SHAW: For the benefit of the record, I will now call to order this regular meeting of the Orange County Board of Education. Let the record reflect it is 2:35 PM. Darou, please call the roll.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Present.

SHAW: Do we have item to approve the agenda for the regular meeting of September 2nd?

BARKE: So moved.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: Okay. All in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: The minutes from August 5th, do we have a motion?

BARKE: So moved.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: All in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: We will now move to closed session. Item number one interdistrict appeal. We have several closed session interdistrict appeal to hear today. So, we will start with number one.

[The Orange County Board of Education goes into closed session and returns.]

SHAW: Everybody, I think we're ready to get started. I'm not sure if our invocation person is here. Is Reverend Ray Jordan here? No? Okay. Well, we'll just start our meeting. It's now 5:03.

WILLIAMS: Can I make some recommendations?

SHAW: Yes, you may.

WILLIAMS: May I ask our wonderful new appointed board liaison, if she'll come up and lead us in a opening prayer?

SHAW: All right, Nikki.

SPARKS: No pressure.

SHAW: You're getting thrown into the deep end.

BAINUM-RAMIREZ: I've never led that before.

WILLIAMS: You don't have to have any experience. It's all about your faith. It's coming from your heart. If you feel uncomfortable, please pull it.

BAINUM-RAMIREZ: Dennis is leading prayer on Sunday.

SPARKS: She can do the Pledge of Allegiance.

BARKE: We're not going to push you to do something you're not comfortable with. I know what that's like. No, don't push her. Is there somebody that would love to do the invocation?

WILLIAMS: Linda Cone is the next person.

SHAW: All right, Linda. We have Linda.

BARKE: There's Ron.

LINDA: Here or there or where?

VALDES: Anywhere you like.

WILLIAMS: Anywhere you like. So just for the public, so they understand that the invocations of standing a protocol that we follow.

BARKE: Your mic.

WILLIAMS: Just for the public and for the record, the invocation has been fought from a legal perspective and we have been sued by it and we successfully won and our policy is very

consistent with constitutional guarantees and it's all voluntary. So, anybody who has spoken in the past, anybody who speaks in the future, you're allowed to sign up. Talk to Darou and she will get you officially on the calendar. But we so thank you, Linda, for just leading us in prayer and just as this is up there in God we trust.

LINDA: Yes. Dear Lord, one of the things that I love coming into this room is what is behind the board. In God, we trust and we do trust in you. We daily put our hope, our trust in you that you will be with us. That is your promise to us. Lord, we come to you humbly imploring for your protection and your hand upon us. Once again, I've said this before, but I'm going to repeat what I've often said. These are your children. We are the stewards that you have appointed to watch care over them. It is our earnest hope and prayer that we do the very best that we can with your strength and your courage and your guidance to be good stewards over your precious children. So please, Lord, guide and direct all of us in this room in our specific roles and in our daily lives to constantly be on guard, to do what you wish us to do for your children. Tonight, specifically guide and direct us, be with the board as they deliberate, be with all of the speakers as they bring their cases forward. Keep your hand on us, Lord. Protect us here in Orange County. Protect our nation. In God, in you Lord, we trust. In Jesus' name, amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

SHAW: Amen. Thank you, Linda. So, we did have some students I think that'll lead us right? Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes. I'm not sure if they're here. I know somebody had reached out to me. Are there a couple of students here from Santa Ana that were going to speak publicly that were planning on doing the pledge? Yes, they're there. Oh, please come up.

SHAW: There they are.

BARKE: Yes, yes. Please come up.

SPARKS: Hiding in the back.

BARKE: Yeah, come right up here. So just ask everyone if they'd like to stand up and put their hand over their heart or start.

ELENY: If everyone could please stand, put their right hand over their heart.

AUDIENCE: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

ELENY: Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you so much.

SHAW: Fabulous. All right. Well, thank you. So, I know we have some introductions.

CHASTAIN: We do. I will start with the students that we have here from Beckman High School. We have Ethan Harrington, Melanie. How do you say your last name? Araleolian, Ava Ansari, and Serena Chan are here from Beckman. And we also have some staff changes and new staff introductions from Dr. Bean.

BEAN: All right. It is my pleasure to introduce to you a couple of individuals and the new roles that they will play. As you know, for the next four years in this new term, we had an opportunity to restructure our organization given the retirement of Renee, and we realized that Renee is going to be hard to fill and replace. So, we did a lot of analysis on restructuring the organization at all levels actually. So, at the very highest level on cabinet, I would like to introduce to you two individuals. If you think about two pillars, we're going to be focusing our 5-3-1 on two pillars and that's educational excellence and operational excellence. Leading the educational excellence side is our new deputy superintendent of educational excellence and that's Dr. Sandra Lee, if you could stand up to Dr. Lee. Now she's going to lead the efforts to strengthen instructional systems, advance high-quality educational services and support our districts, especially in the area of literacy. With more than two decades of experience in public education, Dr. Lee has served as a teacher, principal, district administrator, educational consultant, adjunct professor, and most recently she was our associate superintendent. Throughout her career, she has led improvement efforts in literacy, curriculum and instruction, assessment, professional learning and organizational effectiveness with the focus on translating research and evidence into meaningful improvements for students and educators. She earned her doctorate degree in education in literacy from Cal State Fullerton and her leadership is grounded in investing in people, strengthening instructional practice and creating the conditions for every student and educator to thrive. Congratulations, Dr. Lee.

And then on the operational excellence side, we have hired Misty Key. If you could stand up Misty. Misty Key will be our deputy superintendent of business operations and she brings more than 24 years of experience in public education and school finance with leadership experience at two different county offices. For the past five years, she has served as deputy superintendent of fiscal and administrative services. In the role that she's playing now, she did for five years. Throughout her career, Misty has provided leadership across fiscal services, human resources, technology, facilities, governance and fiscal oversight and support for school districts and charter schools. She is also an active statewide contributor as a presenter, consultant and mentor to school business leaders. Misty holds an MBA in finance from Cal Lutheran University, a bachelor's degree in business administration from Cal State University Stanislaus, and a certificate in fiduciary management. I don't even know what that means, but that sounds awesome. A certificate in fiduciary management from Cal State University in Fullerton. Welcome Misty.

SHAW: I actually have an introduction to make. Oh, go ahead, Jorge.

VALDES: I have a question for Dr. Bean.

BEAN: Yes, sir.

VALDES: I know Aracely Chastain for a very long time as the head of our charter schools unit, but you did not introduce her in her new role.

BEAN: Did we introduce her last time?

VALDES: No.

BEAN: No. Okay. Well, we're going to introduce Aracely. You guys know she used to be the executive director of our charter unit, and she was just recently promoted as our assistant superintendent over governance, charter unit and child reimbursement program. She now holds three large units and that is why it's very well deserved that she gets this promotion assistant supervisor.

BARKE: Congratulations.

VALDES: Congratulations, Aracely.

BARKE: So, it appears, from what I can tell, that it took three people to replace Renee.

WILLIAMS: At least. And just for the record, is Aracely our ex-official secretary, recording secretary?

BEAN: Yes, she is.

WILLIAMS: So, the same responsibilities that Renee has.

BEAN: Yup.

WILLIAMS: Okay. And we're going to miss you, Renee.

BEAN: Oh, by the way, Renee has a retirement party tomorrow. We're hoping that you got your invitation. You'll be joining us. You'll be here at the board meeting, or I'm sorry, board room. What's the time you guys two o'clock?

BARKE: 2:30.

BEAN: 2:30? Yes, 2:30. So love for you guys to come.

BARKE: Yep. I plan to be here.

BEAN: All right.

SHAW: Fabulous. And last but not least, I have an introduction. Nikki, why don't you stand up and wave at everybody? Nikki Bainum-Ramirez. Nikki's our new liaison for the board. She was born and raised in Orange County, graduate of Dana Hills High School. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science from Baylor University. And following graduation, Nikki moved to Washington DC where she gained experience in public service and public policy through roles with the US House of Representatives and the Consumer Technology Association.

She's pursuing a master's degree in public administration from Wake Forest University. I thought you finished.

BAINUM-RAMIREZ: It's in a year.

SHAW: In a year. Oh, sorry. Nikki's excited to bring her experience back home and serve Orange County Board of Education and our community. So welcome to Nikki. All right. So, the more things change, the more they stay the same. No, the more they. Something like that. We're always moving. So, welcome everybody and congratulations on your new roles. Are you Reverend Jordan?

REVEREND JORDAN: I am.

SHAW: Oh, okay. We just did an invocation, but you came all the way down here. Let's do it again. Reverend Jordan. All right.

REVEREND JORDAN: Forgive me. I was told to be here at 5:15, so I apologize.

WILLIAMS: [several inaudible words]

REVEREND JORDAN: But I was tardy. I used to be a middle school teacher, so I know all about being tardy, so forgive me. Give me a demerit. Will you please join me again in a moment of centering in a prayer? I'll first begin by saying that my name is Reverend Ray Jordan, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the senior pastor of the Corona Del Mar Community Church. Right down in beautiful Corona Del Mar, Newport Beach. Sundays at 10:00 AM. You're welcome. Pray with me, please. Good and gracious God, as we gather ourselves into this place and at this time, we seek what only you can give. Oh God, we seek wisdom to make the best decisions for all students, staff and faculty. We seek courage to stand for what is right, even when it is neither politically or personally beneficial. We seek boldness that will enable us to speak truth to power regardless of the cost. God, we seek generosity of heart that we might long to give before we take. We seek compassion and understanding to accept each one despite our differences. And we seek the strength to run this race with honesty, integrity, and with grace. Take now our gifts and abilities. Take, oh God, our talents and our skills and use them for the advantage of all, for the uplifting of all, for the blessing of all. Oh God, finally we pray, please be patient with our ignorance and have mercy on our arrogance. By the power of Christ and in your many names, we pray. Ashe selah shalom, may it be so. Amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

SHAW: Thank you. All right. Well, we are going to move into public comments. I know we have quite a number of them, so I think what we're going to do is do two minutes per public comment and we're going to try our new announcement we've been working on. So, let's see how this works.

AUDIO RECORDING: Before we begin public comment, we would like to remind everyone that the Orange County Board of Education values public participation and welcomes public comments. Public comment is an essential component of open government and provides the

board with the opportunity to hear diversity viewpoints on matters within its authority. The board will conduct today's meeting in accordance with Board Bylaw 9323 meeting conduct and the Orange County Board of Education civility policy, both of which are intended to ensure that the public's right to participate is balanced with the board's obligation to conduct its business in an orderly, respectful and efficient manner. Accordingly, we ask that everyone observe the following guidelines. Please direct your comments to the board as a whole. Comments on agenda items should relate to the agenda item under consideration. General public comments should address matters that are within the jurisdiction of the Orange County Board of Education.

Public comment is an opportunity for the board to receive input from the public. It is not intended to be a dialogue or debate between speakers, board members or staff. Each speaker will be allotted the time established by board rules. Please conclude your remarks when your time is expired so that all individuals who wish to speak have equal opportunity to do so. Consistent with the board's civility policy, we ask all participants to treat one another with courtesy, dignity and respect, even when expressing strongly different opinions. Pursuant to Board Bylaw 9323, the board may enforce reasonable rules governing the conduct to preserve order and ensure that the business of the board may proceed. Conduct that materially disrupts the meeting or prevents the orderly transaction of business may result in appropriate action as authorized by law and board policy. Members of the audience are also asked to refrain from interrupting speakers, engaging in demonstrations or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of the meeting so that every participant has an opportunity to be heard. The Orange County Board of Education is committed to conducting its meetings in a manner that is open, respectful and consistent with the Brown Act, First Amendment, Board Bylaw 9323, and the board's civility policy. Thank you for your cooperation. We will now begin public comment.

VALDES: Okay, President Shaw, we have 19 comments. You have allotted two minutes each. The first one is Rudi Krause and on deck is Maksim Egorov.

RUDI: Hi, I'm within the jurisdiction of the board because I'm talking about your concepts and your ideas that you teach to your students, multiculturalism and diversity and any variation thereof. Now you can do like the Newport Mesa Board of Education and you can say, "We don't have that problem with diversity and multiculturalism. You're not allowed to speak." But that's a lie because I look on their paperwork and they mention multiculturalism and diversity and synonyms. So, I have them in the rap trap, rap trap, rap trap, play it back, got you in the rap trap, lying. So, we have to discuss this multiculturalism diversity tolerance problem that you have tolerance for cultures that are not compatible with the United States and the US values, morals and standards. And we're going to talk about Islam again. And if you see it's blowing up all over the internet, it's nine out of 10 conversations. I don't know what you watch on CNN, but these are the top independent journalists in the world that are bringing these reports and they're talking about the Muslims, the Rupert Lowe rape gang report. Every day, every hour, eight girls raped in the UK, 200 a day, 73,000 a year. That's not compatible with the United States because we are not a culture of rape. Thank you.

VALDES: Okay. Next up is Markim Esparoza and Katherine.

MAKSIM: Good evening president and trustees. My name is Maksim Egorov. I'm an Irvine resident and proud father of two children who attend public charter school here in Orange

County. Today, I'm speaking only on behalf of myself and my family. My family choose a charter school because we believe it provides unique educational experience that works well for our children. I watched the discussion about charter school, which took place during last OCBE board meeting. And honestly, I was surprised and disappointed by some of the comments I heard about charter schools. I live in Irvine. My family owns property in Irvine and elsewhere in the state of California. We pay taxes just like other families and our children attend public charter school. Charter school parents are residents, taxpayers, and members of our diverse communities, just like families whose children attend traditional public schools. Parents should have ability to choose school that work best for their children.

There is no one size fits all education. Every child is different and every family is different. Discussion about charter school should only be about one simple question. What is the best for our children and not about money? I also want to raise one important issue. Our families need more educational options as our children get older. I would like to see full-time and personal public charter high school open in Irvine. As far as I have been able to determine, Irvine families do not currently have that option. I want to thank the board of education for recognizing the importance of educational choice. Please continue support educational choice, support charter school families, expanding educational opportunities, and most importantly, put our students first. Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective.

VALDES: Thank you. Next up is Katherine and on deck is Birgitta Kanipi. Knipe.

KATHERINE: Good evening. I'm the association president for our ACCESS and Connections program. Today, I want to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation to Trustee Valdes and Dr. Bean. First, thank you, Trustee Valdes, for reaching out to our Connection teachers and offering your support. As an association president, this is the first time a board trustee, our own board member has reached out directly to our teachers and asked how you could help support our teachers. And by reaching out and listening to their concerns, it meant a great deal to our members. I also want to thank you, Dr. Bean, for ensuring that those concerns were followed through and that the necessary support was put in place. Several issues that have been raised over the past five years were finally address and we truly appreciate the attention and responsiveness. On behalf of our Connection teachers, our Connection teachers work with modern severe students. It's a very challenging teaching position. I don't know if you've ever been in that position. So, on behalf of our Connection teachers, thank you both for taking the time to listen, to follow up, and to show that our concerns matters. Your support has made a meaningful difference and we are grateful. Thank you.

VALDES: Thank you, Katherine. Birgitta Knipe and Isabella is on deck.

BIRGITTA: Correct. Isabella, you want to come over? You want to wait? Okay. Good evening, board members. I'm here as a parent of twin girls. We are charter school members of Suncoast and we love it. We've just spent the whole day roller skating, so we're pretty excited. I want to thank the Orange County Board of Education for defending something increasingly precious in California. Our right as parents to choose the education that best serves our children. I also believe parents should ask questions about the political forces behind this audit that is going on. Senator Tom Umberg has received substantial campaign support over his political career from public sector unions, including California Teachers Association and California School

Employees Association. He's also received a lot of money from the Democratic Party support, yet Senator Umberg specifically points to this board's charter school approvals as something warranting scrutiny. So, parents have every right to ask, is this truly about accountability or are there political interests that supported Senator Umberg's influencing in an effort that could ultimately restrict educational choice and his predecessor, Mijares, I'm not quite sure how to pronounce that, was also the same. He got money from the same people. Our children should never become casualties of political agendas or financial alliances. Parents know their children. We choose homeschooling and Suncoast because it really works for our families. Thank you OCBE for standing with parents and protecting educational freedom and please keep standing firm. We are standing with you and my daughters are going to debut as speakers. Come on, Isabella.

ISABELLA: Wait, no, wait. Good evening. My name's Isabella and my homeschooling is to me because I get to learn the way that works best for me. My parents choose this education for us because they know us and they want us to have the best education possible. I don't think someone who doesn't know me who should decide that my way of learning isn't good enough. Please keep protecting homeschool and charter schools choices for children like me. Thank you for listening to us.

VALDES: Okay. Heidi Landgraf and Charlotte is on deck. Heidi, good luck following that one.

HEIDI: You are going before me, Charlotte. Okay. Hello. I get to see you guys every month and I love it. Good evening, esteemed Board Members and Superintendent Dr. Bean. First, I want to personally thank you for unwavering support continuing to stand up for parent choice, charter schools and educational options for families we serve. Myself as an educator and the families I support and serve choose the public charter schools homeschooling that works for their children because they want to have the opportunity to educate and shape their children's character, cognitive abilities and future endeavors. Having a program like Suncoast makes it possible for our families and my families feel strongly that having choices within the scope of public education matters. We appreciate what you've done for our families as our board, consistently supporting parent choice and public charter school options, including homeschool charter programs like ours. The audit that Senator Umberg is trying to enforce is overreaching and an undue burden when you consider public schools.

Brick and mortar don't have to go through these steps. I know you guys know this. Last month, I witnessed another example of why our voices need to be part of the conversation and the rights of our families when Irvine Unified School District leadership came before the board to oppose the approval of a homeschool charter. I witnessed them criticize charter schools and the board, raise the A3 charter schools fraud case and cited the JALAC audit stating that they believed an audit of the Orange County Board of Education was warranted. This is unacceptable that a school district come before you as a board and authorize our school to oppose homeschool charter options while also supporting the unprecedented scrutiny of the board that approves those options for our families. Thank you for continuing to provide support in an environment where charters like ours continue to thrive and enrich our families' lives. Thank you so much.

VALDES: Okay, next up is Charlotte and Amy Hitzler is on deck.

CHARLOTTE: My name is Charlotte and I'm a homeschool student. I love homeschooling because I get to learn in lots of different ways. I can learn from books, experiments, nature, field trips in the world around me. If something really interests me, I can spend more time learning about it instead of having to stop before the classes move on. I love my school and hope other children have choice to learn this way too. Thank you for supporting homeschool families like mine.

VALDES: Thank you, Charlotte. Amy Hitzler is up and Caitlin Robbins is on deck. It's

AMY: Always hard to go after those cuties. Good evening. My name is Amy Hitzler and I have been a teacher with Excel Academy for the past 10 years. I would like to respectfully correct several statements that were made about Excel Academy at the last meeting. First, our families do not receive instructional funds in the form of cash. Funds are managed through an internal request platform and may only be used for approved educational expenses that support student learning. This includes classes, curriculum, educational materials, and supplies. No cash is exchanged. These are public education dollars carefully managed and used for their intended purpose, educating public school students. Second, it was suggested that Excel students disenroll before state testing. That has never been my experience. This past year I had 100% participation in state testing. And in my 10 years at Excel Academy, I have never had a student disenroll to avoid testing. I believe it's important that the public record reflect firsthand experiences of educators who work directly with these students. There was also an argument made that charter schools like Excel Academy redirect money away from public schools, but Excel Academy is a public school. Our students have not left public education. Their families have chosen a different public education model. Declining enrollment is not the fault of Excel Academy. Students should not be expected to remain in an educational environment that is not the best fit for them simply to preserve funding for districts. Public education funding should follow the public-school student is intended to educate. It has also been stated that Excel Academy does not provide an unmet need for Irvine families. One of my new students' experiences tells a different story. He's a third grader from Irvine with a 504 plan related to attention challenges. His mother felt that the large classroom environment had become overwhelming, so she chose Excel for its smaller, more individualized learning environment. She simply wasn't looking for a virtual school. She was looking for an environment where her child could thrive. I had so much more.

VALDES: Thank you, Amy. Caitlin Robbins, you are up. Michael Perea is on deck.

CAITLIN: Hello board members. Thank you for hearing me today. My name is Caitlin Robbins, education specialist with Suncoast Charter School. I have both attended as a student and worked as a teacher in almost every school model from traditional to private to brick and mortar charter. And now I've been blessed to be able to work with and have my daughter begin her education journey with Suncoast. Sorry, it's a little emotional. In every other school I have taught in, I've been unable to truly help students who have learning challenges and it contributed to me losing my passion for teaching. I have seen a handful of my students during this past year thrive in this environment where their needs were met, not only by our team, but also by their family and community. Students who have individualized and personal educational experiences achieve success, whereas in the traditional model, they were overlooked and under supported because of the number of students per class and the one size fits all curriculum. This charter school

community is unlike any other I have ever experienced. Led by Windi and a team of quality educators, we get the amazing opportunity to serve our families who want the choice to educate their children as they see fit and we couldn't do it without your support. Thank you for your everything you have done to help us. We are so grateful for such a caring team of board members, colleagues and families. Thank you.

VALDES: Okay. Michael Perea and Emilee Perea, you are on deck.

MICHAEL: Trustees of the board, superintendent and staff, I appreciate the opportunity to speak this evening. My name is Michael Perea and I'm joined by my wife and children tonight. We are an Excel Academy family that lives in Trustee Sparks' district and we are grateful for her and the entire board's commitment to families like ours. Together we attended the July 8th and August 5th public meetings of this board on the matter related to Excel Academy's appeal. We left disappointed by the statements, arguments, and overall tone from IUSD about how charter schools, specifically Excel Academy, were characterized. During these proceedings, we heard a great deal about enrollment goals and losses and the related projected financial impacts when parents choose alternative public school options over traditional brick and mortar schools. I understand that school districts have budgets to manage. However, a child's educational needs are not superseded by school's revenue requirement.

Choosing a public charter school does not mean that a parent is against a local school district. That choice is not a rejection of public education. Rather, it's a choice based on meeting the individual needs of their children and/or their family values. Instead of working against Excel Academy, IUSD could have partnered with them with a shared goal of helping students. I want to be clear in my public comment about IUSD's statements and overall behavior at the prior two meetings. Their statements were disingenuous, their assumptions were flawed and their accusations were offensive. I'm just a concerned dad that only wants the best for my children and to provide them the education they deserve. My children are not line items in a budget. I commend this board for standing tall for us, the families of Excel Academy. Your actions in approving charter schools like Excel Academy and others in the county do not make you an outlier, but rather it demonstrates that you are leaders in preserving individual rights. You prove to be a firewall against those that would silence our voices and remove our right to choose what is best for our children. Thank you for your bravery.

VALDES: Thank you. Emilee Perea and Marco Adame is on deck.

EMILEE: Hi, good evening. My name is Emilee Perea and I have been an Excel Academy student for the last six years. I'm currently a sophomore in high school and I have loved the flexibility of this individualized learning program. I would like to personally thank the board for approving Excel's appeal for charter designation. One of the reasons I love Excel is that my parents are actively involved in my education. I have struggled with anxiety for nearly my entire life and now I'm speaking in front of elected officials at a board meeting. I have been a part of Excel student leadership program for the last four years as well as training jujitsu. This type of public charter program has personally helped me gain more confidence in myself while challenging me academically. All of us teachers and staff at Excel Academy are so kind and thoughtful and they really care about my success in learning.

I have been able to take several classes with credentialed teachers such as algebra one and biology, as well as now taking a class at Saddleback College for dual enrollment. All of the curriculum that I have used throughout my time of Excel has been carefully vetted by my teacher of record and compliance with state standards curriculum. At the previous board meetings, there was discussion about questionable test scores of Excel students. I have never missed a state testing assessment or any ever required assessments by Excel Academy. My test scores have only improved over the years and my more recent scores either met the standards or exceeded the standards for all of the state testing. I'm really proud of that and it was sad that those accusations were made. There is no one size fits all educational model for every student and my ability to have options should not be restrained to budgets of other agencies. I appreciate having high-quality public educational opportunities for Excel Academy. Thank you for giving me a choice.

VALDES: Thank you, Emilee. Marco Adame is up. Herrera, Gabriel or no, I'm sorry. Gabriel Herrera.

MARCO: Thank you for letting me speak today. I am speaking on behalf of Excel Charter School. I listened to what Irvine Unified said and I didn't agree with it. I am a father of four. I live in Irvine and my four children at one time did attend Irvine Unified. One of the main reasons why we left was my younger daughter in kindergarten was showing signs of having some issues at school. We spoke with our pediatrician, and she noticed that our daughter possibly had a auditory processing disorder. We notified the school that we would like an IEP. The school said that she was a little young, that they didn't expect really to find anything. So, we pushed and we pushed. We finally got the meeting. Once the meeting was there, they agreed that she needed an IEP. Every time we requested more services, they continued to make us feel like we were. Since my daughter was borderline, we were taking services away from other children and that kind of like, why are we asking? We eventually ended up at the charter school, Excel Charter School and advised we had IEP. As soon as we were there, we were invited to have more testing. They welcomed the IEP and we also found out that she has a learning disorder and now she's able to do school. She feels better about herself. She feels that she can exceed and now through Excel and through her IEP courses, she's decided that she wants to be an entrepreneur. And so, all summer she's been asking me about business and how it's conducted and how she can learn to invest and make money and she's currently making her own beauty product line that's all natural. Thank you.

VALDES: Okay. Gabriel Herrera and Heidi Gasca, you are on deck.

GABRIEL: Board members and public, thank you for your time. Today I'm here to set the record straight. I'm a sergeant combat infantryman, medically retired from the US Army. After 17 years, I'm recipient of the Purple Heart for wound sustained during multiple engagement with foreign enemies. 17 of my fellow brethren whom I died with willingly laid down their lives for our freedoms. With them, I am saved by grace, alive in Christ Jesus, born again through the living and enduring word of God. I have a wife who is my legal caregiver, which I've been lovingly married to for over 25 years. We have six children in which we're proud to be stewards of, four currently chartered with Excel Academy of Orange County. I paid my taxes and blood through mind, body, and soul. We were led rather than controlled as the home front battle rages on, never conforming to this world yet being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

I discerned immediately watching my children suffer through public school that there are three categories of children, gifted, normal and special ed. So, what happens when your child falls between those categorical gaps? My daughter read at a kindergarten level in fourth grade through public school. She was neither normal nor special ed at all. In fact, unless she was diagnosed by a doctor, nothing could be done for her. She's now in junior high with Excel learning American Sign Language and community college. One day she may be the voice for others giving attention to those which the public school never offered her when needed most. My boys excelled in school, especially math. They were no longer challenged since neither were considered gifted, yet both slightly above average. Now with Excel, they've purposed in love towards others, music, aviation and playing sports at the highest level while holding considerable grade and test level through the state of California. We chose Excel specifically so that our boys would be challenged and our girls be accepted and recognized. The public school system failed us and we're not the only ones nor would be the last. Now through the daily work and power of the Holy Spirit, in which I've been born of, the acceptance of Excel Academy and the OC Board of Education, I'm convinced and have full faith and belief that we are no longer just a number on a spreadsheet. We're all proof and living testimony of an unfailing love for all. Thank you.

VALDES: Heidi Gasca, you are up and Jonathan Rocha is on deck.

HEIDI: Good evening, President Shaw, Trustees and Superintendent Dr. Bean. I'm here on behalf of Excel Academy as the superintendent, and I just would like to sincerely thank all of you and the Orange County Charter School Unit for your trust and confidence that you've placed in our school. We deeply appreciate the time and the professionalism after an extensive renewal and authorization process with the charter school division. The comprehensive review of our educational program, operations, fiscal practices was rigorous and we're grateful for the guidance and support provided by the OCDE staff and the board. On August 24th, we proudly opened our doors with 287 brand new Orange County students, very close to our estimated 300 in grades TK through 12. I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to build a strong working relationship with Rachel Carrillo and the charter school unit. As we move forward, we're committed to working closely with OCDE and the board, meeting all compliance requirements and deadlines, embracing the accountability and oversight. We look forward to our upcoming fiscal and educational oversight visit on October 15th, and I would just like to thank you sincerely for your trust. Thank you.

VALDES: Jonathan Rocha, you are up and Monica Mayen is on deck.

JONATHAN: Good evening board members and everyone here today. I want to take a moment of your time to thank everyone for this movement and how passionate everybody is for education. It's one of my first times being in one of these meetings and it's pretty remarkable. I'm here as a testimony for my children who've been able to attend both public brick and mortar and public charter. Through it, they've been able to expand their learning ability and find their passion. My daughter today is a senior at Chapman University who is doing script writing for the film industry, intending and wanting to graduate this year because she found a passion when she had time to explore when she was working through the public charter of Excel Academy her freshman and sophomore year of high school. My third daughter is in public charter as well, and she's exploring life in the farm and pursuing a agricultural degree and working in that space.

She likes to work with dirt. My fourth daughter, she's a freshman at a brick and mortar school today and she's exploring those opportunities. So, it's just a good place where through education, we can provide learning experiences for our children and making sure that they have options. So, continue that good work and so we can keep giving children an option to learn. One day, maybe grandchildren for me as I'm getting near my fourth child, but hopefully far away from that. So, thank you very much everyone. Have a great day.

VALDES: Monica Mayen is up and Eleny Morales is on deck.

MONICA: Good evening. My name's Monica and I'm both a parent of two children who attend Suncoast and an educator with Suncoast. I wanted to come tonight to simply say thank you. Having the freedom to choose a public charter homeschool program has been incredibly important to our family. My children are individuals with different strengths, different needs and different ways of learning, and Suncoast has given us the freedom to meet each of them where they are. For my son, that has meant going from feeling extremely anxious sitting in a public school classroom to truly thriving. For both of my children, homeschooling has given us the opportunity to protect their love of learning, nurture their creativity and individuality, spend more time learning through nature and real life experiences and make their emotional wellbeing an important part of their education. It has also connected us with a wonderful community of families who share many of those same values. And now as an educator with Suncoast, I have the privilege of seeing that impact beyond my own family. I see other families finding an educational path that works for their children too. I'm incredibly grateful that this board has continued to support charter schools and parents' ability to choose the educational environment they believe is best for their children. These choices aren't just policies on paper. They affect real children and real educators like me and real families like mine. Thank you for listening to families like us and thank you for continuing to support educational choice in Orange County.

VALDES: Eleny Morales is up and Benjamin Morales is on deck.

ELENY: Good evening. My name is Eleny Morales. I am a 16-year-old student athlete. I would like to give thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the opportunity he has given me today to speak up here. I'm here to speak against the new law allowing males to participate in female sports. A little shocking, isn't it, needing to speak on this subject at all? I'm here on behalf of myself and the many girls in the district who have dedicated countless hours to their athletics. My younger sister and I play many sports at a highly competitive level, and like many female athletes, we work extremely hard to earn our place. Girls' sports exists to provide biological females a fair opportunity to compete in an equal playing field. Competition is already challenging between us females. Some of us are taller, shorter, stronger, faster, but we all compete within the same goal and biological category.

This is what maintains the balance for both gender sports fair. I strongly believe God made us genetically male or female. God gave us each our own strengths and weaknesses. So, what happens when a male competes in an all-female sport? It's basic science. The biological difference in strength and speed create an uneven playing field regardless of what one may identify as. This is not about hate or exclusion, it's about fairness, safety, and an equal opportunity for both female and male athletes. My goal as well as many other females athletes is to earn college scholarships or pursue careers in our sports. Allowing these biological males to

compete in girls' sports threatens those opportunities and it undermines all of our hard work and the sacrifices we make every day. Don't believe me? Here's an example. On May 16th at a California regional final, a transgender athlete from Jurupa Valley placed first in multiple girls' track and field events. One of my own district's female athletes was robbed of her qualifying spot due to the male who competed in those same events. Where's her support for the unfairness she was shown? Where's the advocacy for the girls who trained years to reach that level only to compete under these unfair conditions? Thank you for your time.

VALDES: Benjamin Morales is up and Sarah Bach, you are on deck.

BENJAMIN: Hello board members. My name is Benjamin Morales. I am a fifth grader. I'm here today to bring awareness to the environment that some students are experiencing in our elementary schools. I was previously enrolled in a homeschool charter program in August 2025 until December 2025. In January 2026, my parents enrolled me in fourth grade at Santiago Elementary in Santa Ana. During my first week of school, I started being bullied by some of my classmates. They made fun of me because how I looked and the clothes I wore. I told my parents what was happening and they reminded me to ignore the kids and stay away from them. One day I had a conversation with them about my faith and who I thought should be president. I told them I'm a Christian and that I support President Trump because of some of the things he was doing. After that, those kids no longer want to be my friends. They told me about that Mexicans cannot support Trump. They told me that I'm not a Mexican, that I'm going to be deported and that my family would also. I became scared for my family. For several months, I continued to be picked on. I was punched, hit with a bat during recess. And then they threatened that I would get Charlie kirked. I did not want to go to school. Thank you for your time.

VALDES: Sarah Bach is up and Windi Eklund is on deck.

SARAH: I'm so sorry to hear that. I just needed to say that. That's a terrible experience for a student. I think it highlights the very important reason that we have this wonderful board, our Orange County Board of Education to make space for all students. And I am Sarah Bach, founder and executive director of Sycamore Creek Community Charter School. I know it's been a little time since I've been before you. I've been busy working in the city of Cyprus where we recently had our grand opening for our new forever home, which we're very excited about. And just to tell you how excited we are, how far we've come little more than a year ago when we were co-located with our district partners of Ocean View School District in Huntington Beach, we had 155 students in June of 2025 and starting last week, our first day of school, we enrolled 340 students TK through eighth. We're also excited to be eligible to add high school when we are ready. We will take our time to do that, but I really just wanted to come before you this evening and say thank you. Thank you to the public for being here, participating. It's very important. Also, thank you for the lovely invocation. I heard words of courage and bravery tonight, and I think that takes a lot to get up here and talk and represent our children, our families and our teachers and our county at large. So, thank you.

VALDES: Windi Eklund, you are up and our last comment is Catherine Lambert.

WINDI: Hi, I'm Windi Eklund, a homeschool mom of three kids in OC, and homeschooling has always been our way of life. Two have now graduated and my youngest is the only one still

school age. None of them have ever attended a traditional district school. For my youngest, having educational options became even more important after she had an adverse reaction to her MMR vaccine that included multiple seizures. She does not have an IEP and with California passing SB 277, eliminating the personal belief exemption without the required vaccination, she is no longer allowed to attend any in-person public or private school in California. And I have to admit, that makes me ponder the irony of hearing state leaders in school districts complain about declining enrollment when the state policy they passed has actually made it impossible for many kids to attend our district schools. So, when I talk about parent choice and protecting educational options, it is because I have lived and seen how these policies impact our families, and it's one of the reasons I spent so many years advocating for homeschool families to have choices.

I'm also a true believer in what California's charter school law was created to do. Charter schools give us the opportunity to try different educational models, see what works, and hopefully take what we learn from successful models and bring those ideas into the broader public education system. A number of years ago when I left the charter organization I had been working with, I thought about what to try next. I had spent years helping build successful homeschool charter programs and I wanted to take what I had learned and see what we could do with it at a district or county level. I approached OCDE and Dr. Mijares because Orange County already had its own homeschool programs, CHEP and Pacific Coast High School. I wanted to talk about helping expand those programs so they could serve more homeschool families. Dr. Mijares wasn't interested in having that conversation with me, so I moved on. Then in 2022, I was asked to step in and help save a homeschool charter school that was facing closure with just 73 students. Four years later, that school, Suncoast, is serving approximately 3,400 students. Apparently, there are many homeschool families looking for options in Orange County after all, and that is one of the reasons I'm standing here tonight defending and thanking this board. When families have asked for some—oh, there's more. Bye.

VALDES: Catherine Lambert, you are our final public comment tonight.

CATHERINE: They saved the best for last. My name is Catherine Lambert and I am a card-carrying Democrat. There you go. Welcome to Orange County. Here's the deal. Whether I'm a Democrat or not, you can't be a bully and you can't say, "I'm a senator now, and therefore I'm going to use my power to do things to people I don't like because they made fun or were mean to my friend." Now, Senator Umberg, I would like to thank him for his military service. That is something I was never capable of doing and he deserves that honor for it. But in his time in the military, he was a litigator. That's what he did. His job was a lawyer. What do lawyers do? I'm from New York. You lawyer up and you sue and you sue and you sue and you audit and you sue, and eventually people get exhausted and you're like, "Whatever. We'll just go back to our private businesses". Do not let him win.

You are right. He is wrong. And the card-carrying Democrat is saying to the Democratic Senator, Shame on you. Shame. I know your friend died. I know your friend had problems with this board. I get it. And I know that being loyal to your friend is an honorable thing, but you don't get to punish my students this populous because you're trying to score points for your friend by just litigating you people to death. And the money that they say, "Oh, we don't have money for this program. We can't do IEPs". There's no money that we're wasting on lawyers. Nothing against lawyers. Everybody needs lawyers, but we don't need to spend educational funds on lawyers. We

just don't. We have better things to do. Our kids need us. Whether you're pro-charter or anti-charter, our public education system needs you, the Orange County board to say we're not going to back down. Thank you for that from the bottom of my democratic heart.

VALDES: President Shaw, may I be given an indulgence of the floor for about 30 seconds?

SHAW: Yes, sir.

VALDES: Ladies and gentlemen, we don't do this here. We usually save board member comments to the end, but most of you will not be here by the end of this meeting. So, I just wanted to say this to you while you were still in the room. What I believe you witnessed over the last few meetings was really the public debate that is happening in California. There are some very vocal, very talented, very intelligent people that simply do not agree with the majority of the opinions in this room. I'm just going to remind you that while your comments tonight are sincerely appreciated by me, the most important thing you really need to do is go out and vote on election day. Okay?

SHAW: Well, thank you. I don't even know where to begin. Those were great comments. Thank you all for coming. You're welcome every month and let's do it again in a month. I was very uplifted by all those great comments. Did you want to say something, Ken?

WILLIAMS: I was going to say, everything I heard tonight was just such a uplifting blessing, people who we don't know. Deborah, thank I mean, Catherine, thank you for coming. A dear Democrat, politically in the opposite side of the aisle who supports the same public policy. So, each and every one of you who came, who came to support us, Sarah Bach, Windi, all the charter school people. Thank you, Mr. Perea. Thank you for coming and sharing from your heart what you saw. Now we need to take that to the Irvine Unified School District, take your same message and tell them what you saw.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I plan on it.

WILLIAMS: Amen.

SHAW: All right. Well, let's move on to the consent calendar. Item number seven, approving the granting of diplomas.

BARKE: I will move to do that. Make a motion.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: Move by Barke, seconded by Sparks. All in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: Charter schools, item number eight. Are there charter schools?

CHASTAIN: We have two charter submissions. Rocket Ship Anaheim Elementary. They submitted an appeal after denial by Anaheim Elementary School District. Their public hearing is

October 7th and their board action will be on November 4th. And we also received a submission today from Citrus Springs Charter School. That's their charter renewal. They're up for renewal this year. So, their public hearing will be October 7th. Board action will be December 2nd if the school agrees to a one-day extension so that we can hold that meeting during the regular board meeting. That's all.

SHAW: Do you agree?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 100%.

SHAW: They agree.

CHASTAIN: Thank you.

SHAW: Very good. Item number nine, a charter school public hearing, Orange Springs Charter School material revision.

CHASTAIN: The Board will now conduct a public hearing to grant or deny the material revision request submitted by Orange Springs Charter School on July 8th. Orange Springs is a countywide charter school serving students in grades transitional kindergarten through grade 12 with one location within the boundaries of Santa Ana Unified School District. The school's requesting to remove the proposed facility in Anaheim and add a facility within the boundaries of Fullerton School District to begin operations in fall of 2027. The school notified the district on June 25 of 2026 and based on the review of the revised petition and information presented during the public hearing, staff determined that the revised petition satisfies the applicable requirements of Education Code section 47607 and 47605 and did not identify any statutory basis for denial under Education Code section 47605 (c). Therefore, staff recommends approval of the revised charter petition. Representatives from Orange Springs Charter School will now have up to 10 minutes to respond to the staff report and recommendations. I invite the charter school representatives to the podium.

MICHELLE: Thank you once again. I'm Michelle Sheane and I'm assistant superintendent for Springs Charter Schools. And first of all, we just wanted to start with a congratulations to Aracely and thank you. I've been with Springs for three years and you've always been a shining light for us, so thank you. And we also want to thank the charter unit for their recommendation in the staff report for approval. We're very grateful and if you have any questions, we're here to answer that. Here with me is Senior Director Trevor Johnson, Senior Director Trevor Johnson, if you have any questions for us.

CHASTAIN: Thank you. The hearing is now open for 15 minutes of public comment. Trustee Valdes, there are no public comments at this time.

VALDES: That's going to be a quick meeting.

CHASTAIN: The public comment period is now closed. The board has three options for action, approve the material revision and the revised charter petition, approve the revised petition subject to conditions established by this board or deny the revised petition upon making written

factual findings required by Education Code 47605 (c). President Shaw, I now close the public hearing and return the meeting to you.

SHAW: Wonderful. Maybe I'll go to my right. Dr. Sparks, any questions?

SPARKS: I have no real questions. This charter has a wonderful track record and I'm in full support.

SHAW: Wonderful. Vice President Valdes?

VALDES: This charter has a fantastic track record and I don't have any questions.

SHAW: Okay. Trustee Barke.

BARKE: Ditto, you guys are amazing. Thank you for all you do. Thank you for expanding and providing what you do for our community. We appreciate you providing the amazing choices for kids.

SHAW: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: My only comments are that I'd like to make a motion for option number one to approve the charter revision.

VALDES: I second.

SPARKS: Go ahead.

SHAW: Very good. You do have a facility identified, right?

JULIANNA: We do have a facility identified.

SHAW: You better get in the mic just to be…

JULIANNA: Yeah. For the record, yes. We do have a facility identified and I was pleased to find out this afternoon that the CUP is not going to require any revisions or changes. So, with minimal TI, it's going to be a fantastic spot for us.

SHAW: I know that's such a hard hill to climb for so many of our charter schools getting the facility, so I'm very happy to hear that.

JULIANNA: Yes. Yes. We've been looking in Anaheim for quite some time and unfortunately there was not a lot available that wasn't going to cost a whole arm and a leg. So, we're very lucky. Two legs, all the legs.

SHAW: Okay. Well, very good. And forgive me, I think it was a motion by Dr. Williams and seconded by Vice President Valdes for option number one.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SHAW: Okay. So all in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: Any opposed? 5-0. Congratulations. Let's see. Okay, so we'll now recess the meeting of the Orange County Board of Education and open the Department of Education Facilities Corporation. Did I say that right? So, we will now go to meet as the Department of Education Facilities Corporation. Let me get that agenda open.

SPARKS: So we need to take action on the minutes.

SHAW: So is this approval of the minutes from that meeting? I'm sorry?

CHASTAIN: Roll call.

SHAW: Oh, sorry. Roll call please.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Present.

SHAW: So we need to...

SPARKS: Approve the minutes.

SHAW: Approve the minutes from that meeting.

SPARKS: So moved.

SHAW: Right.

VALDES: Second.

SHAW: Moved by Sparks, second by Valdes. All in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: Any opposed? Seeing none. And that was it, right, for that? I'm sorry. So, with that, we will now adjourn the meeting of the Facilities Corporation and reopen the meeting of the Board of Education and move to item number 11, adoption of the Gann Appropriation Limit for '26-'27.

WILLIAMS: I'll make a motion to approve that resolution.

BARKE: Second.

SHAW: Okay. Moved by Williams, second by Barke. All in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: Any opposed? Passes unanimously. Item number 12. It's recommended that the governing board approve the draft amended and restated easement for the Rancho Sonado project subject to ratification of the final amended and restated easement at a future board meeting. Is there a staff report for item 12?

GIORDANO: All right. Well, thank you and good evening, President Shaw, Members of the Board. As you know, our staff has been working for the past several months, and this is with the Orange County Parks and the Nature Conservancy. And this is to modify the existing easement for the access road that runs up all the way to the top of the base camp area over at Rancho Sonado. The easement requires modification for the new water lines that were recommended by the Irvine Ranch Water District that will run under that new access road. The road will be expanded to allow construction for turnouts for emergency purposes, drainage improvements, and installation landscaping to fulfill tree replacement guidelines that were required by the County of Orange. The Orange County Parks and our legal counsel, Tao Rossini, have proposed the attached draft amended and restated easement for approval this evening. The final amended and restated easement will be presented for ratification to the board at a future board meeting, if there are any questions at all.

SHAW: Are there any questions from the board? So, if I'm understanding right, we're just going to have an easement there and we're going to make sure we have enough water to get up there.

WILLIAMS: And you need approval, David? Is that what we're doing here?

GIORDANO: Yeah. Approval of the draft easement.

SPARKS: The draft.

WILLIAMS: Okay. I'll make the motion for the approval.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: Moved by Williams, seconded by Sparks. All in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: Any opposed? So that passes unanimously. Thank you for that. Item number 13.

VALDES: Can I just ask Dave a question? What is the status of the building up there?

GIORDANO: So that's what I was going to cover next on this next item here.

SHAW: Okay. So, in item 13, the governing board award the lease-leaseback contracts to C.W. Driver, LLC, for the Rancho Sonado project. Go ahead, Dave.

GIORDANO: All right. Well, thank you again, President Shaw, Members of the Board. So, as you may recall, this was after the budget study session back in May. My staff provided an update on the Rancho Sonado project. At the time, we shared that the project had already been approved by the division of state architect, but the project experienced some delays and this was due to issues surrounding approval of the easement as well as some environmental permitting issues. I'm happy to report tonight that our project team has made good progress on both of these issues. The draft amended and restated easement was approved by the board this evening. Additionally, the required work permit for the drainage channel that connects with Santiago Canyon Creek at the project site entryway has been approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as well as the Department of Fish and Game. The plan that we presented back in May by staff was to bid the Rancho Sonado project this summer and then present the lease-leaseback construction services agreements for the board's consideration and approval this evening. As you may recall, this was back in March of 2025. The board approved the lease-leaseback construction delivery method and then the lease leaseback agreement templates, which included the pre-construction services agreement, the site lease sublease, and then the construction services agreement. And then it was in May of 2025. This was after a comprehensive competitive RFP process, the board approved selection of C.W. Driver, LLC, and this was to provide the pre-construction services for the Rancho Sonado project. The item before the board this evening is staff's recommendation to award the lease-leaseback contracts to C.W. Driver, LLC. And this is to provide construction services for the Rancho Sonado project at a guaranteed maximum price of $16,754,151. And these contracts have been prepared and approved by our legal counsel, Tao Rossini. If the agreements are awarded by the board this evening, staff will continue to work with the County of Orange.

That's to finalize that easement amendment that we talked about earlier, which will be presented again to the board at a future board meeting for ratification. Construction of the project is scheduled to be completed in approximately 15 months beginning on October 3rd of 2026 with final completion anticipated in December 2027. And then lastly, but importantly, staff would like to thank the Board of Education and the entire outdoor science school staff for their patience as our project team worked through numerous regulatory agencies on all the required approvals for this particular project. And there were lots and lots of different approvals that were required. So, if any questions for the board?

SHAW: You said it'll be finished. When do we think it's finished, finished?

GIORDANO: Yeah, it should start on October 3rd pending that easement approval from the county and then it'll be a 15-month timeline. So, we should be done hopefully in December 2027. We're just hoping that El Nino doesn't impact that too much. We've got some contingencies in there, but hopefully it's not too wet.

SHAW: Well, I hope we have a real nice ribbon cutting and event when I'm sure we'll do that, but let's make sure we invite everybody we can think of, our congressional delegations, legislative delegation, school board members, et cetera. Yes, of course.

SPARKS: President Shaw, I just have one quick question if I may.

SHAW: Yes, you may.

SPARKS: Yeah. How does that number handle any change orders that might pop up? Is that embedded in that number?

GIORDANO: Well, I think that's the good thing about the lease-leaseback delivery method because one of the benefits is that we get to bring the contractor on board early. The contractor's already been working with the architect and so they've been looking at the construction documents, the plan specifications and really tightening that up so that by the time we get to construction, they've worked through all of those issues. So that's one of the benefits of that delivery method. Hopefully we don't have as many change orders. We wouldn't expect any with a guaranteed maximum price.

SPARKS: Okay. That's what I was kind of getting at. So even if there are change orders, they're absorbed by that maximum price. It's not going to go above that.

GIORDANO: That's right. We do have contingencies embedded within that number as well.

SPARKS: Okay. Great.

SHAW: It's sort of like design builds almost…

GIORDANO: It is similar, but a little bit different, but similar.

SHAW: Any other questions, Jorge?

VALDES: What's the framework of the design, Dave, with respect to resistance against fire up there now? Rancho Sonado came up in a conversation, and I'm going to mention this in my board comments later, but there's still a concern regarding fires up there. How are the buildings designed to deter a fire burning them down again?

GIORDANO: Yeah, it's a great question. And that was one of the things that when the architect came on board, we were real clear about. They knew the history of the building. They knew the buildings up there had been burned down during the bonfire. So, everything that they proposed in terms of the design for that building has been designed around that theme. So, when you think about just the windows in the building itself, all those are going to be double, triple pane. There's going to be built around the building itself, there'll be a setback from any type of landscaping so

that we don't have to worry about that landscaping, catching fire and then getting the building on fire. The roof itself will be, I believe it's a metal roof. So, everything was designed around that, making sure that the building itself is brick, for example. So, they were really cautious about the materials that they were using when they designed that building.

VALDES: Did you say the buildings are brick?

GIORDANO: Yes. The outside will be…

VALDES: With a metal roof.

GIORDANO: With a metal roof.

VALDES: There's nothing to catch on fire?

GIORDANO: It'd be very difficult to catch on fire. There'll be sprinkler systems on the exterior outside the building as well as the interior of the building. So, it was really, I think the design was a good one, fitting for that area.

SHAW: Terrific. Any other questions?

BARKE: The only thing I would ask is, and are there some better, I don't know if there can be preventative measures for saving animals. I know we lost quite a few animals last time. Is there anything in place to open doors or unlock gates or?

GIORDANO: Yeah, it's a great question. I know one of the things that we had talked about is that we wouldn't locate those animals up there again permanently because of the high fire area up there. So, the animals wouldn't be located up there permanently.

BARKE: Okay.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

SHAW: Wonderful. So, the recommendation is we award this lease-leaseback to C.W. Driver, LLC. I'll move that we do that.

BARKE: Oh, okay. I'll second then.

SHAW: Okay. And seconded by Barke. All in favor?

SPARKS, VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: Any opposed? Seeing none, passes unanimously. Thank you for that.

GIORDANO: All right. One more thing if I could.

SHAW: Yes.

GIORDANO: So, this is this award that our architect received on the design for the building. And so, this was presented at CASH. I think there were only two design awards that were presented at the last annual conference. And so, this was it. So just want to share that as well.

SHAW: Nice.

SPARKS: Congratulations. That's great.

SHAW: All right. We going to hang that somewhere?

GIORDANO: We should. We should. I think we got to give back to them.

BARKE: It's a loan.

SHAW: All right. We have under communication information discussion, salary increases of $10,000 or more in accordance with Education Code 1302 and board policy 100-10.

WILLIAMS: And we don't vote on this, so we're just...

SHAW: Anything to say, Dr. Bean?

BEAN: I have nothing to say.

SHAW: You have nothing to say. Okay.

BEAN: That's rare.

SPARKS: The gift of gab is quiet now.

VALDES: I'd like to say something.

SHAW: Very well.

VALDES: I'm glad to see that there are a fair amount of teachers on this list.

SHAW: Terrific. My wife's a teacher, so I couldn't agree with you more. She's a full-time teacher. Okay. Under announcements, Dr. Bean?

BEAN: All right. We're going to turn on, there we go, the presentation. I just want to share with you some updates from this past summer. The first thing is the 5-3-1 vision for students. Again, the Summer at the Center showcase went off without a hitch. It was extremely well received this year. It appeared that we had a little bit larger group than in the past. And you remember what this program is where we sent ACCESS Connection students for two weeks to rehearse and then perform in front of live audience over at the Segerstrom Center.

WILLIAMS: Wonderful.

BEAN: It's an amazing program. Wonderful. I don't know when the last time you guys have gone, but please, you should attend next summer. In terms of our second support objective,

which is around instruction and literacy, I'm happy to report that the MTSS PLI was very successful. We had over 2,300 educators from across the state and the nation. It was in the middle of July. This time we didn't have it at the convention center, but we had the hotel and I think it worked out very well. So, we'll probably do that again after next year. Also, we introduced something new and that was an executive leadership series, which was well received among leaders in districts. And we're going to continue that. And the comments we received were it's great that leaders were able to have sessions so they could learn how to create systems, strengthen systems and help every student succeed. Also, just recently, we awarded 11 educators and advocates and community leaders across Orange County the outstanding STEM education award. We celebrated with not only the recipients, but also their families this past August. And just for the record, here are the names of the recipients and where they come from. I'm not going to read out loud. I just want to put it up for video.

And then here are the list of last five. And then in terms of guidance and technical assistance for districts, what we decide to do to help our districts really understand what services and supports we provide, we have jumped into a new website platform. So, we're migrating our old website, if you can see upper left there, and department hosted sites to what we call final site. And it's going to modernize our website as well as make it more accessible and mobile friendly. And then the content is better organized so that our end users will feel it's much more intuitive experience as they navigate the new website. So that is almost ready to launch and we'll be happy to share the next board meeting with you. And then just to let you know, FYI, we are now in middle of the Williams Act reviews. As you know, that's the responsibility of the County Office of Education annually, which we go to sites and we review their instructional materials and facilities, and then there are certain selected sites in which we review. And that list is given to us by CDE. And then finally, in terms of integrating AI, we had a very successful AI Forward Summit, so successful that it was sold out to 150 educators and leaders on August 3rd here. It was a second annual event in which we led the county educators and leaders around how do we responsibly implement AI? How do we look at things like cybersecurity and workforce readiness? And we also have a yearlong AI forward network, which we're kicking off on August 28th, which, well, we just kicked it off apparently a few days ago, but it will also include superintendents in the county to come and advise on a pathway forward for AI implementation. I believe we asked about eight district superintendents to join me in this advisory AI council. And that is the update for the superintendent.

SHAW: Thank you, Dr. Bean. Although I did go to the board's website the other day and it's already changed.

BEAN: Of course. We served the board first.

SHAW: You went with us first? Okay. Yeah. I was like, "Whoa, look at that. It's so different." Okay. Assistant superintendent.

CHASTAIN: Next board meeting is on October 7th. The submission deadline is September 23rd, and the board packets will be delivered on October 2nd. And just by way of a heads up, there is one, currently we have one expulsion hearing that will be at that meeting and six interdistrict transfers. So, we may be looking at a little bit of an earlier start time on that one as well.

SHAW: Six.

BARKE: Do you mind if possible, if you do settle any of them, just let us know as soon as possible to minimize looking at some that we don't need to.

CHASTAIN: Will do.

BARKE: Thank you.

SHAW: Okay. Was that all? Legislative updates. Trustee Barke.

BARKE: Yes. I was just going to briefly review SB 1082. I believe I briefly reviewed this in the past, but just as a reminder, it was to expedite and standardize the process of requesting interdistrict transfers by families. It establishes clear deadlines and timeline. It provides families with greater certainty and a fair process while not taking anything away or diminishing the authority or control of the district. And because it's such a great bill and is great for everyone, it's actually been sent to the governor for signature. We sent a letter encouraging the governor, and so hopefully it will be signed soon.

SHAW: Wonderful. Thank you for that. Let's see. Committee reports. Anyone have a report from a committee? Seeing none, board member comments when I start to my left this time. Dr. Williams.

WILLIAMS: Thank you, sir. I want to reach out to Gabriel. Thank you for your service, sir. Thank you for what you did in the army. Thank you for being our hero and for your kind words today, expressing support for our board. Thank you for, Sarah Bach for coming today and sharing with us. It's been a while since we've heard about Sycamore Creek. Sycamore Creek is one of our many awesome charter schools and she's leading the charge and they have a brand new home facility, so you're very blessed. Just one quick thought on last meeting. I did create not an exact transcript, but very close to it. Our council said that I couldn't share it, but I'm doing it now so it's public. So, if you want it, please let me know. It'll be available for public viewing. There's a lot of interesting comments. I went through that line by one.

BARKE: Can I just say, I think you meant that he couldn't share privately with us. So, it's not that you couldn’t' share it because it almost sounded like you couldn't share, but you are, but yes, he couldn't share privately, but he could publicly just say, sorry.

WILLIAMS: No, no, no, no.

BARKE: I just want to make sure everyone understands. It's all good.

WILLIAMS: You are technically correct. And of course, the Brown Act prevents us from kind of communicating with more than one board member, but I will make some comments here and it will be available for the public if the public wants it. So basically a lot of the words that were shared and disagreements that we saw as Jorge on point made was that this was about a public policy debate and the demeanor, the lack of kindness, the lack of decorum and courtesy that was demonstrated to this board. In my 30 years, I've never seen that before by a superintendent by a well esteemed and respected school district. A school board member came, actually a couple

came and the ideas and comments were atrocious. They were offensive to the wonderful charter school that we approved making accusations of fraud and criminal activity. It was quite atrocious. So, I do have that if you're interested. It's public talked about it, so it doesn't break the Brown Act.

SHAW: Okay. Thank you for that. Trustee Barke.

BARKE: Yes. First of all, I do want to thank, I'm sorry so many people are gone, but everyone who came tonight, it was just as President Shaw said, it was very uplifting to hear all of the positive comments. Sometimes people only say something when it's negative and it's just nice. I do believe positive comments are much better than negative comments. And so, it was great to hear that. And everyone who's still here, thank you for being here. Thank you for speaking. And anyone listening online, thank you for speaking if you're now listening. I also want to mention Sarah and her amazing school, Sycamore Creek. We have so many amazing charters, but I was able to go to her grand opening and ribbon cutting. I not only serve on the board, but I serve on the Sempra's Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and they did the ribbon cutting there.

And I have never been to an opening ribbon cutting where so many elected officials and individuals were there Monday at 11:00 AM. I mean, I was stunned. She had saved me a parking spot or I never would have had a parking spot and it was just standing room only. So, it was a beautiful ceremony and a testament to what a wonderful job you've done that drew so many families and elected officials from every side of the aisle. So, congratulations on your new location, your forever location. It's nice to see that stability for your school now. We've been through a lot together these last—the was, I believe when Lisa and I were elected, she was one of the first schools approved that day. I believe it was March of 2019. So, congratulations, you've come a long way as so many schools really have in our eight years now that we've been on the board. So, it's great to see that and that's all I have.

SHAW: Okay. Thank you. Vice President Valdes.

VALDES: President Shaw, I have a few comments. First, I'd like to thank Katherine Liu, the union president, for her kind words tonight. Katherine, it was a pleasure working with you and some of the teachers and Dr. Bean in the meeting that we had, I'd say it was about six weeks ago. I would like you to relay something to our teachers. Obviously, I was elected and there's always some politics in winning an election, but I am up here to serve parents and kids, period. That is the job that I have and I cannot do that without the teachers that we employ. And so, what is a very high concern to you is a very high concern to me because I can't do this job without you and the teachers. So, while I, of course, hope that Dr. Bean has created some protocols so we can have better communication and avoid any lack of communication in the future. I am always available for a phone call or an email if you need me. To Gabriel Herrera, a Purple Heart recipient, thank you for your service, sir. Thank you for your kind words. Renee Hendrick, I'd like to say it was such a pleasure working with you since August of '22, since I was appointed. You will be missed and I will be at your party tomorrow afternoon.

And finally, this is just a little teaser, but I was at an event last Thursday where I was approached by a constituent who told me that a neighbor of his has what is very likely the largest Civil War artifact collection in the United States privately. And surprisingly enough, it is in Santa Ana. The

person apparently is not doing well with his health and there is concern that this, what I would consider to be a national treasure, there's no known plan yet for what may happen to that. I'm going to view it with Dr. Bean on Friday night.

BARKE: Oh, fun.

VALDES: There is talk about a donation of those artifacts to the OC Department of Ed and what we may end up doing with it. So, I'm just for now going to leave that as a teaser. I am told that as part of this collection, there is an original Civil War cannon, the only one that is held by a private individual in the world. I am told that there are handwritten letters by Abraham Lincoln as part of this collection. So, there are, obviously, if all of this is accurate, this is something that's just simply priceless. So, let's just say I'm working on something with Dr. Bean.

BEAN: We are working on.

VALDES: We are working on something.

SHAW: Well, that sounds cool. Thank you, Jorge. Dr. Sparks.

SPARKS: Yeah. Well, you all kind of said everything that I wanted to say, but I just, again, for those who couldn't stay at the meeting, thank you for coming. And for those of you who are still here, your champions, thank you so much for all the positive comments because it really does help us to represent you in the best way possible, the parents and the teachers and the students especially. And so, you guys give us that extra energy and push to do what we need to do up here. So, I really appreciate you being so dedicated. I mean, our students are so lucky to have parents and educators like yourselves that are just so dedicated. And so, we're all really rowing in the same direction for the kids and families of Orange County. And I just appreciate you guys very much.

SHAW: Thank you. I'll just say welcome to Aracely up here on the diocese. You look good up here. You're doing good. And I wanted to also thank Renee for everything she's done for our Department and for me personally. I got elected here in 2020 and Renee was the one to sit down with the budget and try to explain that to me. And I'm still trying to figure out our budget here that's like this, but she knows it backwards and forwards. So, I mean, I don't know how we're ever going to live without her, but best wishes to Renee and your retirement. So, with that, yes, let's give Renee a round of applause. We will stand adjourned until Wednesday, October 7th. We'll see you then.