking away the purpose of our school. Thank you.

Thank you for that. Sheesha Geary? Sheesha Geary Sharuki? Caden Pang?

Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to speak here tonight. I am Caden Pang. I am a current junior at Raisbeck Aviation High School. Again, I'm talking about the discontinuation of the Career Center and the impact that it has on our students.

The specific point I want to make tonight is that we are currently living in a time where we continuously see news of AI taking jobs, of mass layoffs, and of wars brewing around the world. Understandably, for many of us going toward college or other pursuits, this provides a very daunting task ahead of us.

The Career Center, though, offers a way out. Many of us have had the opportunity to talk to people who have gone through this transition to higher education and to other pursuits, people that I've met like John Somerville or Elaine Simae who have really made me want to pursue engineering. Should they have not intervened, I would not be pursuing engineering like I am now. This story, like Jeremy touched on before, is not unique. Many of our students have felt the same way about all kinds of fields.

We come to Raisbeck, and that is something very different than most students. Coming to Raisbeck is far for most of us. We drive a long ways. We give up on school sports. We give up on home communities and friends we met in middle school. We do this, though, because of the opportunities that this school provides.

The Raisbeck Aviation High School Career Center provides most of these opportunities. And without the Career Center, it leaves a lot of us in the dark. The Career Center truly helps Raisbeck Aviation High School fulfill the Highline promise. I urge you tonight to continue to listen to the testimonies of my friends and peers, as well as our teachers, and to really reconsider the choice to remove the Raisbeck Aviation High School Career Center. Thank you for your time, and thank you for your considerations.

Thank you for that. Bathi Isa? Bathi Isa? Grace Baker?

Hello. My name is Grace Baker. And I appreciate you allowing me to be here, and I appreciate the Raisbeck students and the staff that are here supporting all of us. I have had my children in public school here, Highline, and in private school back and forth. But the most important answer in all of that is that I am here, and I am here as a new para with Raisbeck Aviation.

And I just want to say, you know, Highline, we stand for the name, strength, need. There's many names of students that have benefited from the Career Center, multiple contacts the children have of mentors that have opened doors to their network that will be their future. There's the students. How many students carry business cards and hand out business cards to mentors that they have?

Strength. They have gained confidence. They're proud of themselves. They have growth. They encourage others, and they provide guidance to each other as well. The need. There's students that drive an hour and a half one way to school and back. This school is far more diverse because it is not a neighborhood school, and that is one of the reasons that they come and the passion that they have. Once children learned of the reason as why, there's many answers, simple, long.

One last thing. We have few women in aviation, few minorities, few women. And I have three, personally. I have three daughters. I have a senior at Raisbeck and a freshman and an 11-year-old that will not have that opportunity.

Thank you very much. Kaci Salnick?

Good evening. My name is Kaci Salnick, and I teach at Raisbeck Aviation High School. I want to start by thanking all of you for the work that you do, and I recognize that budget decisions are not made lightly. That said, I am speaking tonight to tell you why we must not cut funding for the Raisbeck Career Center.

I want to tell you a brief story about opportunity. Like many of my Highline students, I grew up without means. I know something about growing up with food insecurity, housing insecurity, about getting a job in high school to help pay family bills. But I never really felt poor, and here's why.

I had school, and I loved school. I loved making friends. I loved my teachers. I loved reading Shakespeare. Most of all, though, I loved the window that school became to a life I could live.

And this is why a place like the Raisbeck Career Center matters. It gives our Highline students a chance to peer through a window of possibility, a window of opportunity, a window to a life they could live.

When our students attend a dinner hosted by a Career Center teeming with STEM professionals, they have the chance to rub shoulders with people from walks of life they may have never even known existed. We know that internships at places like Boeing provide students with distinguishing credentials that will help them access college and employment.

Too often, though, such internships are reserved only for those who can afford to volunteer their time or for those with parents who can access applications and spend time researching programs. Our Career Center makes such internships available to all students, regardless of income or access.

For the past 20 years, Raisbeck has made a name for itself through countless hours spent building relationships with STEM organizations and companies across the Pacific Northwest and beyond. It is not an overstatement to say that losing the Career Center would be a crippling blow to the success of students at Raisbeck. Please do not close this window of opportunity to the students of Highline. Please do not cut funding from our critical Career Center. Thank you for your work and time.

Thank you. Renee Olsen?

Good evening, Dr. Duran and the Members of the Highline School Board. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Career Center and the budget cuts. My name is Renee Olsen. I began at RAHS in 2014, and recently retired from PSSC in January 2026.

During my time at RAHS, I spent nine years in the College and Career Center, first part time and then full time. From the very beginning, I learned that the Career Center mentor and internship programs were not just supports. They were foundational pillars of RAHS.

I took the responsibility seriously, because I saw firsthand the impact on students' lives. These programs did more than provide experiences. They changed trajectories. Students gained confidence, direction, and real-world exposure. Mentors helped them navigate college applications, write recommendation letters, open doors they didn't know existed. Internships gave students a glimpse into their future, and in many cases led directly to career opportunities.

This work was not done in isolation. It was a collective commitment across staff, an all-in effort to ensure students were known by name, strength, and need. The College and Career Center brought that vision to life by helping students discover their strengths and build a path forward.

Even today, former students, now adults, stay connected, sharing their successes. This is the lasting impact of this work. I understand the reality of budget constraints. I simply ask, as decisions are made, you consider the profound and lasting value the Career Center brings to students, families, and our community. The programs within the Career Center don't just support students. They change the direction of their lives. Thank you.

Thank you for that. Kai Bjordahl.

Hello, Members of the Board. My name is Kai Bjordahl. I'm a junior and the ASB Secretary of Raisbeck Aviation High School, and I am here alongside my teachers and my peers to talk about our Career Center.

Now, I want to begin by mentioning something this district has identified as a major priority for its students, future-ready. You want students to explore possibilities and develop mindsets that prepare them for a changing future, and I can't think of something that our Career Center aligns with more.

As an example, just a couple of months ago, Mr. Savishinsky led a job shadow at the Federal Aviation administration's building in Des Moines where I was able to learn about what it's like being a government employee, serving the public, and especially the experiences of government employees amid DOGE firings, government shutdowns, something very important to me as my stepmom was fired by DOGE from the USDA just about a year ago. My eyes were opened to possibilities I would have never been exposed to otherwise. And if you ask any other Raisbeck student, you'll hear the exact same story.

This Career Center has opened countless doors for me and my peers, from paid internships, job shadows, networking opportunities. Me and my fellow students are prepared for the future in ways that are usually restricted to students from wealthy, connected, and well-educated families.

That doesn't happen on its own. It happens because we have someone working tirelessly to support and connect Raisbeck students. Unfortunately, this means that what's so special about our school, what makes us the fourth highest ranked school in the state, is at incredible risk. So I urge you, council, take action. Protect our Career Center. Live the promise and make sure that me, my fellow students, my little brother who will walk into Raisbeck's doors for the first time this September, and countless future students graduate prepared for the future they choose. Thank you for your time.

Thank you for that. Daniel Villas.

Board Members, thank you for your time. I am here also to speak about Raisbeck as well. My name is Daniel Villas. I am an airline pilot and a mentor and advisor to Raisbeck High School.

I think what I want to speak to specifically is that there is a lot of mysticism around aviation. I think the first question I get is, were you in the military? How did you make it to where you are now?

And the journey is fraught, and I can attest to that. I'm the first pilot in my family. I did not come from a lot of means. But I did get the opportunity to go to an aviation high school very similar to Raisbeck, and it was a starting point to jumping off on my career. But it wasn't really until later in my career where I started making the kind of relationships that helped me reach where I am today, and the fact that I have this opportunity now to give back and provide the same service to them.

What we really need, alongside the education that's being provided, are us professionals coming out into the world, and talking to you and telling you, this is the path. This isn't the only path, but this is what we can do for you.

One of the programs I advise to-- I'm so proud to see some of my students here tonight doing that and speaking in regards to this. But this is a field that requires active participation at all times, and it is not something that you can just show up for. You have to be passionate about it, be involved in it.

And helping with that passion, assisting it is not something that I had. I did not have a guiding arm early on in my career going through that. And having this system available to them is an unreal experience, and I cannot state more how important it is that we continue funding it. Thank you so much for your time.

Thank you for that. Hong Ka? Hong Ka? John Somerville?

OK. Well, thank you for allowing all of us to speak tonight. Again, John Somerville. I'm a retired Boeing Technical Fellow. I've been a mentor at Aviation High School since 2010. I know we've made an impact. I have students that have gone through college, are established in a career. They come back and say thank you to all of us mentors, OK? So they're making a big impact now in the industry themselves.

Yeah, the Career Center does do college applications, scholarships, summer internships, et cetera. But really, what stands out to me is the ability for these students to rub elbows with industry experts. One that really stands out to me, I think was mentioned, is spend a day at Alaskan Airlines, talk to maintenance engineers, pilots, business operations, get some stick time maybe in a simulator, et cetera.

I've done tours at Boeing in experimental labs, lightning lab, Transonic Wind Tunnel. Other Boeing SMEs have done experimental flight tests. These make huge impacts on these students.

I sponsor students to attend AIAA events. That's the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. At my expense, I fund students to attend the annual-- AIAA Symposium. There's also quarterly AIAA brunch lecture events that I help sponsor.

So I talked earlier about these students' ability to rub elbows with industry experts. By going to these AIAA events, they truly get to rub elbows with the elite. So thank you in advance for taking all of our comments seriously. Please take that into serious considerations for your evaluation of continuing funding the Career program.

Erin Taylor.

Hello. First, I want to say, students, amazing job. That was really above and beyond. Good evening, Chair, Directors, Superintendent. Thank you for taking us-- giving us this opportunity to speak. My name is Erin Taylor, and I'm a teacher at Raisbeck Aviation High School. As you work through the difficult budget decisions-- and I understand, it's very difficult-- I wanted to share why our Career Center is an essential student support service that aligns closely with the district's goals for equity and post-secondary readiness.

The Career Center serves all students, offering guidance, many especially first-generation and underserved students, like special ed students, which I serve, that cannot access it elsewhere. Through career explorations, mentorship, and individualized support, it helps students navigate their options and overcome barriers.

The Center also maintains important partnerships with local businesses, apprenticeship programs, and community organizations. Whew. These connections provide real-world learning opportunities and strengthen the district ties to the broader community. In a time of rising college costs and rapidly changing job markets, removing the one program dedicated to helping students make informed choices about their post-high school life could widen opportunity gaps.

I understand the Board is facing an exceptionally challenging budgeting situation, and every option carries difficult trade-offs. With that in mind, I hope you will consider how vital this program is to equitability access to student readiness. Even a year of tough choices, preserving the Career Center ensures students continue receiving the support they need to plan for their future.

And I heard Blaine talk about future-- I think it was Blaine-- earlier in the budget. And I just think that that's a very important word, because the future is upon a lot of our students right now, and we need to provide access for that. Thank you for your time and dedication.

Thank you for that. Nik Joshi.

Hello. My name is Nick-- ooh. My name is Nik Joshi. And thank you, Dr. Duran. Thank you to the School Board. Hey, Joe. Thanks for having me here to talk about this very important topic.

One of the great things about going near the end is all of my fantastic students and colleagues have talked about a lot of the points I was going to make. But I think one thing I can add is one role that the Career Center plays is not just serving students, but serving the staff. We have English teachers. We've got Spanish teachers. We've got social studies teachers and math teachers and science teachers.

But most of these teachers don't know a lot about aviation when they come to our school. One of the services that the Career Center provides is not just access to the students to the industry professionals, but bringing these industry professionals and having us as teachers meet them to understand what they do so that we, the experts in the classroom, can leverage their expertise to make our project-based learning absolutely authentic.

So when we say something, the students write it down. But when we have an engineer come in and work with them directly, when that engineer helped us develop the project-based learning project that these students are working on, when those engineers come in and they help assess the work that the students have done, that brings the authenticity. That's the difference between a word problem that has the word "airplane" in it, and actual, authentic, aerospace-based, aerospace-driven, project-based learning. And that's the benefit that the teachers get.

The Career Center has annual meetings and mixers where industry professionals come in. They understand what we do. We learn what they do. Partnerships are formed, and amazing curriculum is developed. And everybody benefits, students and faculty. So there's a difference between cutting back when the budget is tight, and there's a difference between cutting out when the budget is tight. Please leave us the Career Center so that we can continue to do amazing work. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Casey Jeannot.

All right. Good evening, Highline Board and Dr. Duran. My name is Casey Jeannot, and I'm the proud Principal of Hazel Valley. I'm honored to stand here before you tonight to speak about a program, Team Read, that is truly making a difference in the lives of our students.

Team Read is built on a simple but powerful premise-- consistent caring, one-on-one tutoring between high school teen coaches and our 2nd and 3rd grade readers. What begins as a literacy intervention quickly becomes something far more-- a relationship, a bond, a spark.

Research and experience alike tell us that when young readers are paired with encouraging, consistent mentors, something remarkable happens. They don't just grow as readers. They grow in confidence, in identity, and in their love of reading.

Don't just take my word for it. Here's what my readers said today. "I love reading. Team Read is the best. I love reading with my coach. Team Read is different because they encourage me all the time to read more. It's so much fun. I love reading with my coach."

Those words say everything, and the impact doesn't stop with our youngest learners. Team Read also creates a first-ever job experience for our Highline team coaches, teaching them responsibility, mentorship, and the power of showing up for someone who is counting on you. The relationships that grow on both sides of the table are lifelong.

I want to share something personal. As a proud Highline graduate-- go Pirates-- I had the privilege of taking a class in high school that placed me alongside kindergarten students and a daycare program on site at Highline High. That experience opened my eyes to a world of education and lit a fire in me that led me to where I stand today.

Programs like Team Read do that. They open doors for students that they didn't even know existed. We have already taken steps to sustain this work, leveraging our school-based categorical dollars and reaching out to our PTA. But we need more, and we're asking the Board to consider funding Team Read for the coming school year.

I know we are navigating a difficult budget landscape. I understand the weight of every decision before you. But with literacy named as a district-wide priority, I ask you to see Team Read for what it is, not just a tutoring program, but a literacy investment, a workforce development opportunity, and a community builder all in one. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Marcie Wombold.

Good evening, and thank you. I too am here to talk about Raisbeck Aviation High School. As a founding teacher, I have a unique perspective on what it means to be part of a school that is small by design. There's lots of pros and cons in that.

Specifically, every structure we put in place to keep the Highline promise matters. Every part of our program, because it's directly linked to the strategic goals, is essential. It's essential because access to these programs in the career-- in the College and Career Center matters for students that are furthest from educational equity-- our students of color, our female students, our students who may not yet see themselves represented in STEM fields. We do this work for them.

At Raisbeck, we value the Highline promise more than just a theoretical thing. We know all of our kids by name, strength, and need. We connect with them and serve them on a daily basis.

And we're doing that not as a large program. We don't have a big budget. We have a small staff, and we all wear many hats. And so taking away one of those programs isn't just taking away-- I cannot overstress how many hats are implicated by what looks like one small budget item. Our Career Center is a hub of support to help keep our promise. It's how we enact our commitments to innovation and our culture of belonging, because access to real opportunities is what makes belonging real. It's not in words alone. It's in our actions.

Simply put, we ask-- we hope that because you've supported us in the past and that our goals align with your goals, we need the district to continue funding the Career Center position and to support us in keeping our promise to our teachers, our communities and families, and most importantly, our students. Thank you very much.

Thank you. We're going to move on to our wait list. First up there is Kirsten Cooper.

Good evening. My name is Kirsten Cooper. I'm a Highline School District Alumna, a parent of a special needs student in the district, and a resident of North Burien. I'm speaking tonight on behalf of hundreds of community members who participated in the recent thought exchange regarding the proposed relocation of Cascade Middle school.

81% of respondents opposed relocating the school to the Salmon Creek site and supported keeping the New Start Community Garden in its current location. The New Start Community Garden, also known as Shark Garden, is a 1.6-acre community space that supports 76 culturally diverse local families growing food for households. Each year, volunteers grow more than 2,000 pounds of fresh produce for the White Center Food Bank. In a neighborhood identified as having some of the highest environmental health disparities in our state, this space is not a luxury. It is an essential community resource.

Shark Garden also offers a ready-made outdoor learning environment. In many ways, it's like a mini Waskowitz right in your own backyard, a place where students can experience hands-on, place-based learning without leaving their community. Given the site's small size and the established presence of the garden, it may be better suited to a choice school such as Big Picture.

Additionally, this proposal raises important questions about equity for the Cascade students. For decades, Cascade Middle school has operated on a large 41-acre shared campus with access to full-size athletic fields and outdoor learning space. Those facilities are in the final stages of being rebuilt and upgraded to modern standards.

Relocating approximately 650 to 700 middle school students to a significantly smaller 6.6-acre site without room for even one regulation-size field represents a major reduction in space. It also means losing access to facilities their community has recently invested in for them.

These two issues are connected. It's not just about school building placement. It is about how we value student experience, community health, [AUDIO OUT]. Thank you for your time and service.

Thank you. James Cooper.

Good evening, Members of the Board and Superintendent Duran. My name is James Cooper. I'm speaking tonight on behalf of myself and many other parents in our district who raise children with emotional and behavioral difficulties. My son Colin has autism, and has been a student in the Highline School District since kindergarten. In the early years of Colin's diagnosis, the challenges he faced and the district's initial responses left my wife and I deeply concerned about Colin's future.

That changed when we moved Colin to Shorewood Elementary. We witnessed firsthand how the environment impacted his ability to learn. The proximity to trees and a natural greenbelt significantly reduced his overload from the environmental stimuli, allowing him to regulate and engage in a way we hadn't seen before.

As the district considers the future of Cascade Middle School, I urge that you rebuild at its current location. Maintaining the specific site ensures continued access to vital green space and unique natural resources and educational opportunities that simply cannot be replicated at the Salmon Creek site.

The district frequently cites its commitment to inclusionary ideology, striving to ensure every student belongs. You can put these words into action by rebuilding Cascade on the Cascade campus and prioritizing the shared use of the Evergreen athletic fields.

This isn't about sports. It's about a rare opportunity to foster inclusion through the ages, creating a community hub where students of all abilities can interact and grow together in a familiar, supportive environment. Please, let's keep Cascade where it can best serve the diverse sensory and educational needs of all of our students. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Our next speaker called right before the meeting and removed his name. With that, Dave Jones.

Good evening, Board Members. I appreciate the opportunity to address you. My name's David Jones, and I'm here to speak on the Raisbeck's Career Center's behalf. I am a United Airlines Boeing retiree. I'm a private pilot, and I'm a private pilot ground school instructor. And I've exercised that expertise interacting with Raisbeck students for over 15 years in roles of mentor, advisor, coach.

I'd like to give you an insight, my observation of the differences that this program really makes. And I'd like to just cite three. First, a student that I interacted with over 10 years ago, he almost didn't need my help. He was on a path. But that was on the benefit of Raisbeck. All the opportunities, he grabbed them. He's now a Delta Airlines pilot. And to watch that and get a call from him at various points, it really has made a difference.

On the other extreme, during COVID I was assisting our freshman physics teacher in interacting with students on flight simulators. I worked with a student who was a recent Vietnam immigrant. Joined the school as a sophomore. And I helped him graduate, got him a part-time job. He is now employed and moving to his next goal.

With that, I just want to say I've seen this program make a difference, and I appreciate in these tough times the choices you have to make. And I sure hope you'll consider this program and those choices. Thank you very much.

Thank you. Caroline Tran.

Hi. My name is Caroline Tran, and I'm a proud graduate of Raisbeck Aviation, class of 2019. I am proof that this program works. As a first-generation college student, I didn't have a roadmap for higher education, let alone being a woman in STEM. At the Career Center, I found mentors who cared about my future and saw potential in me that I didn't even see myself.

Because of that support, I was accepted to internships at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the city of Tukwila, two very impactful local communities here. These experiences led to an acceptance at Stanford University where I completed both a bachelor's and master's in computer science and later became a Co-Director of the nonprofit she++, which is also created to expand STEM access to marginalized students like myself.

This is a full circle. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without this Career Center. These programs are not extra. They are essential. They open doors that students didn't even know existed, so I urge you to continue investing in the RAHS Career Center, and I thank you for your time.

Thank you for that. And our last speaker is Nasia Ali. Nasia Ali? OK. And then Kenny Pham.

Members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity and for your time today. And thank you, everyone, who is here to support wonderful causes for the community. My name is Kenny Pham. I'm currently a Senior Product Manager at Dell Technologies, a community volunteer for underserved youth, and I am an alum as Raisbeck Aviation High School's 2019 ASB President. I'm here to talk about my experience with the Career Center.

In high school, I was a victim of domestic abuse and became homeless, transitioning to inconsistent temporary housing. In my position, there were a lot of unknowns. I didn't know what to do, where to go and what was waiting for me out there in the world. The unknowns became scarier as each day passed, and especially for the future.

The Career Center, its staff, and its volunteers cleared a significant portion of that unknown future. I had the opportunity to speak with and seek mentorship from experienced engineers, project managers, pilots, you name it. Before this, I didn't know these opportunities existed or how to even get there. Now I'm working in the industry of those I looked up to for the program.

Part of supplying students' needs in my position who are at their most vulnerable is showing what's possible. It's inspiring them, empowering them to be the best versions of themselves. And the Career Center is a guiding light in transitioning students to a successful future, no matter where they come from or where they might go. There was finally hope beyond the cold concrete streets that I was sleeping on. And I model my present mentorship for students in my lived experience based on the Career Center's actions. Thank you.

Thank you for that. And that concludes our speakers for this evening. Just a point of clarification, that Kenny Pham was-- he came to correct the record. He was the one that called out. So just to clarify on the record.

So thank you, everybody, for coming and speaking with us this evening. Now moving on to our consent agenda. Are there any questions or comments in regards to our consent agenda? OK, I do have one. Just a quick shout-out to the Hazel Valley PTA for their \$10,000 donation to the school. So greatly appreciate that. With that, can I please have a motion to approve our consent agenda?

I make a motion we approve our consent agenda that now includes our action items added to that. So I make that motion, so I need a second.

I will second that.

All those in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed? Thank you so much, Vice President Alvarez, for bringing those three action items on board. Since we approved those action items, there are no intro and actions this evening, nor are there any introduction items. With that said, can I please have a motion to adjourn?

I motion to adjourn this meeting. May I have a second, please?

I'll second that. All those in favor?

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed? We have none. Thank you, everybody, for being here this evening.