

Good evening, everybody. Welcome to our regular school board meeting. It's Wednesday, May 20th. 6 o'clock. Can we all please stand up for the Pledge of allegiance?

Thank you. Roll call please.

It'll get there. Out there. Director Espinoza.

Here.

Director Tidholm.

Present.

Director Holien.

Present.

President Van.

Here. And Director Alvarez has an excused absence this evening. And to my left is our superintendent, Dr. Ivan Duran. With that, any calls for changes or additions to tonight's board meeting agenda? There's none. Thank you very much. We're going to move into our acknowledgment and our appreciation.

This evening, we have a great community partner. It's going to be Treehouse. So can I please have Arun [? Adu ?] come on up for introductions?

Superintendent Dr. Duran, President Joe Van, distinguished board members, thank you for taking the time to recognize one of our trusted partners, Treehouse. Today, I will call up Antonio Lewis, who is our McKinney-Vento and foster care liaison; Roland Pablo, who's our graduation success supervisor for Treehouse; and Ollie Endicott, who is an ed specialist. Thank you.

Thank you. For those who don't know me, I'm Antonio Lewis. I've been in the district for 16 seasons now. I am the McKinney-Vento and foster care liaison for Highline Public Schools. And so I oversee both federal education programs, the first of which, McKinney-Vento, provides educational stability for students who are unhoused. So our families who are in shelters and their cars and hotels, and those who are doubled up with relatives due to lack of income or other barriers that are preventing them from getting into housing.

And in my other role as a foster care liaison, I do similar work, except that I work a lot with Treehouse-- as well as our local DCYF, which is the Department of Children, Youth and Families-- regional office to provide supports for our students who, for one reason or another, have been removed from their home and are now in foster care. So some of those services include transportation, which is a big one to transport our students across the region to make sure they're not having to change schools every time that their placement changes.

And so I will turn it over to Roland Pablo, who is the graduation success manager for Treehouse, to share what he does and how they work with our district and how we partner with them. And then Ollie Endicott is the educational specialist who is in some of our schools. And they can speak to what they do in their roles and how we partner and help to continue to partner. Thanks again for allowing me the time to share this with you all as May is National Foster Care month. Thank you.

Hello, everybody. Thank you, Antonio. Thank you, Arun. Appreciate y'all. Appreciate the invite. Just a little bit about Treehouse broadly, and then I'll pass it to Ollie here, who's the ed specialist that works in the schools in your district and has been for quite a few years and does some really great work. Treehouse is an organization that works with youth impacted by the foster care system, and our mission is to try to-- let me pull up the mission.

I have my director here, she's making me nervous. Our mission is to create opportunities for young people in foster care to thrive. And we do that through a few different programs. We have our store, where youth and foster care can come shop for free a few times a year. They get clothing, books, toys and other essentials.

We have our Just in Time funding program, where we fund enrichment activities, sports fees, equipment, dance classes, summer camps, things like that. Just trying to ensure they have the opportunity to stay busy and do a lot of the fun things that, you know, youth deserve to do. Our advocacy program works to remove and resolve barriers to school success for youth in foster care, kindergarten through 12th grade. And that program is statewide.

And then we have our grad success program, which Ollie and I are a part of, where he goes into schools once a week to meet with students one-on-one, checking on grades, attendance, behaviors, provide any corresponding interventions that need to happen. He also does some goal-setting through our Student Center planning model. But I'll pass it to him about what he does specifically in your district and all the great work that he's doing.

Thanks, Roland. Thanks, Antonio and Arun and thanks, board, for having us here. Like they said, my name is Ollie Endicott. I've worked with Treehouse since August of 2021, and the whole time I've been partnering with the Highline district. So this is I realized at the beginning of this year, this is my fifth school year with y'all. And I realized also that I got to like, walk into almost every high school this year and kind of know the people there.

So I've been first with Mount Rainier and Tyee high school since the beginning. And recently, I was working with another one, a great education specialist named Larissa. She left to follow other passions. And so now I'm in all of the high schools here in Highline, including Innovation Heights, and also working with students that are part of the online school.

So just been-- a quick little glimpse into what I do. I get to meet with students on my caseload once a week for half an hour or 40 minutes, and we kind of first check in just overall how things are going. And then I'll pull up my computer and we kind of look at data together, which is an amazing other piece of our partnership with Highline that we get to look together at grades and attendance.

And I know that what's amazing with the data part, with any kind of support, with all the counselors in every school that I work in, the partnership is-- I'm kind of always surprised at how quick everybody gets back to me. I'm kind of this random person that, you know, you all have tons of partnerships. And I'm never sure if they're going to know who Treehouse is or who I am. And even if they've never heard of me, there's always an incredibly quick response.

So I work super closely with the counselors helping students get to graduation. Work in the Connections Center, if students aren't-- as Antonio was talking about, students need to maybe move somewhere and then they move back. And they might have some interruptions to their education. So what's great is I work with students from freshman year through senior year, even if their legal status changes if they get adopted.

They have guardianship. We stick with them through the whole time. So I've had several now. This is my second time of having students I work with, ninth graders are now graduating in a couple weeks. So just thank you to Highline for being an easy district to work with, able to help us when we are kind of this like free agent. I think of myself as not a counselor, not a social worker, but someone who meets with these students more than a lot of their other supports.

So I get to see them grow, get to see the struggles, and then also work through that with them. Like Roland said, setting goals, helping them get supports. So yeah, it's been a really good five years. Looking forward to even more. And I appreciate you all and Highline for all the support that you guys have allowed us to give and you've given us. So thank you.

Thank you very much. Directors, real quick. Do you have any questions or comments?

No questions, but a comment. Having worked in substance abuse and case management with adults who didn't have a great upbringing, a lot of them coming up in the system and recognizing the impact that not having that support has, I really appreciate the work that you do. And I know these babies do, too.

Ollie. Thank you, Director Tidholm. I do have a quick question in regards to our students. If one of our students was here today, I mean, what do you think that they would want us to understand in their situation? And how could we support them?

That's a great question. Thank you for asking that. I think honestly, knowing that you're asking that question is maybe one of the first things that they should know is that they are not voiceless. And they're not-- they're heard and valued, I think, is my North Star, is that I want to listen to who they are and what they need and want. And so I think a lot-- it's not just the students we work with, but especially for them, feeling not heard and not-- if there's an issue, I'm stuck. And the easiest thing for me to do is just get the heck out of here.

And instead of that, knowing actually there's these supports that exist at your school. And I keep telling people on our team all through Treehouse, Highline has all these cool, other alternatives. I'm working with a senior now who started the year nine credits behind. And he's-- you know, fingers crossed-- he's, you know, two classes away from being able to have that kind of quick, receptive ability I think, and reactive ability.

We like to be proactive, of course. But sometimes things happen and we need to be flexible. So I think understanding that flexibility is necessary, when they have an issue, that they have someone to talk to, and I-- and someone who cares about them. And that there can be flexibility, that it's not the end of the road when they don't-- they get no credit for a class that we can then figure out ways to move forward through that.

And that's kind of a message I try to give. Because I've had that kind of background experience now with Highline. And I think making sure that students know that, so they don't give up prematurely, that they can kind of fight through that-- those challenges.

Thank you very much. Any other questions, directors, or comments? All right. Thank you so much. Can we give them around of applause? I would like to invite you up for a picture, please.

Thank you all for being here this evening. With that, that concludes our appreciation for this evening. Dr. Duran?

Yeah, I'm going to go ad lib here a little bit. And just, you know, here at Highline, we have our promise to know every student by name, strength, and need. To help graduates prepare for the future of their choose. And we have a way of honoring people for the work that they do.

And I just want to take a moment to honor you, Antonio, for all the work that you do. You do so much work in the background that people don't know about to support our students. But I know you know so many students by name, strength, and need. And so here's a promise pin for you tonight.

All right. I want to thank everybody for being here tonight. I'm going to keep my remarks relatively short tonight because we have a number of presentations from our Family Action Committee. Today, I had the opportunity to visit Puget Sound Skills Center. It's always a joy to be out in schools, but I always love going to the Puget Sound Skills Center to see the great work that they're doing there, especially the hands on work in CTE.

I love visiting the culinary program because I love to cook and I always get ideas. But today's students have prepared dishes from their own cultures and had a potluck today, so I had the opportunity to try some of them and have some ideas for my ceviche recipes that I do. So in addition, students in the multimedia class organized senior photo day.

So 12th grade students brought their caps and their gowns and captured some wonderful photos to commemorate their upcoming graduation. It's really fun to see all the students from all the different districts that participate at Puget Sound Skills Center. I attended the Gold Star breakfast last Friday. I think I saw Fred here, Fred Swanson, executive director for foundation.

A wonderful job, we had a great time. Directors [INAUDIBLE] were able to attend. I just want to thank the foundation for all the work they do to support our students and our families. You all make a real difference for our students. And it was a great event. So thank you.

I would now like to welcome Lita O'Donnell, the Director of Family and Community Partnerships, to the podium. Tonight, we have the privilege of continuing to hear about the good work of our Family Action Committee. The committee represents family members from across the district who bring an invaluable perspective to our work. And I'll hand it over to you, Lita.

Wonderful. Thank you so much. I'm back tonight to share a little bit about the subcommittee work that we're doing on the FAC. And so I'm going to kick us off by talking about the Family Engagement Subcommittee. And then you'll also hear from our Secondary Redesign Subcommittee and our Inclusion Subcommittee.

There we go. So partnership with our families helps us to live out our promise to know all students by name, strength, and need. We have a tremendous group of families and staff on our subcommittee. And building on our work from last year, where we revised the family engagement policy, our families on the Family Engagement Subcommittee selected Family University as an area of focus.

And to hear why Family University is important from a family perspective, I'm going to invite one of our FAC families, Reina, up to share.

Hi, my name is Reina. [SPEAKING SPANISH]

Hi my name is Reina. I'm here because the information that I give here as a parent leader, we can share with other families. Because it's important that our opinions are here and where we learn them together. Thank you.

And now I'd like to invite Sarah Bliss, another one of our families, to share about what we did and the key feedback from the FAC this year.

Thank you. So several of us on the committee had not experienced Family University and weren't very familiar with it, but loved the idea. And so staff were kind enough to do a sample presentation for us and for some invited guests so we could experience Family University and provide some feedback. And so we got together for a session called "Navigating Systems."

And then we were able to provide feedback on what worked well, what we really appreciated and learned, what could benefit from more clarification. And then ideas to improve the session for all families. To get a little more specific, we suggested providing a clearer, simpler overview of OSPI. The presentation kind of covers all levels state down to figure out who does what. And simplifying and clarifying that seemed helpful, shifting the emphasis.

And then ensuring that it could be adapted to different audiences and school contexts. We're really excited about being able to tailor and focus it for specific communities in the district. One idea was to offer an opportunity to practice navigating the district website. There's so many excellent resources on the website, but it's sometimes hard to find them or hard to know what's there. And so that was one of the things we suggested would be helpful.

And then adding more depth on specific topics. Like I mentioned, it could be really helpful to offer tailored presentations for specific groups or specific needs. And so, for example, the transition years, entering kindergarten, entering sixth grade, entering high school. Learning guides and how families can use them, school-specific sessions. So here's what you need to know about your elementary school or your middle school. And then digital citizenship was another area we talked about.

So thank you, Sarah. I'm happy to report that we've already worked with our digital transformation team. And we created a digital citizenship Family University, and we piloted that recently at Glacier Middle School. In addition, we partnered with Seahurst Elementary School to do a school-specific Family University. And in the works are creating what Sarah spoke about, the sessions around how we navigate the website.

And partnering, I think a really exciting piece is partnering with our families to co-facilitate Family University alongside our families, and really think about how our families can support with recruiting and outreach in their own school communities as trusted messengers. So that is a little bit about the work on the Family Engagement Subcommittee. And welcome to take any questions or comments that you have.

Directors, any questions or comments?

OK.

I do have a question.

OK.

So as many of you know, Lita, this is your last meeting before you retire from the board.

Yes, it is.

And being a huge part of this program, what is the most rewarding moment that you've seen going through all this, for this?

For the Family Action Committee? Well, I started as a family member on the Family Action Committee before having the opportunity to be one of the leads in the work and supporting it at the district level. And I will say this past year, the subcommittee work has been extremely rewarding. It's been wonderful to be in partnership with district leaders across our system.

And really bringing in not just input and feedback, but the opportunity for our families to co-lead and co-design what it means to implement what we want to do in Highline to fulfill our promise. So working with families and community, Joe, was always, always my pick.

Thank you so much for all you do. Appreciate you.

Thank you. I am going to now ask for our Secondary Redesign folks to come on up for their report.

OK, I'm short. Hello, everyone. Good evening, board of directors and Superintendent Dr. Duran. My name is Rosa Manriquez. I'm a parent of Highland High School student. She's a senior this year, and I've been in the Family Action Committee since it started with Dr. Enfield. And this is my last year, so that's exciting, too, on the other hand.

But I'm here tonight to introduce our committee for the FAC for Secondary Redesign. And we're going to do a little bit of an overview. If people don't know what Secondary Redesign is, it's different ways that schools can engage. I'm not going to read everything, but as you can tell, there's different ways that we're engaging with the students, so that works for them.

I would say that at Highline High School, they went into the four periods. And it's working for my student. She's able to do more choice classes, and I also like that we do a showcase every quarter where we get to learn what students are learning in that. But as you can tell, every school has a different design. And now I would like to pass it over to Carrie.

Good evening, directors and Superintendent Duran. It's lovely being on this side of the dais. I am a parent of a ninth grader at Mount Rainier High School and a fifth grader at Mar Vista Elementary, who has to go to dance right after this. I was really excited to be on the Secondary Redesign Committee because I worked in secondary schools for over 20 years.

So we focused on what we could do to support the work that had already been done with secondary redesign, and then how to bring it forward. Right? So we wanted to provide feedback for our four big high schools on their secondary redesign plans, as well as hold them accountable to what they said they were going to do and hopefully get better results.

So one of the first things we did was we communicated with the principals of the four major comprehensive high schools. And we asked a bunch of questions. We said, you know-- and they were tailored for each plan. So if you see, we asked different questions to Evergreen than we did to Tyee because they had radically different redesign plans.

We got a lot of feedback about what they were doing and how it was going. And then we were able to provide feedback. So the two big things we really wanted to share with them are that because these redesign plans were so different, there's no shared metric that they have. So they all have their own redesign plans.

And one of the things that is kind of unclear right now is, how will they know they are successful? What are they measuring? When are they measuring it? How are students engaging in that? How are families engaging in that? And then that leads to our last bullet, which is we really wanted to give recommendations on how to communicate that with families.

So how are you telling-- yes you've told families that we're doing a four-period day, for example. How are you communicating to families that, here's what the four-period day is doing for our students. And here's what we see in our data that is showing that this is a successful redesign.

So those are recommendations going forward. I know that secondary redesign is turning into school redesign, but I do think our work with these four specific schools and their plans can be enriched with some of these recommendations. I think it's Steph.

So thank you for having me. My name is Stephanie Scanlon, and I've been a part of the FAC for 10 years. This, too, is my last year because my daughter's graduating. And you do have to be a parent to participate. We're very proud of her. She's been working her way through this district and has been working really hard and got accepted to the Foster School of Business at UW this fall.

And she's a product of Evergreen High school and Shorewood Elementary and everything in between. It's really important for me to participate in the fact, because my students go to these schools and I would like to understand how decisions are made and how priorities are set for our kids. And so that's been part of the reason why I've always participated in the fact for these many years.

Part of the Secondary Redesign that I was asked to join, I was very happy to do it because my daughter, of course, is at Evergreen. And the level of autonomy allowed-- that we allowed the schools to have in designing what would be the best path forward for their kids was fantastic. And, of course, all of the comprehensive high schools have continued to build on the strategies that were set in '23.

You know, some of the things we thought of that would be ideal to communicate, how to best communicate with the parents. I really enjoyed the coffee with the principal. I thought that those meetings, or just the get-together where you can have a breakfast at the school. That was a great time to join, to help prepare the meal and talk with parents about some of the concerns or some of the missing data that they have about the school their kids are in.

We can also clarify the direction by tying secondary redesign strategies to clear and actionable strategic plan measures and focus on goals. And that kind of leads into what we were just discussing earlier. Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure. I don't know how much more interaction I will have with the district, but it is-- the parents here are amazing. And the leaders here that are help guiding our kids, top notch. And I wouldn't have been-- I wouldn't have put my kid in school anywhere else. Thank you so much. And now I'm going to introduce. [INAUDIBLE]

Good evening, Superintendent Duran, President Van, members of the board. I want to say, first and foremost, thank you so much. This is my second year engaging with the FAC and subcommittee. Second year working with Rosa, second year working with Steph, first year-- where's Carrie? There you are. First year in this capacity with Carrie.

But I want to thank them for the time that they spent, and really for the authenticity and the conversations that we had around secondary redesign. And so I want to just go back a little bit. Yeah. When we look at our focus, we know that the Family Action Committee has three objectives-- to advise on family engagement strategies, provide feedback on district policies, and hold the district accountable to strategic plan goals.

I highlighted 1 in 3 because I really feel like this group of families were able to advise on strategies and hold us accountable. I think you heard that, right? How do we know that our measures will be successful? And so moving forward with redesign, there are a few next steps as we think about the next phase of redesign.

As Carrie mentioned, we're thinking about preparing future-ready students. And although our focus has been in high school, we know that we don't prepare future-ready students beginning in high school. And so we're thinking about the K-12 continuum and a focus on school design, rather than just secondary design. We know that as we take that lens, we're going to have to focus even more on both clarity and communication.

So ensuring that we have strong communication with our families and clarity of direction, especially with our updated strategic plan measures, we're so excited to help to have those guide the next iteration of school design in Highline. So thank you all so much. And thank you to our families for your support. And I wonder if you all have any questions or comments.

Directors, any questions or comments?

Yes. Hi. I do have a question. Thank you, everyone for your great work. So I think I'm understanding correct. But maybe I'm not, so you could share with me. But each of the schools has their own set of metrics, correct? I think that's what I heard. I'm also hearing that there's an opportunity for the refreshed strat plan measures that could guide this work. So how is that going to happen?

Yes, so each school has their own objectives, I guess based off of the feedback that they receive from their community. So as you see, some of the redesign strategies for Evergreen are different from those of Tyee and Highline. There's a common thread, in that they're all preparing students for their futures and life after high school.

A question that we receive from our families and they really pushed us on is, how do you measure that? How do you measure that level of success? And so, really, we're looking at the opportunity that you mentioned with our updated strategic plan measures. You know, are we measuring, for example, participation in advanced coursework? Right? Are we measuring, for example, attendance, industry-recognized credentials?

Are ninth grade on track to ensure that our students are ready for graduation and post-secondary? So we're really looking at that opportunity through our Strategic Plan Refresh and our new measures to say, here's a North Star. As we continue with redesign, we don't innovate and we don't redesign for redesign sake, but we have a North Star. And those measures will really help us to drive forward in a targeted way.

Perfect. Thank you.

Great. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

I would now like to invite our Inclusion Subcommittee. Gaye Bungart. Thank you. It's also Gaye's last board meeting with us and work with the subcommittee. And I've just really appreciated her and her partnership. OK.

Thank you for having us, Dr. Duran, President Van, and other board members for having us here. I'm not going to talk a lot because this is about families and not about me or what I think. So I've had the opportunity to work with this group for two years. It's been great. It's been informing, and it helps me to sit back and listen to our families and hear what they have to say. And so I'm going to hand it off to our presenters tonight, Ashley and Savannah.

I am a mother to four kids in the district, all elementary age. There you go. And this is my first year on the FAC and it's been great, just getting to collaborate with parents I wouldn't otherwise have met. Kim Bobbitt is also on our team, Sarah Bliss, Sydney Puja, Martina Calderon, Eugenia Calderon, Ryana Gallegos Rosas, Iris Cvjianovic-- I hope I'm not butchering that too badly-- Mickey Rowe, Savannah Bentley, Rosie Santiago, Darren Spencer, and Gaye just spoke to you guys.

Good evening. What we did is we facilitated meetings with families about inclusive practices in Highline in an effort to meet families as close to their schools, and homes. We arranged to meet in high schools across four regions of the district, distributing flyers to schools of primary and secondary, as well as posting flyers on platforms such as Peach Jar, Parent Square and Facebook.

As we got through our first two meetings, we felt that we needed to boost participation. And so our meetings at Highline and Tyee were made-- were opened in a hybrid option, so that families could participate virtually, so that we weren't hindering their after school routines and structures that they rely on so, so much. Just to remove the challenge of them participating and getting their voices heard.

We grounded our work in understanding that special education is a service, not a place. And our goal is to maximize inclusion by placing students in general education classrooms whenever possible while considering their individual strengths and needs. And in these conversations, we were set up in table groups, where parents and families, a few paraeducators were coming in and interacting with at least one or two either FAC member or Special Ed staff.

And what we learned from our conversations is that families had questions about what inclusion means for all students, not just students with disabilities. Wonderings about interactions of general student body with their students, and overall hearing very positive relationships and genuine friendships being born out of inclusion practices.

Families are asking for clarity around measuring the success of inclusion. I think families are-- who are experiencing a shift in models to inclusion are kind of noting transition and sort of students being overwhelmed in a sense. And they want to be assured that these changes are positively impacting their students.

Families appreciated the open and transparent conversation with district staff. I think in these table groups, it was very valuable to have just the knowledge there that questions could be answered right away. And if not, deferred. But also, they had a face and a name and an email and contact for ongoing communication.

We realized attendance was challenging for some families. Again, as these families are relying on routine and structure right after school, that transition can be very hard to get away from. Challenges, families also voiced challenges with navigating different levels of inclusive practices within siblings of the same family. We know students all have unique needs, even within a family.

And so families asking for support in having a pair of for one, or not necessarily needing one for another, but having another support in place. I think families are really navigating how to accommodate siblings.

And I'm short, sorry. Here we go. So what is next for our Family Action Committee subcommittee? We want to create more opportunities for these family sessions that include now the option of virtual, but also provide child care for those that want to be there in person. We want to create a contact list or resource list, so they know who can support them and answer those questions.

We also want to have clear understanding of what an IEP component are, what those components are, and also create that opportunity of understanding when grade level transitions happen. And what are those support and those changes that happen from preschool to kindergarten, elementary to middle, and middle to high school? And also, what does it look like for those students that are considering-- and it is appropriate for them to do-- our transition programs that we offer here in Highline?

Forgot about the-- OK Thank you. I don't know if you have any questions or not. Any comments I can answer or we're done?

- Directors, any follow-up questions or comments?

- No questions. Just a comment for all the subcommittees. I really appreciate the work. Like Lita said, she started on the FAC committee. I also started in FAC. So just the importance of parental involvement and being in those rooms and having those conversations and asking the questions that might not otherwise be asked. Because as parents, you know there's certain things that are on our minds.

And even questions, things that you guys are saying now that I might not have considered. I really appreciate just the engagement. I appreciate all the work and all of the time. I know that they feed y'all, but your time is money. And you're there for free. Not because you have to be, but because you want to be, and you're showing up for your babies. And I appreciate that.

Thank you.

Yes. So thank you all for your work. I did have a question about what you all learned. You noted that families wanted clarity about measuring the success of inclusion. So did you-- I mean, I don't understand what that means from this bullet point. So if you could share a little bit. And then also, if they had any ideas about what success to look like for their families.

I think they want to know that their students are being supported regardless. Because some of our students with the most significant needs have not had access to a lot of inclusive opportunities before. So there's been a lot of fear and wondering, what does that mean? So kind of undoing that and thinking about what does an IEP-- which is that Individualized Education Plan-- mean? And how do you deliver that whether-- no matter where the student is.

So they had questions around that. I think measuring-- I think a lot of times people hear that we're a full inclusion district. I don't believe that should be how we talk about inclusion. Inclusion is for every student. It's different for every student. So full inclusion would mean-- I think it scares some people to think that kiddos in Gen Ed all day, whether they should be or not.

And really it is based on, what does the child need? And how often can they be there? So a lot of times, some of our kids are there 0 to 39% of their day because that's all they can manage. And we're stretching that all the time. So I don't think that the measure should be how many minutes they're sitting in general education, but what is their growth over time?

Our students with IEPs have had more significant needs, have not ever had access to some of our district assessments. And we've learned, then, with the right accommodations and supports, they can access those and we can see their growth, where that didn't happen before. They were sitting in a classroom with other kids like them, not having access to rigor or experiencing other students.

I think something that comes out more and more is the appreciation for the empathy and kindness and support our students are getting from their peers. Met with families from the special needs PTA last night, and that came out over and over and over, that their students are feeling included. That when they get off the bus or they get out of the car, there's kids meeting them and greeting them.

Before, that was a paraeducator or a teacher who pulled them around to a building. In the past, they didn't have access to other kids and kids didn't have access to them. And the more we build community for these kids, the more successful they will be. There's not a special ed park or special ed grocery store or a special ed movie theater when they leave us at 22, some of them. So if we don't prepare the community around them now, they won't have access to that.

So I think measuring success is going to look different. And I think moving ahead, there's a lot of ideas about that that I will be gone and won't participate in. I won't be here for. But I know-- I trust that will be something that they really think about, like, how do we measure this work? Because what we've seen reciprocally is kids are resilient.

Kids rise to the occasion every time. Sometimes it's the adults that struggle more with this work. So yeah. So I leave that in the hands of the people who follow me. Oh! I thought you were telling me I was done. One thing I did learn at the FAC-- or at our last meeting-- I sat with a group of parents. And one of them said, do you think there's any way you could get speed bumps put in at Hilltop? And I said, you know, that isn't my job, but I'll mention that to somebody. Maybe that would be helpful.

Thank you so much.

Yeah. Thank you.

Thank you. Any other follow-up questions? That's it.

Thank you.

Very good. I think Dr. Greg was right when that went down, Gaye. So just want to thank the families and the subcommittees for all the work. So let's give them a round of applause for all their support.

All right. Now I'd like to call Lita back up again to the podium to present the Annual Policy 0050 Report on Parent and Family Engagement.

All right. Thank you. So good evening again. And thank you for the opportunity to share our annual family engagement update as outlined, as Dr. Duran said, in Policy 0050. So this work supports our district promise that every student is known by name, strength, and need. And family engagement is an important part of how we build those conditions.

Today, I'm going to share our progress on our family engagement goals, what we're hearing from families, and how the family action committee supports this work. I'll walk through how we measure family engagement, what families are telling us, how we responded and what we're seeing as a result.

So we have two strategic plan measures currently around family engagement. And the first measure focuses on family engagement plans. And this looks at whether schools include at least one family engagement strategy from our district catalog in their annual action plan. And these are strategies that have been vetted by our family action committee.

And so looking at the progress on the measure made, we've seen strong growth with 71% of our schools meeting this criteria. And our goal is for full implementation across all schools, with final progress that will be available in July. Our second measure focuses on family experience based on how families answer questions on the family engagement survey.

And so our goal is a 2% increase in favorability rates in responses each year. So the family engagement survey is currently open. It will be open until June 1st. So we've seen growth in both how schools are implementing family engagement and how families are experiencing it. And from there, I want us to just take a little more closer look on what families are telling us.

And so this is what has come from the family engagement survey. So families are affirming strong relationships with teachers, clear expectations, and feeling able to support learning at home. Families are also identifying barriers including communication, logistics and student engagement. Families are also clear about what they need and they have asked for more proactive communication, stronger language access, leadership visibility and more inclusive engagement opportunities.

Based on this, we've been intentional about how we respond as a system. And so I want to take a moment and do a shout out to Sarah Chandler and Tyler Burns from our digital transformation team in helping us develop this insight dashboard that you see a sample of on the screen. And this really helps us to organize and share the data from the family engagement survey. And this allows us access to use the data to help guide our work.

So what did we do? So one key response is strengthening partnerships directly with families and Academic Parent-Teacher Teams, or APTT, is a central strategy in this work. And so this graphic shows how APTT is being implemented across the district and how the strategy has expanded over time.

This year, we moved into secondary with adding Sylvester and Innovation Heights. And our educators have consistently reported that APTT strengthens relationships and creates meaningful two-way communication with families. And importantly, we are seeing progress of students. So the next few slides highlight the good work happening in our pilot schools-- Blake, McMicken, and Mount View-- where you'll see growth in reading and math and improved attendance.

So this next graphic shows visual comparison of academic growth in APTT pilot schools. And here we see similar patterns in attendance and reduced gaps. At the same time that we're building educator capacity because strong family engagement depends on both educators and families, I'd like to highlight some professional learning with our bilingual educators and our culture and climate team leads.

So in partnership with our language learning team and our college and career team, we provide professional learning supports to our bilingual educators and instructional practices, strengthening communication and relationships with families. And this year, we focused on a community of care, creating a space to build community, strengthen trust and support one another in the work with our students and families.

In partnership with our social and emotional learning team, our culture and climate leads are engaging in professional learning around tier 1 supports, including family engagement components, in how we communicate with families during the student support process and how we partner. For language access, this is how-- a visual of how we support engagement with families.

And again, with the help of Linda Galas and Pooja Naidoo from digital transformation, we've launched a new interpretation and translation app this year that really has streamlined that process for our schools. Our Family Action Committee also helped shape this work, which serves as our district family partnership.

As you've heard in the board reports that have come up through our subcommittees, this is the area of focus that they've been on, our big four, in addition to family engagement and budget. And before inviting one of our family speakers, which is also called out in Policy 0050, I just want to point out the posters that you see over here in both English and Spanish.

This was a exercise we did with our FAC families, where they identified and shared strengths within their own families. And this is one of the ways we center family voice that connects directly to our work with our educators, where we consistently reinforce how we start with family strength, and student strength first. So to ground this work in lived experience, I'd like to invite Savannah-- oops, I'm clicking the wrong way here-- to share her experience on the FAC this year.

Good evening again. I want to highlight our participation in the University of Washington's Leading for Justice Symposium this past February. The family engagement team was invited to share highlights development of the Family Action Committee to frame how district leaders can engage with families as partners. We presented together in conversation and through a gallery walk of artifacts of the impact the FAC has had for shared power, collective action and community wisdom.

We testified about family leadership development and parent agency through the actionable goals of our subcommittees and the centering of underrepresented voices. We shared lessons learned because honest growth is transparent. As an attendee, I chose to participate in other sessions, because I wanted to hear and interact with the professional learning content of our education leaders.

Being present for a session titled "Creating Coalitions and Leveraging Resources Outside Academia" was an opportunity to sit directly at the table, offering context to resources I see my community using already, like the Indigenous Creative Collective offering free Indigenous art and land-based programs. The speakers for our native family gathering nights are among those in this collective database.

Another organization, Communities Rise, offers grant-writing clinic, which becomes helpful when a PTA or parent are looking to supplement school programs with grants. I'm grateful for the chance to elevate these programs, and to meet the needs to elevate these programs to meet the needs of our Highland communities.

I continue looking for opportunities to visit these professional learning events, such as "Native Ways of Knowing" training event for the elementary literacy and language cadre of Highline. "The Importance of Indigenous Perspectives on Literacy Practices," aligned with the John McCoy Lulilas "Since Time Immemorial" curriculum, deepens culturally responsive instruction and strengthens the integration of Indigenous knowledge system. Thank you.

OK. Before we move to questions, since this is my last family engagement school board report, I'm going to take a point of order, and I'd like a moment to recognize someone who's been instrumental in the family and community engagement work here in Highline. So in Highline, we give a promise pin to celebrate individuals publicly who are living the promise.

(VOICE BREAKING) I said I wasn't going to do this, but I am. I'd like to invite Kisa Hendrickson to join me. I practiced and I didn't cry. So I will get through this. So I met Kisa 15 years ago when she came to interview for a role in the Family Center. I wasn't a part of the interview panel, but I had a chance to talk to her while she was sitting and waiting.

And I remember Zizi Newman and I both going up to Bernadette, who was our supervisor at the time, and we said, this is who we want. We want her. This is the person. Thankful, so thankful that interview team agreed with us and Kisa got to join Highline.

So over the years, I've seen firsthand the impact of her leadership. Kisa has elevated family engagement in Highline in ways that are both visible and deeply foundational. Under her leadership, much of what I've reported on tonight would not be possible. Our family action committee was formed. Our family engagement vision was co-created with our staff and families.

Academic Parent-Teacher Teams, APTT, was brought into the district as a core strategy. Language access was strengthened even before it was required, with a policy passed during COVID. And she built the structure of the family and community partnership team that exists today. But more than the systems, and they are many, Kisa has always been a consistent champion of families and community.

She creates the conditions for partnership, for trust, and for this work to grow. And on a personal level, I would not be in this role or have the opportunity to lead the team that I do without her. Kisa Thank you for your leadership, your vision, and your commitment to ensuring that Highline continues to be a place where families and educators are true partners in supporting students. And it's my honor to present you with this pin.

Now I'll open it up for questions.

Is there any questions or comments? We're good. Thank you so much, Lita.

Thank you.

Thank you, Lita. And once again, just a big round of applause to all the members of our Family Action Committee. All right, continuing the mode of updates, I would now like to welcome Jackie Bryant, our chief financial officer, to share the monthly budget update. And as she's making her way up to the podium, again, this is a reminder to our community.

We started this last year in order to continually share with our community where we are, with our budget being transparent and open about what we're trying to do to ensure that Highline is fiscally sound today and into the future. Welcome, Jackie.

Thank you. Good evening. So I'm here tonight to talk through the May 2026 numbers. These are reflective of the end of April. April is not officially closed yet, so these numbers could fluctuate a little bit. But this is where we are as of the end of April. So our April enrollment held steady as what we've seen throughout the year. We're about 10 FTE over projections. So that is great news. We're steady. And our allocations represent the students that we have in our schools.

Our year-to-date numbers. You'll see this is probably the only month really where our expenditures and revenues are almost equal. And the reason for that is because we collect property taxes in April. And a large majority of our revenue, of course, is our levy. Our levy also increased slightly this year, so we saw additional revenue coming in from that in April.

Our expenditures are exactly where we would expect them to be at this time of year. And they're right in line with past year trends as well. When we look at our year to date revenues, you'll see those local dollars are almost fully collected. That is because we've collected our local levy. Part of those levies will trickle in throughout the rest of May and June, and then we'll see that number increase. But the big sum has already come in April.

Our state allocations will continue on a monthly basis. And because our enrollment is so steady, we expect that to come in as budgeted this year. Federal dollars as well. We are spending our federal dollars right now. Most of that is our Title I supplemental grant. And so we have put an end date of spending on that a little bit earlier this year, so we can anticipate funding going into next year.

And then our other is things like, of course, collecting on leases or collecting from other districts for transportation. And so those, as well as some grants. So that's what we see there with revenue coming in. Our year-to-date expenditures, again, are trending where we would expect. Special education is the one that we look at really closely this time of year, and it is trending to be slightly higher than budgeted, which we knew back in November when we had the work session.

But we also are anticipating a larger amount of revenue in our safety net collection this year. So that is also really good news. So talking about '26-'27 budget development, we are-- we actually just today submitted both the F-195 the F-195F to the ESD. So those are the financial reports that are required each year to be submitted to the ESD.

They approve it. And then once the board approves a budget, that goes-- those documents go to OSPI. So we submitted both of those there into the ESD for review. They do a financial overview review, and then we meet with them to ensure that everything looks correct going into next year. So we have those two documents. Our budget work session is in two weeks from today, June 3.

And so we will have the presentation, which is an overview, really, of what's in those two really large documents that we submit to the state, the F-195 and the F-195F. We'll also have our budget board action report and the budget resolutions, and those will both be presented in on the June 18 meeting.

So I went over this briefly, but June 3 is our budget board work session. 18th is the intro for the bar and resolution. The 24th will be the public hearing. So we actually do those separate now because it allows the public to have some time to look over not only the work session presentation, but also the other budget documents before the public hearing.

And then July 1 is when we will have action on both the budget BAR and the resolution. And one thing I will note is that we did have a FAC subcommittee team that was budget, and we will get into a lot of that during our work session. But I just wanted to recognize Lita and say thank you for letting us have that opportunity with families in that subgroup this year. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Thank you, Jackie. Directors, any follow-up questions or comments?

That's the end then.

Thank you.

Thank you so much.

All right. Thank you, Jackie. All right. And I'd like to invite Jeb Binns, President of the Highline Education Association, to the podium to share a few remarks. Welcome, Jeb. Good to see you.

Good evening. I decided to edit the heck out of my speech because it's 7 o'clock. So I'll spare you some time. So good day, President Van, Superintendent, and members of the board. So question for you. Where were you 46 years ago on Monday? I was on a hike on the Pacific Coast, and I was sure I heard a bang.

If you're unsure what I was talking about, I was seven years old, and that bang was Mount Saint Helens. So why do I bring this up besides being timely? It's because big, rumbley things happen and the world goes on. Now we all don't get to be the source of those rumbley things all the time, but we need to be the force that helps keep the world going on.

Admittedly, it is fun sometimes to be the rumbley source. I appreciate the hard work of the folks who show up and do the hard work for our kids every day. The task and the responsibility is great. I'm also happy to be in the presence of royalty this evening. Anne Hickey, the ESA of the Year, is in the house. And I also want to say happy SLP month.

And finally, because my incoming member of my executive board told me to say this, and I said I would, May 31 at 8:00 AM is the Girls on the Run 5K. It's happening in Renton. So time to put on your shoes and do some running. I remember running that event with my daughter, Abby, when she was a student at Gregory Heights. It was her first.

Oh, I can't say only. She actually ran 5K again. It was one of-- it was her first for many, many, many years of 5K. Right. Thanks.

Very good. Thank you, Jeb. That concludes my comments this evening. Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Duran. With that, we're going to move to our Directors' reports. We're going to start with Director Holien.

Thank you, President Van. Pacific Middle School nurse Roberta Bilek was named Highland's first Daisy award recipient. Highline is the first district in Washington State, and one of the first 10 districts nationwide, to launch the Daisy award for school nurses. 20 Highline nurses were recognized as Daisy nominees this year. The Daisy award is an international program that recognizes nurses for compassionate care and service. That is all.

Thank you so much. Director Tidholm.

Evening, folks. So earlier this month, White Center Heights participated in the school's first practice of Vietnamese spelling bee. 70 students participated. White Center Heights is one of our dual-language schools where students build skills in English, Vietnamese. We also have Somali. The event included a Jeopardy! style game where the students, family, staff, and the community, guest teachers, families and PTA partners and community members all came to support the event.

I also had the pleasure of attending the Lee Courageous Leaders conference last week in Atlanta. It's an organization that really supports leaders across education nationwide. And that's charter schools as well as public schools, as well as partners that support not only the students, but the educators and leadership. So it was like a nice mix of people from all different areas, all different walks of life, all different positions.

And we really got to have some good conversations. One of the main things people are talking about is obviously the money, budgets. Everybody's struggling everywhere. And how do we continue to support and show up for our communities and our families and the babies with what we have? And how can we also advocate for paramount duty to be fulfilled to fully fund education so that we're not trying to do all the things with limited funds?

But also big conversation with charter schools versus just public school and fighting for the scraps. I know there's this conversation about charter schools are taking all the money. And my personal, unpopular opinion, if education was fully funded, that would not be an issue. Conversations around literacy, what that looks like in the different areas, how we can really get these babies up to par.

Talking about what does that look like? Ownership, accountability for the families, as well as the classroom level, district level, what people are doing that's working, what they've tried that's not working. Cell phone bans is a huge conversation everywhere. My kids love me for it, but I would love to see them gone. Some districts are doing it and it's working great. Some people are trying to figure it out. But just getting some information about what that's looking like and what's working for other people as well as inclusion, obviously.

Really proud to say that compared to a lot of places across the nation, we are pretty far ahead of the curve as far as the inclusion goes. But hearing what's going well for people, what we could do better and also giving people ideas for what they could do. [CLEAR THROAT] Excuse me. One of our adventures that we went on during the conference was also visiting the Civil Rights Museum, which was a real humble reminder.

I mean, everybody's familiar. Well, not everybody, forgive me. A lot of people are familiar with *Brown vs The Board of Education*, but also learning about the different local municipalities and state-level policy that prevented people of color from attending schools from K-12 as well as college. And just seeing where we are today, compared to my mother's generation, is pretty sad and also impressive. But yeah, really good experience. Happy to have experienced that and bring back the information that I learned.

Thank you, Director Tidholm. Director Espinoza.

OK. So Big Picture students are ending the year with a lot to celebrate. Two students were acknowledged for their writing through the Writers in the Schools program. Four students earned paid internships. And many students explored other pathways, including an overnight visit to Central Washington University. And then seniors are preparing for their thesis panels and graduation. And this is a proud moment for the Big Picture community.

I was also at Chinook earlier this week, where I spent time at a science-- in a science class and saw students really grapple with complicated vocabulary words and apply it to their thinking process and to their accountable talk. I learned that sort of a way of dialoguing in small groups and making sense of their learning. So it was really helpful. And I think that's it.

Thank you so much for that. And it's my turn. Fred's not here. I just want to start by thanking the Schools Foundation for putting on another great Gold Star breakfast. It was a great, meaningful event that brought our community together and raised important funds to continue supporting our students and educators. So thank you for the foundation for creating that space to celebrate excellence and investing in our future of our schools.

We're able to recognize so many staff members that made a difference, and Fred was able to present the Living the Promise Pins for all the winners that day. You know, one of the presentations there that night was our Rookie of the Year. She was recognized.

Her name is Bethesda Ortiz-Gonzalez. She's a Hilltop Elementary Special Ed Teacher. As an English language learner herself. Bethesda-- passion for teaching began early as she helped her father learn English at home. So today she creates an inclusive, relationship-driven classroom where students feel supported, valued, and a true sense of belonging. So we have a quick video that we'd like to show you.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- I am Betsaida Ortiz-Gonzalez. I work at Hilltop Elementary School and I'm a fourth-fifth grade case manager. When I was in school, I was a [? yellow ?] learner. I was segregated a lot from the classroom. And then in second grade, a teacher let me into her classroom and she taught me so much English. I loved her classroom and the way that she taught.

It wasn't to exclude me, but rather create that inclusive environment that we see and that I get to be part of at this school. Seeing students as individuals and meeting them at their needs, and allowing them to have a voice within their learning and exploring that, it allows them to blossom. It might be the smallest moment, the smallest a-ha that we can think of. But for them, it's the biggest thing because at that time they achieved that. They did it. And that's exciting for me to see.

I am proud for what Highline stands for in their promise. I've never been exposed to a school that has this model of inclusivity. And being able to pop into any classroom and say, I see you and I can support you, I feel very proud of where my students are at. They are a bundle of joy. They make me think about life in a different way. It's amazing.

[END PLAYBACK]

That's great. Thank you so much. And that concludes our Directors' reports. As we move into our scheduled communications hearing here, on behalf of the board, we sincerely appreciate you taking the time to join us and sharing your thoughts this evening. You'll notice that our norms and guidelines are displayed on your screens for your reference.

Please remember that you're addressing the board. There may be students present or who are watching and are listening carefully to what you're saying. Please note while the board is unable to respond directly to your testimony, we value your input. So thanks again for being here and speaking with us.

Our speaker this evening is Katie Paulson.

Good evening, Dr. Duran and board members. My name is Katie Paulson, and I'm a mom of North Hill students. I am confident in speaking on behalf of North Hill students, staff, and families in expressing our sincerest gratitude for keeping-- for your decision to keep our leaders, Ms. Jones and Ms. O'Leary at North Hill. Thank you for truly listening to us and taking our concerns to heart.

Your decision has kept our North Hill family whole. Most importantly, thank you for honoring and validating our students' voices. Our children stepped up and spoke out for what they believed was right. Because you chose to listen, they didn't just witness leadership. They learned a lifelong lesson that their voices matter and can impact their community. Thank you for your leadership and for protecting our school stability. I yield the rest of my time to Hazel Bacillus.

Good evening, Dr. Duran. My name is Hazel and I'm a fourth grade student at North Hill Elementary. I'm here to present a poster that all of North Hill signed. And I'm also here to say thank you, Dr. Duran for letting Ms. Jones and Ms. O'Leary stay. The community, the students, parents and staff appreciate it. And a special thanks to Katie Paulson. She led the protesters that helped Ms. Jones and Ms. O'Leary stay. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Jessica Walsh.

Hi, I'm Jessica Walsh. I'm from Des Moines. I live in Des Moines. My son is a first grader at Des Moines Elementary, and I'm an SLP at Des Moines Elementary. I have been in SLP and Highline for 10 years. And I'm here tonight with many of my SLP friends to celebrate May, which is our National Speech Language Hearing month.

I'd like to share about how SLPs and Highline are supporting our district's priority of expanding inclusionary practices at IEP meetings. Parents often tell us that communication is their top priority for their children, and communication disabilities are often the main barrier between our students and the curriculum. This is where our SLPs really shine.

Here are some examples of the essential work that SLPs are doing around the district to make the dream of inclusion a reality. We are increasing visibility and understanding of alternative communication styles like AAC use and modeling safe and neurodiversity-affirming practices. We lead whole class AAC lessons. We collaborate with teachers throughout the year to plan, supports and modify the curriculum.

We pre-teach and reinforce vocabulary in all content areas. We create vocabulary boards for science units. We provide push-in services during specialists like art and music and library. We are constantly updating our AAC devices so that our students have the vocabulary they need in all their content areas. One SLP and teacher wrote a grant to obtain a whole class set of AAC. We are out here doing the work. Thank you SLPs.

Thank you very much. Malia [INAUDIBLE]

Good evening, Superintendent Duran and the members of the board. My name is Malia [INAUDIBLE] and I am a student at CHOICE Academy. I am speaking on behalf of our growing group of concerned community members. We want to begin by expressing our sincere gratitude for the district's decision to keep the leadership team at North Hill Elementary. By listening to our families and reversing the planned reassignments, you chose stability for our students and respected the culture of excellence our educators have built.

But this experience taught us that school leadership isn't just about administrative move on the board, it is about the heartbeat of the community. When the heart is moved without real consultation, the entire school body suffers. We are glad that this time you chose to listen. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Denise Perman?

My name is Denise Perman. I have been a speech language pathologist in Highline for the past 15 years. I am one of two SLP department designees. May is National Speech Language Hearing month. It is a month dedicated to raising awareness about communication disorders and celebrating the work of audiologists and speech language pathologists.

I thought this would be a great opportunity to share with you the work of SLPs in Highline. The Highline SLP department consists of 52 SLPs. We work with over 2,000 students in Highline with communication disabilities. That's almost 12% of Highline students. These students range in age from 3 to 22 years old, and are served within every building and educational program that Highline has.

But what exactly does a school-based SLP do? In general, school based SLPs help students learn to communicate effectively so they can succeed academically and socially at school. We work with students who have disabilities with speech, language, social communication, fluency, and more. Our roles are vast.

We are evaluators working to identify students with communication disorders and determine need for special education services. We are therapists who provide neurodiversity-affirming, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate interventions to help students improve skills needed for classroom learning. We are case managers and team members, collaborating with teachers, OTs, PTs and families in order to develop and implement IEPs with individualized goals and accommodations to best meet the needs of our students.

We are technology experts working to support augmentative and alternative communication by modeling without expectation, programming devices, training staff and families, and helping to integrate AAC into classroom routines, academics, and social activities in order to foster authentic communication. I'd like to conclude by thanking my fellow Highline SLPs for all the amazing work they do every day to ensure each student has a voice and is able to participate to the fullest extent possible in their education. Thank you.

Thank you. Jana Joof?

Good evening. My name is Jana Joof. And I am a fifth grader at North Hill Elementary. Though we got part of what we were fighting for, our community still wants to address what happens next. While we are celebrating a win for my school today, this process showed a deep need for district-wide change.

Over the past two weeks, we served as a safe bridge for educators who are too afraid of retaliation to speak for themselves. Living our promise must include a promise of safety for the people who teach Highline's children. Moving forward, we are asking the board for three things. First, transparency. Make community impact studies a standard part of any leadership shift.

Second, protection. Formalize stronger whistleblower protections for staff, and ensure no school leader feels forced into a move that robs them of stability or autonomy. Third, follow through. Give our neighbors at Des Moines Elementary a clear, long-term plan that prioritizes their stability just as much as ours. We have seen what happens when the district and the community work in opposition. We much prefer the results when we work together. Let's make listening the new standard for Highline. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Linda Shin.

Hello, board members. I hope you and your families are happy and healthy. Happy National Speech Language Hearing month. My name is Linda and I'm a speech language pathologist at Highline High School and RTP, and also a parent of a Highline graduate.

Communication is not just an academic skill, it is the foundation for learning, relationship-building, self-advocacy, and future success. When a student cannot communicate effectively, every part of their education is impacted. Families often seek help for communication concerns first before any other developmental worry. As speech language pathologists, our role within the ESA team is uniquely complex.

We don't only provide direct therapy, we conduct comprehensive evaluations to determine eligibility, write IEP goals, manage compliance, collaborate with families and staff, and serve as case managers. No other ESA role carries both evaluation and direct treatment responsibilities in the same way. And we don't do all of this-- and we do all of this with an average caseload of 44 students, which is higher than our OT and PT colleagues in this district.

Behind that number are 44 individual schedules, progress reports, parent communications, treatment plans, and children who deserve meaningful, individualized support. We entered this profession because communication changes lives, but high caseloads make it increasingly difficult to provide the level of service our students and families truly deserve.

I invite the board to recognize both the importance and the complexity of what speech language pathologists do, and to consider how workload and staffing decisions directly impact student outcomes. When we support communication, we support every student's ability to learn, connect and thrive. Thank you for listening.

Thank you. Bianca McCluskey.

Hi. My name is Bianca McCluskey. This is my ninth year as an SLP in the district. This year alone, at one point or another, I've had 66 different students on my caseload, even though our average is 44. Throughout my career, I've served students in preschool all the way up to high school, including students in the Open Doors program, which you'll be discussing in the motions later on tonight.

I'm here to talk about inclusion and highlight just some of the things that SLPs do to support it that maybe not everyone was aware of. Inclusion is important because it improves academic achievement, belonging, and social emotional growth, preparation for the real world, and promotes a stronger school culture. SLPs are integral in supporting inclusion because we target communication skills that underlie academic and social success-- sorry. That underlie the essential skills for participating meaningfully in inclusive classrooms.

With effective communication skills and/or modifications and accommodations, students can access curriculum, engage with peers, and demonstrate their knowledge, making SLPs critical to inclusive participation for students and staff. Here are some things we've done recently in support of our students. Had in-depth conversations with the student to create a plan to help him regulate when he's feeling overwhelmed. Written a communication evaluation for insurance in order to help a family obtain a communication device with Eyegaze accessibility for their home.

Collaborated with school counselors to create a safe space for an autistic student to ask questions about their diagnosis and process what it means to be neurodivergent in a majority neurotypical school and world. We have standing meetings with handfuls of teachers, sometimes weekly, sometimes monthly to problem-solve barriers for students and create modified materials so everyone can access and participate in class. We team with OTs and PTs to create. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Joanna Arroyo.

Hi, my name is Joanna and I have three kids in the Highland. [SPEAKING SPANISH]

So good evening. My name is Joanna Arroyo. And today I'm here alongside other parents whose children attend Highline Public schools. Our children have disabilities and special needs. Some have an IEP, and others have 504 plans. Some of our children are also here with us today because many of them cannot express their needs with words, but they still have a voice. And many times those voices are us, their parents.

As a mother of two children with autism, Brianna and Scott, today I feel the need not only to express gratitude, but also to share the concerns that many families experience within special education. We also recognize that the district is working towards a more inclusive special education system for students with disabilities. However, we believe that inclusion cannot remain only in policy or written documents.

For it to truly work, it needs real support, ongoing training, and adequate resources for teachers and staff. It is also very important that teachers and staff work in special education, receive continuous and proper training to correctly implement IEPs and 504 plans. Many of our children are nonverbal or have difficulty recognizing danger. Because of this, one of the greatest concerns is the safety of students with special needs within schools, and how the district can continue strengthening and supporting. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Appreciate it. And just for the record, for our audience this evening, per our board policy, we allow-- four minutes are given for interpretation. So next up is Soledad Velasco.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

Good evening and thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this meeting. My name is Soledad Velasco, and I am the mother of two students in the Highland public school district. My daughter is a student at Hazel Valley Elementary School. And my daughter, Paulette, is a former Hazel Valley student and now is in sixth grade at Cascade Middle School.

Paulette has an IEP, and she is the reason that I am here today to share my concern. Please do not misunderstand me. I am very grateful to the Highland district for trying to provide a fair education to our neurodivergent children with IEPs or 504 plans. As a mother of two who already experienced the transition from elementary school to middle school, I can say that it was extremely difficult for my daughter.

And as a mom, I often felt powerless and unable to advocate for the way I want to. I would like to wish this experience for the families to not become the same. My experience at Hazel Valley was very positive. Even through there were challenges, I truly felt that the staff made a real effort to support my daughter and do their job with care.

I would love to see the inclusion work being done, accessibility continue to grow and replicate in other inclusive school. This school year, however, I have heard comments at Paulette's school that have broken my heart, such as we cannot help. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Alma Chavez.

Good evening. My name is Alma Chavez. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my children, Joab and Sarah. I want to first start by acknowledging the wonderful things happening at Hazel Valley Elementary. I have personally seen staff work hard to create spaces where children with disabilities feel welcome, valued and included alongside their peers.

As a parent, those moments mean everything. But along with gratitude, many families also carry real concerns. One of the biggest concerns is safety. For many students in special education, especially non-verbal autistic children, adequate support staff is not optional. It is essential. When there are not enough paraeducators or one-on-one supports available, it increases the risk of elopement.

For children who may not be able to communicate their name, needs or danger awareness, that can become a life-threatening situation within seconds. For families like mine, one moment of understaffing can mean a child walking out of a classroom unnoticed. That fear is something many special education parents carry every single day.

National research by the Washington Autism Alliance and Advocacy has shown that wandering and elopement are common among autistic children, especially those who are nonverbal. When discussing funding cuts to special education, I ask you to remember we are not simply talking about budgets or staffing numbers. We are talking about the safety, dignity, and protection of one of the most vulnerable population, vulnerable children.

When making these decisions, I believe it is imperative that we ask, how can we ensure enough paraeducators support staff are available to create staff learning environments-- safe learning environments for all students? As the mother of two non-verbal autistic children, this issue is deeply personal to me. My children may not always be able to speak for themselves.

Thank you very much. Giovanna Castro.

[SPEAKING SPANISH]

You have time.

I was like 34 minutes, what? OK. Good evening. My name is Giovanna Castro, and I am the mother of a student at Hazel Valley Elementary who has autism and receives services under IEP. One of my biggest concerns as a mother is my daughter's safety. For families with children who have special needs, it is very important to have good communication between the school and the parent, especially when an incident, accident or important situation occurs.

We need to be informed quickly and clearly so we can support our child-- our children in the best way possible. I am also concerned about access to information for families who do not speak English fluently. Spanish is my first language, and many important documents, such as IEPs and 504 plans are not always translated properly. This can cause many families to feel confused or unable to fully understand the resource and decisions related to their children's education.

Every parent deserves clear access to information in their own language, and deserves to feel included in important decisions about their children's future. When families are informed and included, children receive strong support both at school and at home. Today, I am here because I am the voice of my daughter. And she has an IEP where her rights must be respected. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Maria Peña?

Good evening. My name is Maria Peña, and I'm the teacher librarian at Hazel Valley Elementary. As an inclusive-- as an inclusion school, we have worked intentionally to ensure that every student feels valued, seen and heard. In my role as librarian, I have witnessed many meaningful moments that reflect the power of inclusive education. Our students, who now learn alongside their peers, have access to opportunities that enrich their learning and overall school experience.

I've seen some of our most impacted students accomplish things that once-- that were once significant challenges for them, such as checking out books independently, coding on iPads, using Ozobots, and learning and playing alongside their classmates with confidence and joy. Equally important is what I've seen, what I have witnessed from students without disabilities.

I've seen remarkable examples of empathy, kindness, support, and genuine friendship. Students know their classmates' likes and dislikes, model and assist with classroom tasks, and advocate for one another in thoughtful ways. This growth is happening because of the dedication of our staff as we continue to learn together and examine practices that may unintentionally create barriers for students with disabilities.

I would also like to acknowledge some of the challenges we continue to face. Most importantly, the lack of adequate support for students who need it most. Our paraeducators play a critical role in the success of inclusion. Without sufficient staffing and support, our most marginalized students are disproportionately impacted.

When a paraeducator is absent, the amount of coordination required to restructure schedules and services for the day create significant disruption, beginning with the student and extending to teachers, specialists and administrations. If we are committed to implementing inclusion for-- excuse me, for a fair and meaningful and adequate way, increased support is essential.

I would also like to recognize the work of the dedicated group of mothers whom you've heard from tonight. These incredible mothers meet monthly to learn alongside one another, provide support each other, and partner with staff as we continue learning about disability inclusion.

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. And that concludes our scheduled communications this evening. Thank you so much for coming out and speaking to us-- with us. That moves us to our consent agenda. Any questions or comments? OK, I'm seeing none. Can I please have a motion?

I move-- do I need a roll call?

No. What do you move to?

I would like to motion to move the consent agenda.

I'll second.

All those in favor?

Aye.

Aye.

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed? OK, I'm seeing none. Thank you. OK. A few action items this evening. 8.1, this is motion to approve Board Resolution 08-26, requesting that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction approve three waiver days for the purpose of student-led and family-teacher conferences. Any questions or comments?

Seeing none. Can I please have a motion?

I move the Highline School Board approve the resolution 08-26 for three-year waiver request from the 180-day school year requirements for three days from 2026 to 2027 and 2028 to-- oh, sorry. 2027 to 2028 and 2028 to 2029 school years for the purpose of student-led and family-teacher conferences.

Thank you. Can I please have a second?

I will second that.

Roll call, please.

Director Tidholm?

Yea.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

Director Holien?

Yea.

President Van.

Yea.

This motion passes four to none.

Thank you very much. 8.2, this is motion to approve the First Amendment to the ILA 0126, the interlocal agreement for partnership and cooperation between Highline Public Schools and the Port of Seattle. Any questions or comments?

I did have a question. So this mentions. financial funding. And what other types of support partnerships do we get from the Port of Seattle? It seems like a really important partner to have.

Yes.

In our region.

Yes, absolutely. So the Port of Seattle has been a big supporter of Maritime High School since its inception. And so some of the specific kinds of supports they provide include, probably most prominently, connecting students with internship opportunities, job shadowing opportunities, guest speakers, and a full-- and really having access to that full range of career development opportunities that the Port offers.

So that's one big piece of what they do, is direct contact with getting kids involved with those opportunities and having ongoing communication about that. One of the other major points of partnership is helping the Maritime High School team think about and understand what the career opportunities can be, and how that world is evolving. So I would say those are the two main areas of partnership that are beyond what you see with the financial contribution.

Thank you so much for that, Bernard. Any other questions, directors? I see none. Can I please have a motion?

I move the Highline School Board approve the First Amendment to ILA 01-26 for partnership and cooperation between Highline Public Schools and the Port of Seattle. May I have a second?

Can he please have a second?

I'll second.

Roll call please.

- Director Holien?

Yea.

Director Tidholm?

Yea.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

President Van?

Yea.

This motion passes four to none.

Thank you very much. 8.3, this is motion to approve purchase order increase for First Students, Inc. Contract addendum for the '25-'26 school year. Any questions or insert comments on this? I hear and see none, can I please have a motion?

I move the Highline School Board approve the purchase order increase of \$263,259.79 with First Student, Inc. for the non-renewable contract addendum, which supported prior urgent staffing needs. May I have a second?

I'll second.

Roll call, please.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

Director Tidholm?

Yea.

Director Holien?

Yea.

President Van?

Yea.

This motion passes four to none.

Thank you very much. And that concludes our action items. We're going to move to seven intro items. The first one, we do have a presentation. 10.1, motion to approve resolution number 09-26. This is the surplus of district properties adjacent to Mar Vista Elementary School. Parcel numbers 6113400100 and 6113400110 and 6113400105 and-- this is the last one-- 6113400115. With that, Jackie.

Good evening again. This action is will allow us to surplus four parcels that are adjacent to the Mar Vista Elementary School. It's actually on Marine View Drive, so it's on the back, behind Mar Vista Elementary. We are required, when land is no longer needed for school purposes, to surplus it first. And then that allows us to move forward and do an appraisal of the properties, of the four parcels, and then decide if we want to move forward with a possible sale of those properties.

If we were to do that, all sale of properties go directly into the Capital Projects fund. So it does not go into our general fund. It goes into the capital fund and has to be used for capital needs in the district. I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you so much.

How do we determine that the district has no use for those parcels?

They're not a usable size for the district. So it's-- when you look at them, it's almost four residential parcels that are on the very end of that Mar Vista property. So it's not something that we would be able to develop for school needs on that site.

OK.

Thank you very much. Any directors, any other follow-up questions for Jackie? If not, we still have a couple of weeks if there's any questions, send Dr. Duran and Jackie an email.

Thank you.

Thank you very much. 10.2, motion to approve Graduation Alliance Open Doors and the ALE programs. Questions or comments? 10.3, this is motion to approve Highland College Open Doors Re-engagement program. Any questions or comments on this? Hearing, seeing none.

10.4. This is motion to approve the Career Link South Seattle College Open Doors Re-engagement program. Questions or comments? Hearing and seeing none. 10.5, motion to approve Southwest Youth and Family Services Open Doors program. Any questions or comments? Hearing, seeing none.

So 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5. Just want to reiterate that this is just a pass-through funding to the colleges to support their programs. 10.6, this is motion to approve the acceptance of the annual review scores for the Asset Preservation program. Questions or comments?

Seeing none. And our last intro item is 10.7. This is motion to approve the Pacific Middle School replacement project. Approval of contractor Skanska, change order number 5. Purchase order number, CP-240033. Any questions or comments on this? Hearing and seeing none. And that concludes our intro items.

Number 11 here calls for additions to the upcoming consent agenda. But before we get to any motions, I just want to-- from what happened last time, I just want to make sure it's clear. Do any directors have any suggestions for agenda items that should be moved to consent? We can just speak freely. OK, hearing, seeing none.

Well, that concludes it. Can I please have a motion to adjourn?

Oh, motion to adjourn. May I have a second?

I'll second.

All those in favor?

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed? Hearing, seeing none. Thank you very much. Everybody have a great evening.