SHAW: Good afternoon. I'd like to call this meeting to order. For the benefit of the record, this meeting is called to order at 2:04 PM. Darou, will you please call 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: Here.

SHAW: Do I have a motion to approve the agenda?

BARKE: So moved.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: All in favor?

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

SHAW: Any opposed? Do I hear a motion to approve the minutes of September 2nd?

BARKE: So moved.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: All in favor?

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

SHAW: Are there any public comments related to the inter-district transfers? Seeing none, we will move to closed session.

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

SHAW: The Orange County Board of Education will be returning to open session at this time, 3:58 PM. Welcome. Okay. Good afternoon. It is now 4:04 PM according to my phone on October 7th. This meeting of the Orange County Board of Education is called to order for the purpose of conducting an expulsion appeal hearing. Will the clerk please call the roll? Darou? You don't have a mic?

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Here.

SHAW: This hearing is held pursuant to Education Code section 48919 through 48924 to consider the appeal filed on behalf of Samir Daniels, a former student of the Irvine Unified School District, case number 05H-2526 from the decision of the governing board of the Irvine Unified School District made on June 23rd, 2026, to expel the student for violation of Education Code section 48915(a)(1)(E), 48900(a)(1) and 48900(c). This appeal was timely filed and notice of this hearing has been provided to the student and to the governing board of the Irvine Unified School District as required by law. The appellant has requested in writing and within the time required by Education Code section 48920 that this hearing be conducted in a public meeting. Accordingly, this hearing is being conducted in open session. I will now ask Dr. Seema Paul, senior administrator of student services to present the staff report on this matter, including the procedure the board will follow today.

SEEMA: Thank you, President Shaw. This matter concerns the expulsion appeal of Samir Daniels, case number 05H2526, student number 120170173 from the decision of the governing board of the Irvine Unified School District on June 23rd, 2026, to expel the student for violation of Ed Code sections 48915(a)(1)(E), 48900(a)(1) and 48900(c). The appellant's formal request for expulsion appeal raises four grounds recognized under Ed Code 48922. First, that the IUSD governing board acted without or in excess of its jurisdiction. Second, that the student was denied a fair hearing. Third, that there was a prejudicial abuse of discretion in the hearing. And fourth, that relevant and material evidence, specifically video footage, was improperly excluded from the hearing. Consistent with Ed Code 48921, the board's review of this appeal is confined to the certified record of the proceedings before the IUSD governing board. As both parties were

notified in writing in advance of today's hearing, the board will take up the fourth ground first as a threshold matter because it can be resolved from the existing record alone.

The threshold question is whether the existing district record establishes that relevant and material evidence, specifically video footage concerning the incident underlying the charges was improperly excluded from the June 1st, 2026, expulsion hearing. If the board finds that this evidence was improperly excluded, Ed Code section 48923(a) authorizes the board to either remand the matter to the IUSD governing board for reconsideration with or without—oh, sorry. Reconsideration or grant a hearing de novo before this board. If the board makes that finding and remands, it will not need to address the remaining three grounds at this hearing. If the board does not make that finding, the hearing will proceed to address the remaining three grounds and both parties will have the opportunity to present their positions. I want to be clear that this description of the order of proceedings does not indicate and should not be read to indicate how the board is inclined to rule. The board has not yet considered or acted. Because the board's review under section 48921 is ordinarily confined to the existing district record, the board will not view, receive, or consider the video footage itself as this hearing. The question before the board today is limited to whether the existing record establishes that this evidence was improperly excluded, not what the video shows, whether it favors either party or whether the people committed the charged conduct. Consistent with the board's adopted appeal procedures, each party invited will be provided three minutes to address this threshold issue. The appellant, Ms. Daniels, you may proceed.

DOMINIQUE: Don't start my time, but I'm going to be on the record. First of all, I put in writing, I requested a disability reasonable accommodation for a little more time. So, if the board has denied that, I need to make sure you guys state that on the record. I have vision issues and I have other disabilities that I will not disclose and that's why I put it in writing and I made it clear to the board that I needed that disability reasonable accommodation. If you guys do not grant me more time, you are effectively denying me access to use your services and programs. And so, I do need the extra time that I requested. So, if it's denied, I need you guys to state it on the record.

SHAW: How much time would you like?

DOMINIQUE: I asked for an extra three minutes.

SHAW: So you want six minutes?

DOMINIQUE: That's correct.

SHAW: Without objection.

DOMINIQUE: Thank you. Okay. I first want to make it—well, I need the time to say six so I could know.

CHASTAIN: We can only do three minutes at a time, so it'll do three minutes and we'll reset it for another three minutes.

DOMINIQUE: Okay. So, when you reset it, I'm asking you to stop it. I'll stop talking and then I'll proceed.

CHASTAIN: That's fine.

DOMINIQUE: Okay. So, first of all, I'm just making it clear that I am here to address each and every issue raised in my appeal. Neither me or Samir has waived any of our rights to be before this board and have each issue addressed. And in addition to the grounds that's in the appeal, I just want to make it clear that the Irvine School District does not have jurisdiction to expel the child for any of the allegations that's alleged because they're required by law to satisfy each and every element to the allegations against the child, and that has not been accomplished to this day. Second, the school district excluded the video recording, which they mentioned it in front of the panel, and it is relevant. I requested multiple times during the hearing because that proves my child's innocence and they withdrew that and they hid it and they concealed it. And that's a direct violation of California Penal Code section 135 because that video was anticipated on being used and it's a crime as well to hide, conceal, destroy evidence that's foreseeable to a hearing in a proceeding and his exposure hearing was a proceeding. It wasn't accidental. It was intentional because when you look at that clear video, the copy that I saw, not the copy that the school district provided you, my son was assaulted. My minor child was assaulted twice from your school staff and they did it to hide and cover up the assault and battery. School district are mandated reporters.

They didn't report that, but what they did was they retaliated and they discriminated against the black kid, treated him differently, and he was acting in self-defense. When you look at the panel's ruling, they didn't even consider self-defense. They ignored the arguments. That's not even considered in their decision. The elements are not even stated in the panel's decision. So, the board and the panel expelled the child without substantial evidence and violation of his due process in the ed code. It's based solely off of hearsay. They're using statements, unverified statements from children at the school to expel the child. Samir was not allowed to cross-examine them, ask them questions. The district was supposed to make a finding under Ed Code 48918(f)(2) or the panel that it presents an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm to the kid, of the students, the witnesses. That was the only grounds that they was allowed to exclude. And the reason that Mr. Tatum stated was, "I don't want to put them through that." So, they intentionally withholding evidence and violating my son due process rights, and we're going to continue to fight this.

And then I also want to say, you guys could sit up here and look at me and act like you don't know that you already reached a resolution. There's a conflict of interest. The Irvine School District know I'm going to sue the hell out of them and they're avoiding liability. You guys know my advocacy because I had you guys named in a lawsuit. I believe that based off the facts and evidence known to me, you guys are conspiring to violate our due process rights. It's intentional. And no matter what you do here, that is not going to stop Ms. Daniels for advocating, and you should know that. Also, the panel was influenced by Tim Tatum. During deliberations, Tim Tatum emailed me and said, "Hey, I talked to the panel and they wanted to see the video." So why are you talking to the panel after the exposure hearing has already expired? It's a conflict. It's a conflict of interest. It's a direct violation of my son's rights. When you look at the elements of the allegations against the kid, and when you look at the panel's decision, it doesn't reflect.

What it does reflect is that the panel is making decisions saying legal decisions as if they're an attorney saying that the school district didn't violate no laws. That show you what it is. The panel is trying to protect the school district from liability and infringe on Samir's procedure due process rights and it's clear and the facts and the evidence show it. And I'm going to tell you straight up, I don't expect you guys to do the right thing. You guys never do the right thing. You have a legal obligation of—you don't have to like me. I don't like you neither. You don't have to like my son.

He don't even know you, but you have a legal obligation to look at the facts, not to hide evidence, not to conspire, not to protect the interest of the school district, but the law and this kid. And I do not expect neither one of you guys up here to do the right thing because you know you would not. You guys sit here and look innocent. You sit here and go on the record. You guys are cowards, criminals, thugs. Don't stop me because this is a protected activity because when you don't follow the law, you violating the ed code, your own board policies to hide when the evidence is right in your face. Yeah, I said it. I'm not here to beg you to do the right thing. The constitution and the law requires you to, and that's just what it is. Before you expel my son, give him due process. They suspended him without even giving him—they put him under continued suspension without even giving him a hearing. So, you guys could sit here and act like you haven't discussed this with the school district. You could sit here. I am not a fool. I know what shit look like and I know what it smells like and it's right here in front of me. So, if you're going to follow the law or you're not. If you wish to remand this back, that's just giving the school district time to cover up their mistakes and do it over. So, I'm asking for either you to affirm it or vacate it and I know what else that I need to do to get the resolution, but a remand would be futile and it would be unfairly prejudiced to Samir. I'm done.

SEEMA: Irvine Unified, you have three minutes.

ALEXANDRIA: Thank you. I just wanted to ask a quick question. I know that we had a threshold issue that we wanted to address first. Would you like me to stick just to the threshold issue with regarding to the video evidence? Thank you so much. So, thank you for giving us the opportunity to address you today. My name is Alexandria Davidson. Tim Tatum is with me. And with regard to the question of video evidence, what we wanted to say is that the appellant, and I'm going to use appellant or student rather than utilizing the student's name in public, the appellant was given notice on at least two, if not three separate occasions that they had the right to inspect and review copies of evidence and also had the right to present both oral and documentary evidence at the hearing. The appellant also has a separate right to request subpoenas from the school district to make sure that their preferred witnesses are also available at the hearing. The appellant did not afford themselves of either of these opportunities. No subpoenas were requested. The appellant was also given at least two opportunities to view the video evidence prior to the hearing and could have requested that the video evidence be presented at the hearing. The school site does not have an obligation to present all available evidence during their presentation of evidence at an expulsion hearing. They do present evidence that is relevant and beneficial to them. The individual who is up for expulsion themselves through an advocate or their legal counsel has an opportunity to then present additional evidence of their choosing. That opportunity was not taken. The other point that I wanted to bring up quickly as well is that while there was not a presentation of the video evidence at the hearing, that is accurate. Mr. Tatum had, or sorry, Dr. Tatum had reached out after the hearing within 24

to 48 hours to offer to reconvene the hearing so that the video evidence could be presented to the panel and that the appellant had the opportunity to question witnesses with regard to the evidence in the video, potentially present additional evidence with regard to the video and that opportunity was not taken. So, we do not believe that there was an unlawful exclusion of evidence considering that the evidence was not requested to be presented at the hearing by the appellant. I also wanted to mention that Penal Code section 135 does not apply in administrative hearings. Thank you.

SEEMA: Thank you.

SHAW: Very well. So at this stage, I think I'll ask the board if there are any questions for Dr. Paul or our general counsel regarding the record or the applicable law.

ROLEN: That's more appropriately done.

SHAW: So is it the will of the board that we convene to closed session?

WILLIAMS: I would recommend that.

SHAW: Very well. The board will be convening to closed session and we will come back shortly.

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

SHAW: So, the board met in closed session and voted 5-0 to remand the matter to Irvine Unified School District. So that concludes this hearing, right?

CHASTAIN: Ms. Daniels?

SHAW: You need to be at a microphone. This matter is closed. We will reconvene to open session at 5:00 PM.

[The Orange County Board of Education takes a break and returns.]

SHAW: Good evening, everyone. Great to see so many smiling faces out there. We will now reconvene this meeting of the Orange County Board of Education. As we begin, we wanted to kind of deviate from the agenda just a bit. Today is October 7th, 2026. Three years ago, October 7th, 2023, we unfortunately had a very horrific attack in Israel that were over 1,000. I was asking ChatGPT, I think the number murdered was around 1200 and about 251 people taken hostage and that obviously sparked that whole hostage crisis as well. So, I thought we've been talking

that it would be appropriate as we remember the three year anniversary of that tragedy, that horrible day, that we take a moment of silence. Thank you for that. And as is probably appropriate on a daylight today, we are lucky to have leading us an invocation Rabbi Stephen Einstein. So, Rabbi, welcome.

RABBI STEPHEN EINSTEIN: For our parents or our grandparents, there's a line of demarcation in their life experience, and that line of demarcation is Pearl Harbor, what happened before and then what happened after. For those of us who are old enough, not our young folks who are, one of whom's going to Washington DC, great job. But for the rest of us, our line of demarcation is 9/11. History was kind of divided between what came before and what came after. For Jews in Israel throughout the world, exactly as you mentioned, three years ago on this day was a line of demarcation. I might say it's always very special for me to come here to do invocations. I'm asked to come to many of our city councils and schools, et cetera, but I always receive a particularly warm welcome here and it's important for you to know that with the rise of antisemitism that we've seen, especially over these last three years, knowing that we have allies is very comforting. And so, this is a day of grieving, it is a day of mourning, and so I would like to offer traditional Jewish memorial prayer for those who were murdered. Oh God, full of compassion, who dwells on high and yes, with us in the depths. Grant perfect rest in the sheltering wings of your divine presence among the holy and pure who shine as the brightness of the firmament to those 1200 plus souls who were taken from their homes, from the dance floor, innocent people. We ask, take them now to their eternal home. Author of mercy, bring all of them under the shelter of your wings. Let their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life for you, oh God, are their inheritance. We ask that they rest in peace and we all say amen.

BARKE: Amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

SHAW: Thank you. Rabbi, that was beautiful and we just want to extend our condolences to the Jewish people who've gone through some very difficult years the last few years, and you always have friends with the Orange County Board of Education. We love you. We value your friendship and you're always welcome here. I didn't arrange this, but can I ask my friend Maribel Marroquin to lead us in the pledge? Can you do that? Sorry to throw a curve ball at you.

MARIBEL: What an honor. Thank you so much. Everybody place your right hand over your heart. Ready? Begin.

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.

SHAW: All right. You did a terrific job. Thank you. Aracely, are there any introductions?

CHASTAIN: There are no introductions.

SHAW: Very well. We will move to item number six, special presentation from the Orange County Red Ribbon Week Campaign. Dennis Cole, what do we have tonight?

COLE: Good evening, Dr. Bean, President Shaw and honored trustees. Red Ribbon Week is our nationwide drug prevention awareness campaign, which is observed each year from October 23rd to 31st. Inspired by the sacrifice of DEA Special Agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, it brings schools, families, law enforcement, and community organizations together to encourage young people to make healthy drug-free choices. The relationship between the Orange County Board of Education, the Orange County Department of Education, and the Orange County Sheriff's Department is especially important because protecting students requires a coordinated community effort. OCDE connects prevention resources and education with schools across the county, while the Sheriff's Department and the Sheriff's Advisory Council bring trusted law enforcement leadership, community partnerships, and direct support for students. This year, our friends at the Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council packed almost half a million red ribbon wristbands, one for every student in Orange County, including our charter schools this year and private schools that participated as well. And together, we reinforce a clear and consistent message, student safety and wellbeing are shared responsibilities, and every young person deserves the support needed to make positive choices and to thrive. So tonight we welcome four honored guests to accept a red ribbon resolution from the board. And so, I'm proud to introduce to the board tonight Sergeant Gerry McCann from the Sheriff's Department and Maribel Martinez Waldron, executive director of the Sheriff's Advisory Council, along with two of her staff who are leading this charge, Kiersten Oliver and Brandy Rojas. And so, I'll hand it back to you, Mr. President, and then we can do the resolution.

SHAW: Okay. So do I hear a motion to approve item number six?

BARKE: So moved.

WILLIAMS: I make a motion.

BARKE: I'll second it.

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

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

SHAW: Passes unanimously. That's wonderful. Should we pause and take a picture and give them a—are we going to do that now? All right. Mari's a little worried about the shoes she's wearing, but we won't embarrass her.

BARKE: In my defense, I had really big shoes I was going to wear and I left them by the door because I got a phone call from work.

PHOTOGRAPHER: All right everybody, big smile. One, two, three. Perfect. One more. One, two, and three. Awesome. Thank you guys, I appreciate it.

WILLIAMS: Ken and I agree, Mari's shoes are wonderful.

BARKE: Really good thing I don't drive barefoot or I'd have no shoes.

SHAW: Okay. Item number seven, adopt a resolution in support of recognizing October 23rd to October 31st as Orange County's Red Ribbon Week.

WILLIAMS: I think we did that.

SHAW: Oh, I'm sorry. That was number six. Yeah, you're right. So now we'll go to item number eight, special presentation, recognition of Logan Thielen, winner of the 2026 National Civics Bee California State Finals. All right, Dennis, you're on again.

COLE: Well, hello again, President Shaw and Dr. Bean and our esteemed trustees. Brea Junior High School seventh grader, Logan Thielen. His interest in civics began with a book he got from his father. Reading about battles that changed history sparked Logan's curiosity about our nation's past and eventually led him to participate in the National Civics Bee, a competition that challenges middle school students to demonstrate their knowledge of government and civic engagement while proposing solutions to issues in their communities. Earlier this year, Logan won the regional round of the National Civics Bee at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library. He then earned first place at the 2026 National Civics Bee California State Finals, and I think we see a huge trophy over from that. Man, that was held June 27th at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Tonight we are joined by Logan and his family, his father Mike, his mother Jenna, and his sister Olivia, and they will travel to Washington DC where Logan will represent California at the 2026 National Civics Bee Championship on Wednesday, October 14th next week. So, we wish him the very best as he represents California and Orange County on the national stage. So, I'll hand it back over to you.

SHAW: Awesome. Well, let's give it up for Logan. The biggest trophy I've won in my life is about a third the size of that. I would say don't lose it, but I don't think it'd be possible to lose that.

CHASTAIN: We have a certificate for you to give him.

SHAW: We're going to do a picture. All right, let's do another picture.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Perfect. Okay everybody. I get the trophy in there. Okay. Big smile. One, two, three. Awesome. Couple more. We do a quick adjustment and one, two, and three. Perfect. Thank you, guys.

WILLIAMS: Not too many young men know Stonewall Jackson.

SHAW: Maybe you'll be on Jeopardy one day or something. We'll see. We'll be watching for you. Okay. You guys can take off if you'd like. Those who are here for—we're going to get into less exciting stuff.

BARKE: Or you can stay.

SHAW: Whatever you'd like, whatever you'd prefer. Okay. For public comments, looks like we have five.

VALDES: Okay. I am going to read the first...

CHASTAIN: I'm sorry we have…

VALDES: Oh. We're going to do the, all right.

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 of the meeting 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. I am going to read the first name and the person who is on deck. Rudi Krause is first. Heidi Landgraf is on deck.

RUDI: Thank you. This is the latest ongoing multicultural global crime that you guys are involved in. You are the enablers of this crime by what you teach. This is happening in France right now. *France is burning. France is burning. It's terrifying. France is burning. The Muslims rioting, the media not covering. It's terrifying. White teachers burning.* This has been going on for a week. This is the second week. This started with a bunch of Muslim high school students with their false claims or their justification of school conditions. We got bad school conditions, so we have to start rioting and torching up teachers and yeah, torching up teachers with aerosols, with a match, flame on. And then there's the firefighter who, they just stood around, he's burning and they're doing clicks and likes and laughing. This is the Muslim mentality. These are barbarian acts and you guys push this with multiculturalism and diversity because it wasn't for the Mexicans or the Chinese or the Filipinos or all the other cultures that assimilate.

No, diversity and multiculturalism had a hidden agenda. It was by Obama. It was to usher in the Muslims under the umbrella of all of the other cultures that do assimilate because the Muslims couldn't get in by themselves because rape, pedophilia was too obvious. They had to be included. And you guys got played and you guys pushed it with no questions, zero. I find that really preposterous. How could you not know? Now imagine we're the US Department of Education. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10. We'll take someone from here, 11. I'm 12. Here's the concept. We have a new concept, diversity, multiculturalism, tolerance of all disenfranchised groups. What's the mission statement? Well, we want to bring everyone up. Well, who are we including? Mexicans, Japanese, everyone else? And then you slip in Muslims. And you guys all say, "Okay, but I say no." And you say, "They'll change over time." No, they don't change over time.

VALDES: Okay. Heidi Landgraf is up and Karen Jaffe, you are on deck.

HEIDI: Good evening, President Shaw, honored Board Members and esteemed Superintendent Dr. Bean. My name is Heidi Landgraf and as all of you know, I have been with Suncoast from the very beginning. I am proud to report and speak on behalf of our entire staff at our new school, Suncoast Charter. We surpassed our original enrollment number, a milestone made possible by the commitment of our students, families, staff, and community. This year there are more opportunities for our high school students. We're expanding pathways for students through our career and technical education, CTE program, and a new entrepreneurship program where they get to create a business from ideation, product development, marketing, sales, and pitching to investors within six months to monetize a product, service, app or a brand. They become founders of their businesses with guided mentors and created online seminars with top companies like Google, HP and LinkedIn programs.

Awards are given and top candidates are placed in an incubator for further support and development. During my in-person classes, students ages five to 14 are engaged in a hands-on film production working together to write and produce an adaptive screenplay of Harry Potter. The entrepreneur class I host weekly is already gaining momentum and looking to culminate in a holiday market this December where students can showcase their business ventures with their families. I've had the pleasure of witnessing these collaborative opportunities help forge strong lasting bonds between our families. We offer a well-rounded weekly online learning as well. Our incredible teachers host engaging classes each week that support students' academic, creative and personal growth. Weekly field trips give students hands-on, engaging experiences and opportunities to explore different locations such as our beaches, parks, hikes, aquarium, space center, kayaking, snorkeling at La Jolla, and exploring nature on hikes around Orange County and other counties.

And that's just like in the last two months. We are looking forward to this November 4th meeting, this upcoming meeting where our students will present speeches honoring our veterans. We're deeply grateful to our school board for its leadership and unwavering continued support. That commitment matters, especially as you have had to navigate criticism and challenges from school districts and Sacramento politicians. We're proud of what our community has accomplished and excited to keep creating meaningful opportunities for our families we serve. Thank you for your time.

VALDES: Okay. Karen Jaffe, you are up and Heidi Gasca, you are on deck.

KAREN: Thank you. Three years ago today, our world changed forever. We remember the lives stolen. We honor the heroes who ran toward danger. We hold in our hearts the families whose lives will never be the same. October 7th left a wound that time cannot erase, but it also reminded us of the strength of a people, my people, who refuse to be broken. We'll continue to stand together and fight Jew hatred wherever it appears. We won't be intimidated into silence and we won't allow those who glorify or excuse terror to hijack the narrative or rewrite what happened. Hatred is not born. It is taught. That's why education matters so deeply. True education seeks the truth, honors facts, invites hard questions and teaches young people to see the humanity in one another. Indoctrination does the exact opposite. It replaces understanding with slogans, replaces history with propaganda and curiosity with contempt.

We've seen where indoctrination leads and we refuse to let it take root in our schools. You refuse to let it take root in our schools, on our campuses or in our communities. We will keep standing up for classrooms where facts are taught honestly, where students learn to think rather than simply repeat and where every student, including every Jewish student can learn without fear. Education is how we protect the truth for the next generation. I am deeply grateful for the Orange County Board of Education for its support and for the opportunity to share these words tonight and to stand amongst this community. On a day as heavy as this one, it means so much not to stand alone. Your commitment to education grounded in truth and to the safety and dignity of every student gives us real hope for the future we're working to build together. We remember the truth. We stand together. We choose light over darkness, courage over fear, knowledge over hate and hope over despair. May the memories of those we lost forever, three days ago today, three years ago today, forever be a blessing. We'll carry their light forward. We'll never forget October 7th.

VALDES: Okay, Heidi Gasca, you are up and Karen Shaw is on deck.

HEIDI: Good evening, President Shaw, Trustees of the Board and Superintendent Dr. Bean. My name is Heidi Gasca, the superintendent of Excel Academy, and I'm just here tonight to say hello and thank you for your partnership. We started our school under Orange County just 44 days ago and we're off to a great start. We have 267 students enrolled. 202 of those are in grades TK through six and 65 are in grades seven through 12. We already have something very special to celebrate. One of our seniors has been accepted to Westmont College, so we're very excited. That's the first of many to come, college acceptances. And I just wanted to share tonight how much we enjoyed meeting the board liaison, Nikole. She came out to our office on September 24th and then joined us for one of our community events last Friday. It was really a pleasure getting to know her and we sincerely appreciated her desire to connect with our school and our team and learn more about what our students were doing in our school and out in our community. Thank you again for your trust that you've placed in Excel Academy and we will continue to lead with integrity, transparency, collaboration and high expectations. Thank you.

VALDES: Okay, Karen Shaw, you are going to close it out.

KAREN: Thank you. I hadn't planned on speaking, so I don't have anything prepared, but I wanted to make a comment regarding the Red Ribbon Week and I asked the sheriff to stay. I am

a mother of a child that did not make it because of fentanyl poisoning, and I feel very strongly that this is more than just a rubber stamp on this Red Ribbon Week, and I would like to possibly reach out to those in charge. I'd be happy to help with the curriculum to address the needs of parents, parents like me that didn't know what to do when their child started using. I have been involved with addiction recovery program for family support for many years even after my son passed. I have had many years of training as a participant in the principles of boundaries and just giving them the opportunity to make the right choices and how to try to manage that. It's a very, very difficult position that families find themselves in. I think we need to really look and go a little bit deeper and make sure that children and families are having good communication and there's no bullying and things like that at school. But I would also suggest that perhaps a parent meeting or some kind of class or literature would be appropriate as we look at this week and see the needs of our community. And that's all I had to say. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

VALDES: Okay, President Shaw, that is it for our public comments.

SHAW: Very well. Thank you. The consent calendar this evening is item number nine.

BARKE: I'll move to approve the consent calendar.

VALDES: I second.

SHAW: All in favor?

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

SHAW: Item number 10, charter submissions. Aracely.

CHASTAIN: We had one charter submission. Orange County Workforce Innovation High School submitted their renewal on September 10th. Their public hearing will be on November 4th and board action will be on December 2nd. That's all.

SHAW: Very well. Thank you. We will proceed to item number 11, charter school public hearing, Citrus Springs Charter School renewal charter petition. Aracely Chastain, are you leading us off here?

CHASTAIN: I am. Thank you. The board will now hold a public hearing to receive input regarding the renewal petition submitted for Citrus Springs Charter School. Citrus Springs Charter School submitted its renewal petition on September 2nd. The school's current charter term was scheduled to expire on June 30th. However, pursuant to extensions codified in state law, the charter term was extended through June 30th of 2027. Based on applicable state performance criteria, Citrus Springs Charter School is classified as a middle performing school and its renewal is being considered under the renewal standards set forth in Education Code 47607. Consistent with those standards, the board will consider academic performance as well as the school's educational program, fiscal condition, governance practices and compliance with applicable laws. Before public comments, charter representatives are allotted 15 minutes to

address the board. I now invite the representatives from Citrus Springs Charter Schools to the podium.

MICHELLE: Alrighty. Well, thank you very much. Good evening, President Shaw, Members of the Board, Superintendent Bean, staff. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here tonight. My name is Michelle Sheane. I'm the assistant superintendent at Springs Charter Schools. You've seen me here the last couple of months. I was wearing an orange hat and I was here for Orange Springs Charter School, but tonight I have a fake yellow hat on and I'm here proud to be here representing Citrus Springs Charter Schools and the students and families that we serve here in Orange County. Our mission has remained consistent over the last 25 years, empower students, engage parents, and provide a personalized learning program around each individual student. Citrus Springs is supported by experience and infrastructure of the whole entire Springs network. For more than 25 years, Springs has operated personalized learning, public charter school with an emphasis on strong authorized relationships, financial stability, accountable governance, and continuous professional development. Today, Springs includes 10 schools in 24 locations with over 13,000 students all focused on this one mission. At Citrus Springs, personalized learning isn't simply about where a student learns. It's about how we design learning that is truly student driven. Parents are active partners alongside credentialed teachers. Students have multiple pathways, set goals, they monitor their own progress and pursue their interests. And then when additional support is needed, we do respond with targeted instruction and interventions. The best way that you can look at it is through the lens of one of our students, and I'd like you to meet Kira.

[Video plays]

KIRA: I love the ocean. I also love building things, so of course I put those two things together. Coral bleaching is a really bad problem. I actually had to go every day to collect footage just to get a time lapse of a coral bleaching. I was like, "You know what? I don't think marine biologists should go through all of this to get the data that they need." So, I decided to make a device called CORAL. So, this is CORAL. It stands for Continuous Observation and Research for Aquatic Life, and it's essentially like a marine monitoring device that takes data and footage of its surroundings that will help marine biologists understand how the ocean is changing. I was really grateful for all this opportunity that Springs gave me, and I really hope that I can do great things in the future.

[Video ends]

SHAW: How old is she?

MICHELLE: I think seventh grade? She's12.

SHAW: Wow.

MICHELLE: And she is a great example of what can happen when a student's interest really becomes part of their learning. I'm going to turn it over to Jared.

JARED: Thank you. Good evening board and superintendent. My name is Jared McLeod. I'm the senior director of student achievement and assessment. So, I get a fun job of looking at test

scores and data all the time, so I'm here to play that role tonight. But as you can see in the data, Springs is currently qualified as a middle performing school. Before we get to the academics, we want to talk about who we serve, and who we serve is 70% of our students are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and nearly 17% we are serving students with disabilities and also English learners and students experiencing homelessness. Our enrollment spans TK through 12, and as you can see in the bottom of that chart, it's very balanced. We have a very balanced group between TK-5, 6-8, and high school. Now, looking at the state Dashboard, we're all eagerly anticipating the new Dashboard coming out next week, but for what we have for the 2025 Dashboard, we have multiple indicators showing strong academic performance. And so, in English language arts, Citrus Springs is green. They have improved over 11 percentage points and just 2.9 points behind standard. Even more importantly, ELA growth is measured as accelerated. So, as we look to hold accountability that every child is growing, the indication is that we are growing an accelerated rate. And for math average, and that's doing great, we're continuing to work on math. Math remains an area of focus and Citrus Springs has already responded with targeted supports, including a new math curriculum, and we're looking closely at our upcoming CAASPP results for improvement and celebrations that we will share with you once they are received.

On a recent LCAP survey, we had a huge response from our parents. Over 90% of our parents showed a positive calling about our school, and over 96.6% attendance rates of kids actively pursuing their education. Tonight, you'll also hear directly from some of our families who have chosen this model for their children. So, for 10 years, Citrus Springs has operated under the authorization and strong oversight of the Orange County Board of Education. We value the relationship we've built with the Orange County Board of Education and the Orange County Department of Education. We look forward to continuing that partnership together. Our record meaningfully shows that we are fulfilling that promise we're making to the students, academic progress, engagement to families and students, and a community that is helping every single student succeed. On behalf of our students, our families, and staff, and our governing board, Citrus Springs respectfully requests a five-year renewal term from July 1st, 2027, through June 30th of 2032. Sounds weird to say that, but thank you very much for your partnership and your consideration here tonight. Our team is available if you have any questions. Thank you so much.

CHASTAIN: Thank you. The hearing is now open for 15 minutes of public The comment. Trustee Valdes, please call for the first speaker.

VALDES: Okay. I'm going to read off the first name and then the person on deck. Jose Tapia is up right now and Emily Pennington is on deck.

JOSE: Good afternoon, President Shaw, esteemed Board and Superintendent Bean. My name is Jose Tapia and I am the proud president of the Santa Ana Educator Association. I represent over 2,000 unit members. I am also a special education teacher and have been for the last eight and a half years. And I'm a former OCDE employee of the ACCESS Division. I'm asking you tonight to put students first and vote no on the renewal of Citrus Springs Charter School. Santa Ana is currently home to 18 charter schools, a disproportionate amount of charters. I have seen firsthand the consequences of what happens when the charter schools fail our students. Just last year alone, we had a student who was enrolled in a charter. The student had a visual impairment. The parent withdrew her because there was no progress made at the charter. Currently, we have a school

board member, a candidate who's running for school board. She withdrew her two children from our education system in Santa Ana, put them in a charter, brought them back because the charter system was not able to provide the services that her children needed.

Citrus Springs' own petition tells a troubling story about some of the children who need our public schools the most. In 2025, students with disabilities were 75.3 points below standard in ELA and 129 points below standard in mathematics. And this isn't one bad year. Citrus Springs acknowledges in its own LCAP that students with disabilities receive the lowest performance level in both ELA and math on the 2023 California Dashboard. Those aren't just numbers. Those are children, children with IEPs, children learning to read, children struggling with math, children whose families have entrusted us with their education. Santa Ana families do not have to choose between flexibility and their public school system. Santa Ana Unified already operates an independent study program. We already have the Santa Ana Virtual Academy offering a flexible, virtual education and support for students with IEPs.

Santa Ana operates its own SELPA, providing a full continuation of services, continuum of services for students with disabilities. The question I ask the board is simple. What educational need is Citrus Springs providing to Santa Ana students that SAUSD cannot provide? Citrus Springs is classified as middle performing, but that designation should not become a shield behind which struggling children disappear. The petition itself recognizes that California's renewal process requires consideration of school-wide performance on the performance of all student subgroups with greater weight given to academics. So don't just look at the average, look at the child behind the average. Put students before institutions, put their education before organizational interest. I urge you to vote no on the renewal. Thank you.

VALDES: Thank you. Emily Pennington is up and Tara Flattley is on deck.

EMILY: Good evening. I've been a parent with our program now with Springs for six years and I've got three kids in elementary school currently. And a year and a half ago we were here in this room fighting to stay alive and you all were so kind and so gracious to us, but your hands were tied. Little did we know that the seed had to die in order to flourish. Springs then took us under their wings and has rolled out the red carpet for us, which has finally given us the chance to become all that we knew that we could be all along. And it's absolutely incredible. The hybrid model, the hands-on learning, all grades studying the same topics at the same time, curriculum choice and the staff. I cannot say enough about the phenomenal staff who all gush over being with Springs now, by the way. I talk about it so much that all of our friends and all of our siblings and all of our church group has all now started at Springs. And every time I see them, they just say, "Emily, it's even better than we thought. Thank you so much for sending us here." All that to say, I just wanted to say thank you. Thank you for the huge part that you play in making it possible for Springs to exist. Our family is eternally grateful.

VALDES: Tara Flattley is up read by Julianna Hubbell and Christine Hennessy-Capuano is on deck.

JULIANNA: Yes. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to read this statement on behalf of our parent Tara. She says, "My name is Tara Flattley and I am a resident of Santa Ana, a former nonprofit executive and mother of four. My husband and I both hold master's degrees

and place a high value on education. I'm writing to encourage your renewal of Citrus Springs Charter School. My eldest child is currently in seventh grade. In addition to being a COVID kindergartner, four months before going fully remote, her teacher went on maternity leave, leaving her with a full-time substitute just before COVID shut her school down. The following year, we chose to begin homeschooling when the private school that she was enrolled in decided to remain fully remote. She was fully homeschooled for first, second, and third grade before we discovered the hybrid charter option. She finished elementary school repeatedly scoring at or above grade level in all academic content areas and with many strong peer friendships despite the impact of COVID on the beginning of her educational journey.

When it came time for middle school, she was curious about what other school options were out there. She decided she wanted to experience a traditional five day in-person school for middle school. And after three months in that private school, she was feeling unchallenged academically and disillusioned socially. As we approached Thanksgiving break, she asked to return to homeschool for the remainder of the year and we spent that Thanksgiving break looking at curriculum options as she gave input about what excited her about returning to homeschool. This past August, she was thrilled to return to the hybrid program for seventh grade. And on the other end of the spectrum is my third grader. After two years of monitoring social and academic development, both in classroom and at home, she was diagnosed with ADHD and ODD. In addition to the plentiful resources, both in person and virtually provided by her classroom teacher and the campus support staff, I am able to give my daughter the individualized attention that she needs. I firmly believe that her academic and social success is due to the flexibility provided by the hybrid model to meet her unique academic, social and emotional needs. Our ability as a family to maintain an academically rigorous curriculum that focuses on mastery provides the opportunity for my children to both excel and receive extra individualized support as needed throughout the school year. The hybrid model also affords our family the flexibility to focus on social emotional health of our children.

In addition to the academic content that we cover, we have been able to help them understand their individual learning styles, cultivate time management skills, learn how to advocate for themselves when their needs are not being met and what it means to give back to their community and serve their neighbors. We view this opportunity as priceless as we prepare them for their lives as informed and engaged citizens. The hybrid charter model provided by Springs may not be the right fit for every student or family, but it has had a tremendously positive impact on my children and I urge you to continue to make this critical option available to families like mine. Thank you for your consideration".

VALDES: Okay. Christine Hennessy-Capuano is our last speaker.

CHRISTINE: Okay. Capuano, but it's Italian. It's hard to say.

VALDES: Sorry.

CHRISTINE: Thank you, OC Board of Education for taking the time to hear about our school. It's unique. It's different. A lot of people maybe don't even know that much about a two-day hybrid school and I have been with this same program and the preceding programs. This is my 19th year and all five children of my children went through it. My oldest, who is about to turn

25, went to kindergarten in our school district, which is a wonderful school district, top 10 rated school. It did not suit him. He would drum and he's in a band presently. He went to a performing arts high school for Pop Rock in Huntington Beach, and he also took two years of culinary in high school and he works full-time in catering. He was so well set up through our first through eighth grade that he was there and so encouraged and so appreciated for who he was. He went into honors English. All three of our older ones did go into a full-time high school after our eighth grade through our school in honors English, one two in honors history and one in AP calculus and one in AP statistics by their senior year.

So, they were very well served in this school. I still have two young children that are presently at the school and one is again scoring above 95th percentile. He's also a musical. We have time for music lessons. We have time in the afternoons for sports, but that's not why we do this program. It's because of our wonderful teachers and staff. We've had the same principal that has been involved there for about the same amount of time as I have, that many years. We call ourselves lifers. Now one of my youngest is also in special ed services and she has dyslexia. She has an IEP. She is also so well served through our school. She gets two hours of one-on-one tutoring and our special ed teacher is so encouraging and she feels just as loved and appreciated as all of our other children did. Our school meets children where they're at, whether they're in the middle, whether they're high academically, low academically, and helps them to strive and to reach their potential. All of my children have also been engaged with community services. They have all coached in junior high and high school at a local sports program and our 12-year-old daughter also just started this past summer also volunteering there. So, our school is so special and serves so many families just like ours in different ways. All the students graduate with great friendships and love school. Thank you.

VALDES: That is it for public comments, President Shaw.

SHAW: All right.

CHASTAIN: The public hearing is now concluded. The Orange County Department of Education staff will publish recommendations including recommended findings by November 17th and the board will take action at the December 2nd meeting. President Shaw, I now close a public hearing and return the meeting to you.

SHAW: Thank you. I wonder if I could ask you guys some questions. There was a pretty strong comment there about the services being provided to special ed. How many students do you have an IEP? Would you know that?

MICHELLE: 32.

SHAW: 32 students?

MICHELLE: By 16.8 with around 500 kids. That's my best guess.

SHAW: 16.8 what?

MICHELLE: 16.8% at 500 kids.

SHAW: Okay. So as a percentage, it's 16.8?

MICHELLE: Yes.

SHAW: Can you speak to how your special ed program runs?

MICHELLE: I certainly can. So, we have a full continuum of services, whether a student's online 100% in the classroom 100% or somewhere hybrid in between. So, each student has a case manager. We offer SAI services. We offer full occupational therapy, speech language. We have every service available. We don't often buy spots back in a district because we can't provide something. We're fully inclusive and our students are making great gains. I don't have the specific data in front of me, but I do know that our students are making good gains in distance from standard. Of course, they are going to be less than the general population as their disability is going to be a bit of a hindrance, but we can bring you that complete data, their difference with Santa Ana and the state.

SHAW: Do you know how many of your teachers have a special ed credential?

MICHELLE: So, every single one of our special ed teachers has a special ed credential. So, in our ratio is somewhere between 20 and 26 to one. In Citrus, we serve both mild to moderate and we have extensive needs students who take a separate exam also.

SHAW: Okay. Who'd like to lead us off? Dr. Sparks, are you ready?

SPARKS: I really don't have anything to say. I've followed you all over the years. You're doing such an amazing job. I've read through the renewal and I'm feeling really strong and confident about it.

SHAW: Okay. Vice President Valdes.

VALDES: I don't know why Mr. Tapia, who makes his comments and then just walks out, but I'm a little less concerned, Michelle, about people occasionally being dissatisfied. I represent the city of Santa Ana and I can tell you that there are thousands of people dissatisfied with the Santa Ana Unified School District. Quite literally thousands, and I have spoken with hundreds of them. But I am concerned about your reporting 2.9% below standard for ELA and 50 point something percent below standard for math. What does that mean?

MICHELLE: I could answer that, but Jared gets paid to answer that question. Jared, I'm going to give that to you.

JARED: Yeah. I mean, full transparency, math is a struggle for, I think, most in the state. It is a concern in our schools and we're doing our best to address it. I think that's what gives us hope as a charter school is that we notice those findings ourselves. We analyze what to do about it and we decided let's change the curriculum. Let's try something different. I think that's really what our families appreciate about that is not being stuck to something that's not obviously working. This population in Citrus is really dynamic because they're a non-seat based program. So, some kids come to our program only for one year. So, when you're looking at state Dashboard data,

you're really comparing two groups of kids when you look at schools like us. You're looking at kids that came for just one year, they're gone, and now you're comparing them to a whole another cohort of students. So, I think what we're looking at is when you look at the growth data, and I know it's not one of those renewable points right now, but the special ed students are in the accelerated category for ELA and they're in the average category for math. So average is nowhere we want to be. We want to be accelerating every student, but we're working towards that. So, I think 50 is definitely a shock to us too. We want to be better.

VALDES: But for myself and for the public, what does that technically mean? 50% or 50 below standard?

JARED: 50 points. So, 50 points away. So standard is zero on the state scale of achievement. So being at zero would be on grade level. So that's what we're saying. We're 50 points away from being on grade level for the average student in math. For ELA, about two points.

VALDES: And that's across the whole school, and that includes the kids with the IEPs?

JARED: Yes, sir. It's all students.

VALDES: Okay. What are you guys going to do about that?

JARED: I think as it mentions in the slideshow presentation, we have just changed the curriculum last year. It's going to take a second for our teachers to be trained on the new curriculum, for staff to be trained on that, and to partner with parents. This is a non-seat based program. So as much as teachers are supporting, they're advising families that are making this choice to select their own curriculum and to go through the educational journey that's parent led. So, I think a lot of it comes down to also teaching our parents how to teach because they are essentially taking on that responsibility as a homeschool family, which is beautiful, but it's also... It wouldn't be my strong suit if I was homeschooling my children, but I would have to learn to get better at that so my children could thrive in math. So, I think for us, it's a reflection on both what we can do and how we can support parents better in that non-traditional sense.

They're not coming to a classroom sitting in rows and we're teaching math. Families are doing that. So, it's like how do we bridge that gap? I think our homeschool staff has done a wonderful job of leading parent conferences and offering opportunities for the parents to get some more training on that, and our teachers are doing a wonderful job supporting our families with that. So, I'm strongly encouraged when the test scores come out next week, we'll be looking at that Dashboard and we'll hopefully be seeing some growth that we've seen.

VALDES: I know I'll be looking at it.

JARED: Yes, sir. We will too.

VALDES: But I just cannot stress to you enough, coming back here for a renewal for me, I'm looking at your performance.

JARED: Of course.

VALDES: And 50% below standard just isn't very good.

SHAW: 50 points.

JARED: I just want to clarify it's 50 points.

VALDES: 50 points.

JARED: I think the state is around 40 points below standard, so we're not so far off as a state. So, I just want to clarify that. So, we're not 50% behind the state or anything drastic like that. The state is around 40 points is where students are on average. So that's why I started by saying math is a concerning notion for most of us in education. So, the state average is around 40, and so being at 50, of course, it's not where we want to be, but it's not so drastic that I would want to scare you or anything that we're doing anything like that.

VALDES: Okay.

JARED: Do you want to add any more?

JULIANNA: Yeah. I think too, Mr. Valdes, that it's important to remember the program that is being offered to our families and students in this particular charter school is really super personalized to how that student learns. We're not necessarily spending all day, every day teaching those kids how to take the test. And so, I think a lot of what we also see in the results sometimes can be clouded by those students are not as familiar with test taking, especially on the computer in that format. And so, we've really beefed up some programs and offerings that our families are able to take advantage of or that we encourage them to take advantage of that will help them prepare for that exam and the environment around that and kind of help build up their grit and ability to stick with a test.

VALDES: I appreciate that. I'm here to give parents their choices, but I want them to be excellent choices. And I have to come in when I see numbers like that and at least ask some hard questions and ask you guys what you intend to do to fix it. There are other schools with very similar demographic backgrounds that are reporting numbers that are much better than this. So, I just cannot stress to you enough how important I think it is for you to raise those math numbers.

MICHELLE: Thank you. Yes, sir.

SHAW: Okay. Trustee Barke.

BARKE: I don't have a lot to say, but you guys do a great job and I love the choice that you're bringing to the community. We really appreciate that. I don't have to belabor the math because Trustee Valdes did that for me. The one thing I appreciate is as a charter school, I know you can pivot, you're going to try a new curriculum and it's very easy for you to do that. I know that you'll keep your eye on it and pivot where necessary. So, thanks for all you do.

MICHELLE: Thank you.

SHAW: Dr. Williams.

WILLIAMS: What math curriculum do you use?

JARED: The core company is Savvas, but it's Envision is the product that we're currently using.

WILLIAMS: Okay. And that's different than last year, right?

JARED: We were using a platform curriculum associates, more of like a i-Ready math, but parents have a suite of choices, meaning this is a homeschool program, just as a reminder. So, we do have a catalog of our strongly recommended curriculums that parents choose from and we put Envision at the top as that we've seen more success with that curriculum.

WILLIAMS: I see. And more on the financial, what are your reserves?

MICHELLE: Oh. You met Trevor last month. He's in Riverside tonight doing the same meeting there. So, I don't have that in front of me, but it is in report and we can find it given a couple of seconds.

WILLIAMS: That's fine. You're over a million dollars, I bet.

MICHELLE: Oh yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

MICHELLE: In fact, it is our healthiest school, I believe.

WILLIAMS: Okay. So, your fiscal state is stable?

MICHELLE: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Strong?

MICHELLE: Very.

WILLIAMS: Okay. The number of students you serve?

MICHELLE: Over 500.

WILLIAMS: And what district do those kids come from primarily?

MICHELLE: It is a charter that is approved by Orange County, so it can serve online homeschool those home-based learning in Orange County and then any contiguous county.

CHASTAIN: Microphone, please.

MICHELLE: So, we serve students in over 26 of the counties. 26 of the districts in Orange County.

SHAW: We only have 28.

MICHELLE: I know.

WILLIAMS: So, you have 26 districts that you represent. There's 500 kids, so around what, 25 kids per district?

MICHELLE: 20-ish.

WILLIAMS: Okay. That's all the questions I have.

SHAW: Okay. Very good. So, we'll see you next time, I guess, right?

MICHELLE: Yes, very much. Thank you very much for your time.

SHAW: Okay. We'll proceed to item number 12, Charter School public hearing, Rocketship Anaheim Elementary appeal charter petition. Aracely will lead us off.

CHASTAIN: The board will now hold a hearing to consider public input regarding the charter petition appeal submitted by Rocketship Education to operate Rocketship Anaheim Elementary. On August 31st, Rocketship Education, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation submitted an appeal charter petition to the Orange County Board of Education following denial of the petition by the Anaheim Elementary School District governing board. Rocketship Education proposes to operate Rocketship Anaheim Elementary as a classroom-based charter school serving students in transitional kindergarten through grade six. Under Education Code 47605, the Orange County Board of Education is required to hold a public hearing on the provisions of the charter petition and consider the level of support for the petition by teachers, parents, guardians, and the school district where the charter school petitioners propose to locate. Tonight's public hearing provides an opportunity for the petitioner and members of the public to address the board regarding the proposed charter school. Prior to public comment, representatives from Rocketship Education have up to 15 minutes to address the board. At this time, I invite the representatives from the charter school to the podium.

JANINE: Good evening, President Shaw, esteemed Trustees, Dr. Bean and staff. In advance, I will say apologies if I start coughing mid, but I do have a cough drop in my mouth to help us get through. My name is Janine Ramirez, and it is wonderful to be here in community along so many people that deeply care about students and academic achievement, because for us at Rocketship Public Schools, it is a value that we also deeply share. And I'd love to share a little bit about how that story started for us. It was the fall of August 2007, 160 proud rocketeers, seven founding staff members, and a few classrooms that we lease from a local church in downtown San Jose. Rocketship opened our first campus ever, Rocketship Mateo Sheedy. Founding families always name all of our schools as they choose a name that honors their commitment to the community, and they named the school after Father Mateo Sheedy.

His parishioners were some of our founding families and they wanted to honor him in the school name for his deep commitment to the community. And to date, we are in our 20th year since we opened our first school, and we have grown from 160 rocketeers in one school to 10,000

rocketeers across 22 schools, founding new schools across different counties in California, Milt, Wisconsin, Tennessee, and Washington DC. And while we have learned so much along the way, our vision and mission remain the same. We believe that great schools are the foundation of the American promise of equal opportunity. We are committed to supporting children and families overcome barriers so that every child in our community can realize his or her dreams. Our vision is simple, yet ambitious, equal access to opportunity for all, as you see on the slide, and we define this as access to high-quality education, and that vision is what brings us to Orange County and specifically Anaheim.

We know this community is filled with families who have high hopes for their children and who are working hard every day to create brighter futures. I know this because families are sharing this with us, and we strongly believe that every child deserves access to an excellent school that prepares them not only for academic success, but also for a life of purpose, a life of choice and opportunity. Excellent elementary schools create stronger middle schools, which in turn build stronger high schools, become the foundation for students to thrive in college and the workforce and beyond. This is how Rocketship Public Schools helps contribute to the entire public education ecosystem in the community that we are privileged to serve. Longevity on its own is not what defines our success. It is our results, and tonight we look forward to sharing a little bit more about that with you and together make a vision of reality for more students in this community. And for that, I would like to invite Juan Mateos, our vice president of schools, to share more about our proven track record.

JUAN: Thank you, And good evening. Over the past 15 years as a member of the Rocketship community, I've seen what our Rocketship model can do firsthand, first as a fourth grade teacher, as a principal in East San Jose, and now as a network leader, and I'm particularly proud that those results have been validated by research from my own alma mater, Stanford Center for Research on Education Outcomes, or CREDO, conducted one of the largest studies of charter school performance in this country, and they evaluated three million students, 29 states across 13 years, and they found that our rocketeers gained the equivalent of 96 additional days of learning and reading and 138 additional days in math in a single school year. That's compared to similar students in traditional public schools. CREDO highlighted Rocketship as one of the nation's gap busting charter networks. That means that for us, that accelerated growth is how we help students catch up, close gaps, and get on the path towards long-term success, and those results come from the school model that we hope to bring to Anaheim, a model that we build around excellent teaching, around personalized learning, and a deep partnership with families.

We see that story reflected in our own California state assessment results. The vast majority of the students that we serve are socioeconomically disadvantaged, yet, as you can see here, our schools outperform the state and surrounding school districts where we currently serve or hope to serve students. And this matters for us because it reinforces the fundamental belief behind our model, which is that zip codes do not determine a child's potential because we believe that all students deserve the right to read, they deserve the right to dream, the right to discover, and the right to develop their unlimited potential. For Anaheim families, this means greater access to a public-school option with a demonstrated track record of helping students overcome gaps and achieve at a high level. When we broaden the lens, zoom out from social economically disadvantaged students to all students, that same pattern holds, as you can see here. These charts compare Rocketship's performance for all students in grades three through five with schools

across the Anaheim District. If Rocketship were included in this comparison today, our students would rank first in math and second in English language arts.

So, the story for us is consistent, strong outcomes for all students, and that's what we hope to bring to Anaheim, another high-quality public-school option where all students have the opportunity to thrive. How do we do it? Our track record of academic excellence is rooted in three pillars of our transformational school model. Number one, personalized learning. That means we tailor instruction, the experience for students, and the pace to make sure that we're unleashing the potential of every student. Two, talent development. That means we invest in the growth and development of every team member to unleash their full potential. I'm a testament to that. And three, parent power. Like you all, we deeply believe in the power of families to champion for their child's education and enable high-quality schools to thrive. I'd like to now invite our founding principal for our proposed Anaheim school, Ms. Riley St. Marie, to share a bit more about our model.

RILEY: Thank you, Mr. Mateos, and thank you all. I am so excited to be here tonight, and I'm excited to have the opportunity to be the proud founding principal of Rocketship Anaheim, working to build a school with the community that is truly grounded in excellence. And that excellence starts with what our students experience every single day. One of the things that makes Rocketship really unique is our rotational model. And throughout the day, students rotate through different learning environments. They go to see teachers who specialize in specific content, they get instruction in small group at their learning level, and they have an opportunity to go to the learning lab where they get additional practice, support, and hands-on learning experiences. And that same approach carries into how we use our data. Our teachers and leaders are constantly checking what students know and what they need to know. And we use that data to regroup students and adjust instruction in real time. We're not waiting for the next benchmark or the next assessment to make sure that students are getting what they need and deserve. And finally, every rocketeer has an individual growth goal. We know where every child is starting and where they're going. But just as importantly, our students who we call rocketeers also know their goals. They know what they're working towards. They get to own their growth and celebrate their successes along the way. This is what personalized learning looks like at Rocketship.

The second pillar of our model is talent development, and this is something I've experienced firsthand. I'd like to share a little story with you. When I came to Rocketship to interview nine years ago, I stepped into a kindergarten classroom hoping to teach them two plus three using apples and oranges. And I start to teach the instruction. One student raises her hand and she says, "We learned this a while ago. Can you give us a challenge?" That was my first development of what personalized learning looked like. In my first year as a first-grade teacher, Mr. Mateos walked into the room where I was teaching and he saw my instruction and in the moment, we wasted no time for him to support me in ensuring I could reach more students by determining the misconception and reteaching that part of the lesson. And when you see students get it, you see the light go off, it's a really great feeling. That's talent development. And as an assistant principal, I had the privilege to step into spaces and help teachers feel that success to lead to student success as well. And I've had the privilege the last three years to serve as a proud principal at a Rocketship school. Rocketship has continued to invest in me every step of the way, and now I have the opportunity and honor to bring that experience to Anaheim. That's what

talent development has looked like for me, and it's the same commitment we make to educators across the network.

Our third pillar is parent power, and this is truly at the heart of how we build our school communities. This partnership starts before the first day of school. Our teachers and leaders have home visits with families, not just to talk about grades or academics, but truly to get to know families and what their goals are for their students. But the home visit is really just the start. This communication goes all year long. It's constant, sharing progress, celebrating wins and discussing challenges. And every family has three dedicated family conferences each year, not just when a student is struggling. We believe families deserve to know their students' process through meaningful conversations consistently. And for our founding families, that connection goes even farther. They get to help us name the school, participate in interviews, and talk through what enrichment programs we might offer. They get to help build a school that is part of the greater Anaheim community. And we don't want families to just feel informed about their students' education. We want them to truly be a part of it. And when you put all of this together, it creates a really unique school experience. Students are challenged, teachers are supported, and families are true partners. And I am incredibly excited about the opportunity to build that experience with our families here in Anaheim.

JANINE: We'd like to close by returning to the purpose of charter schools in California. State law is clear about why charter schools exist, to improve student learning, expand opportunities, encourage innovative approaches to teaching, give families greater choice and deliver results. Rocketship has lived out this purpose since our founding 20 years ago, and the proposal before you today does the same. It brings a distinct proven educational model to Anaheim. It gives families another public option for their children, and it creates greater access to an educational model designed to help every single student grow. So, when we think about community benefit, we believe it begins with students and families. More students with access to high-quality educational opportunities is a community benefit. More families empowered to choose the public school that best meets their child's needs is a community benefit. And a public education system with different models, approaches, and opportunities, each accountable for delivering results strengthens the community as a whole. That is the opportunity we believe this school will bring to Anaheim. And with that, we'd like to thank you. We believe that together we can help more students unleash their full potential and thank you for your time.

SHAW: Thank you.

CHASTAIN: Thank you. We now open the public hearing for 15 minutes of comment regarding the Rocketship Anaheim Elementary Charter petition. Trustee Valdes, please call for the first speaker.

VALDES: We have 12 cards and you said…

CHASTAIN: We have 11, I believe.

VALDES: No, it says 12.

CHASTAIN: I think it's agenda item number 12.

VALDES: Okay. We have 11 cards and 15 minutes. So how are we going to go a minute and a half? All right. Well, let me count them.

SHAW: Just because you have a minute doesn't mean you have to take the full minute. That's a rule.

VALDES: I have 11 cards. Are we going to go a minute or a minute and a half?

SPARKS: Minute.

WILLIAMS: Minute.

VALDES: Minute. Okay. We're going to go one minute. Yolanda Bernal-Samano is speaking now and Laura Vega Hernandez is on deck.

YOLANDA: Good evening county trustees. My name is Yolanda Bernal-Samano and I am the proud parent of two rocketeers in San Jose, California, and they attend Rocketship Fuerza. I am also a parent board member on the Rocketship board of directors where I've served my term for over five years. Sending my children to Rocketship was one of the best decisions for my family. Not only did it provide a high-quality education for both of them, my children thrived in the classroom and I grew as a parent leader. Rocketship's commitment to parent engagement invited me to join the classroom in the Los Dichos program, serve on school site council and give feedback from parents and contribute as a parent board member over the last five years. Over the past several months, I've traveled down here and met with many exceptional parents and their students at house meetings, recruitment events, and community gatherings. We've shared our experiences, concerns, commonalities, goals.

VALDES: Okay. Laura Vega Hernandez is up and Melvis Cruz is on deck.

LAURA: Hello. Oh, hello. My name is Laura Vega Hernandez and I am here today to represent Rocketship alumni and the students and families of Anaheim. I experienced firsthand how Rocketship can change the direction of a student's life. As a young child, I had a speech impediment until the age of four and five years old. I began first grade at the church-based school, then I transitioned to Rocketship Mateo Sheedy. My mother worried that I might experience bullying or have difficulty adjusting. The school assured her that I would be supported and Rocketship kept that promise. My teachers recognized my challenges, but they also saw my potential. They encouraged me, challenged me, and taught me to persevere. Today, I hold a master's degree in child and adolescent development from San Jose State University. I now work in early childhood community services and the confidence, purpose and persistence I develop at Rocketship continue to shape the person and professional I am today. I am asking the Orange County Board of Education to approve Rocketship Anaheim because family to service school that recognizes every student's potential, supports children through challenges and gives them the tools to succeed inside and outside the classroom.

VALDES: Okay. Melvis Cruz, you are up and Leticia Bermudez is on deck.

MELVIS: Good evening. I have a three minute, but let's narrow this down. Good evening. My name is Melvis Cruz. I am a proud Rocketship Los Suenos parent, former Rocketship educator

and community advocate. Growing up, I attended Simonds Elementary School in South San Jose, even though my family lived in downtown. Simonds was recognized as a blue-ribbon magnet and distinguished school. Every morning I would board the bus at 6:45 AM to arrive by 8:30. My life in my neighborhood was also very difficult. My family regularly witnessed violence, prostitution, and other traumatic situations near our home. I experienced anxiety and often cried because I did not feel safe. In response, my family created a Mexican Folklorico dance group to teach children about their culture, traditions and roots. That experience helped me understand what I wanted for my own kids. I have five seconds and I want to thank you for your time, but I respectfully ask the Orange County Board of Education to approve Rocketship Anaheim Charter School and give the families the same opportunity. Thank you.

VALDES: Leticia Bermudez is up and Evelyn Recendez.

LETICIA: Good evening. I am reading this testimony on behalf of our parent leader, Angie. “Hello, my name is Angie. I am a longtime Anaheim resident and Anaheim School graduate. I'm a small business owner and serving the Anaheim community. I graduated because my mother kept me on track and consistently advocated for me. When my oldest son entered third grade at our neighborhood school, I became concerned about how his experience was affecting him. Although we created a positive environment at home, he would return feeling defeated saying that he was not smart enough. I advocated for my son and I exercised my right to enroll him at a different school. Since then, he has been thriving. My experience taught me how important it is for families to access high-quality educational options. Every child deserves to feel capable, supported, and proud who they are. I teach my son that his skin color is beautiful. I want every child to feel proud of their own skin. I hope...”

VALDES: Evelyn Recendez is up and Stephanie Espinoza is on deck.

UNIDENTFIED SPEAKER: What's your name?

EVELYN: My name's Evelyn.

UNIDENTFIED SPEAKER: Do you want Rocketship?

EVELYN: Yes.

UNIDENTFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

VALDES: Okay. Tough one to follow there. Stephanie Espinoza, you are up and Maria Vargas, you are on deck.

STEPHANIE: Hello, my name is Stephanie Espinoza and I'm a mother of three young children and I want a high-quality education for my children and I support Rocketship and I hope it happens.

VALDES: Okay. Maria Vargas, you are up and Izabell Jaimes is on deck.

MARIA: Hello everyone. My name is Maria Vargas. I will be reading this testimony on behalf of our parent leader, Vanessa. “Hello, my name is Vanessa. I first met Rocketship team a few

weeks ago at a community fair in Anaheim. I am the mother of a bright three-year-old boy named Johnny who currently attends preschool part-time. I am committed to ensuring that he has a successful educational pathway. I grew up in Mexico where I excelled academically. When my parents courageously immigrated to the United States, I enrolled in an LAUSD high school. The transition was life changing. My new school did not provide the quality of education I had experienced in Mexico. Many students were disengaged, some faced serious challenges, and even teachers sometimes appeared disconnected. Eventually, I stopped investing in my education and my grades declined. My father held me accountable when I told him I could succeed but was choosing not to. He challenged me to prove it. I finished the semester with straight A's and ultimately completed high school with a 4.0 GPA. I am committed to making sure that my student exceeds academically."

VALDES: Okay. Izabell Jaimes, you are up and Lorena Solorio is on deck.

IZABELL: Hello, my name is Isabelle Jaimes and I went to Rocketship Alma Academy in San Jose. I am currently a second-year psychology student at UC Riverside. As a child, I love trying new things and my teachers at Rocketship always encouraged me to explore my interests. When they saw that I was not being challenged enough, they provided higher level assignments and encouraged me to consider advancing a grade. That support taught me to challenge myself and remain open to new possibilities, influenced my decision to attend college in Southern California where I could become more independent and discover who I wanted to be. Although I did not choose psychology until high school, my interest in art, law, and literature began at Rocketship. Those interests continue to shape the classes I take and the career paths that I consider pursuing. Orange County would benefit from Rocketship Anaheim because Rocketship's educators care deeply about their students and communities. I hope more children have the opportunity to receive their encouragement and support to help shaped my future. Thank you.

VALDES: Okay. Lorena Solorio, you are up and Elvia Hernandez is on deck.

LORENA: Hello. Good evening, Trustees. My name is Lorena Solorio and I'll be reading this on behalf of our parent, Brittany. "Hello, my name is Brittany and I'm an Anaheim parent. Today, I would like to advocate for my daughter and other children who need school that will recognize their individual strengths, support, and their development. My daughter was born extremely premature at 24 weeks. Because of this, she has needed additional time to reach certain developmental milestones and understand new concept. As she prepares to begin elementary school, I want her teachers to meet her developmental milestones and understand, sorry. I want my daughter's teacher to meet her where she is, patiently explain things in different ways and help her build confidence without making her feel behind. My daughter is also developing some personal care skills, including toileting. I worry that these challenges could become barriers to her being accepted or fully supported. She deserves to be treated with dignity and compassion while she continues to grow. Most importantly, I want a school that communicates with me and treats me as a partner, and I think Rocketship can do that for me. Thank you".

VALDES: Okay. Elvia Hernandez, you are up and Estefany Chavez is on deck.

ELVIA: So good evening. I'm talking on behalf of Francisco. “My name is Francisco and I'm a father and a community leader in the city of Anaheim. I want our community to be better. I want my kids to have a better future with more opportunities. Several times I have had to take them out of Anaheim to cities like Irvine so they can receive better resources and better services. Our family should not need it to leave the community to find better opportunities. We deserve schools with a high quality in our home base cities. This is one of the reasons why I support Rocketship Academy. I want our families to have better educational options and I want that this school is going to be contributing to straining our community. Thank you so much for your time”.

VALDES: Okay. Estefany Chavez is our last speaker.

ESTEFANY: Hi, good evening. My name is Estefany Chavez and I'm going to be reading the testimony of Imelda, an Anaheim parent. “My name is Imelda. I am a community leader and a mother. Due to my job, I hear all the multiple necessities of several families. I believe that Rocketship Academy can help a lot to our community because we all need schools of a better quality. I want a school that support all students. I want a school that supports parent engagement and prepare our kids for a better future. For all of these reasons, I ask for you to approve Rocketship Anaheim. Our families deserve to have better educational options near their home. Thank you very much for your time”.

VALDES: Okay. President Shaw, that was our last speaker.

CHASTAIN: This concludes the public hearing. The staff report, including staff recommendations and proposed findings will be published by October 20th. The board is scheduled to consider the appeal petition and take action on November 4th. This concludes the public hearing on the Rocketship Anaheim Elementary charter petition appeal. President Shaw, I now return the meeting to you.

SHAW: Thank you. Want to excuse Dr. Sparks. Apparently, things are progressing in the labor and delivery room a little faster all of a sudden, so she needs to go become a grandma here shortly, so we're excited for her. Yes. All right, questions. Maybe I'll start with you, Dr. Williams.

WILLIAMS: Wow, that would probably summarize the presentation, the people who talked. Thank you for coming here. Just a couple questions if you want to come up. Typically, we go through this little scenario, you get up and you get grilled and you get some questions thrown at you, but we'll be as nice as we have always been. So, your location and site for this school is in Anaheim, is that correct?

JANINE: Yes, we are proposing to be in Anaheim.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit more about the actual physical site? Is it a classroom, a school, is it a church? Fill me in with details.

JANINE: Yeah, so we are looking to have an in-person facility without the charter in hand, it is more difficult to secure the facility both from the financial investment and also just from

fiduciary responsibility. And so, we are waiting to have the charter on hand, but we are looking at a couple different leads. Additionally, we will also be going through the Prop 39 process.

WILLIAMS: Okay. You don't have a physical site at this time. Is there any Prop 39 opportunities?

JANINE: Yes, there is. If I'm understanding your question correctly, if we can apply for Prop 39, yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Is there any school space at the local district level, classrooms, whole schools, things like that? It looks like you're coming up to answer my question.

CHASTAIN: Can you please go to the mic? Thank you.

BEN: We've done some analysis...

WILLIAMS: Okay, what's your name again?

BEN: Ben Carson, CFO, Rocketship Public Schools.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Hi, Ben.

BEN: Nice to meet you. We've done some analysis of Anaheim Elementary School capacity relative to maximum enrollment. We've identified at least a half dozen campuses that would be able to occupy or house our first couple of years enrollment needs. Our plan is to build and occupy a private facility long term. And so as soon as, God willing, as soon as the board votes, we'll move into being able to sign letters of intent, being able to start making moves on CUP, being able to start spending. But obviously we don't have charter, you can't sign a lease without a charter.

WILLIAMS: So you're the CFO?

BEN: Yes, sir.

WILLIAMS: You're the guy who can answer money questions. What do you have in reserves?

BEN: $55 million across our California schools and additional $9 million in our CMO district or our CMO division.

WILLIAMS: I like how quickly you came out with that figure.

BEN: I looked it up after the question you asked.

VALDES: And I like the number.

BARKE: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: You've explored the issue of school sites, and that tends to be the biggest problem that we have with the two charter schools that we had to close because they tried to start it early.

They didn't have the guarantee of a school site. It's unfortunate that that has to be that way, but you have $55 million in reserves, which is very, very strong.

BEN: Yeah, if I can just, Rocketship has a long track record. We build and operate and own our own buildings. That's core to our model. We do it without raising property taxes. We do it without mills and public support. We issue private bonds and build and own our own buildings. That's our intent in Anaheim, is to build and own a great new public-school facility. We know that we need, if you heard the story about Rocketship Mateo Sheedy, we have to find an incubator site. We need a space to open first, get our legs under us, get the process going with CUPs, site acquisition and development. Plan A, there is Prop 39. We're working really hard on that. Plan B is a religious educational space. We're working really hard on building relationships there. Again, call us when you get a charter is the typical answer we get when we start to engage private landlords. And so again, plan A, Prop 39, Plan B, private religious school with access classrooms, but in either way or in either route, permanent Rocketship owned facility as soon as possible.

WILLIAMS: Why Anaheim?

BEN: That's a great question.

VALDES: Hey, what's wrong with Anaheim?

WILLIAMS: Nothing.

JANINE: It's a beautiful question, and the truth is because our mission drives us to Anaheim. At Rocketship, we believe that every student has and deserves the right to high-quality instruction regardless of your zip code. And we chose Anaheim because our mission calls us to serve in communities where we think there is a need, that our model, that our expertise, and that our proven track record can add to it. Through part of our green lighting process, we did a lot of research. We started talking to families. We started looking at the data, and there's a couple things we learned. Anaheim is such a beautiful, vibrant community. It has so many hardworking families. I mean, some of those families weren't able to come because they have three jobs, and so ask someone to read their comment on their behalf. And there was also an opportunity to have a choice, to have a different type of model to be able to serve those students. We learned that in Anaheim, only 30% of students are at state level, and we felt that Rocketship Public Schools can come into the Anaheim community, support, thrive together, and add to the educational ecosystem.

WILLIAMS: Okay. That's all.

SHAW: Thank you. Trustee Barke.

BARKE: Well, Dr. Williams asked the really hard questions and I was going to ask why Anaheim, although we've had some discussions, and so I'm very familiar with your mission and your goals and what you're doing here, and I appreciate what you guys are doing. I think you'll be a great addition to the Anaheim community. Looking forward to that, and appreciate all the parents that came out tonight and those that came down from San Jose and from all over. You guys are amazing, and thanks for sharing your experience.

JANINE: Thank you.

SHAW: Vice President Valdes.

VALDES: I can tell you, representing the city of Anaheim, that there's a lot of opportunity there. There's a lot of dissatisfaction with the public school system there. I walked a fair amount of homes and I had a lot of people walking for me in the last election, and I can tell you that there's a very good opportunity there, I think. I didn't catch your name when you presented, but you said something that I wanted to follow up with you about. First off, what was your name again, sir?

JUAN: Juan Mateos.

VALDES: Juan. You said that if Rocketship had a campus in Anaheim, your students would be first in math and second in English. Could you expand on that?

JUAN: Yeah, happy to share.

VALDES: How did you come up with that?

JUAN: We were referencing grade level proficiency, and that's what our average grade level proficiency is for our Rocketship schools in California. The other part that I would add is if we look at it as a system, Janine mentioned it, but as context, the Anaheim School District has approximately 30% of students who are at or above grade level in third through fifth grade. For us, that's 45%. And in math, it's 23% in Anaheim, and for us it's 52% with similar demographics of students. We feel confident in our ability to be able to provide another high-quality opportunity for the students.

VALDES: You're going to tell me today that if we approve you, you're going to be first in math and second in English?

JUAN: I want to say first in math and first in English.

VALDES: All right. Riley St. Marie, you're going to be the principal on site?

RILEY: Yes, sir.

VALDES: Okay. Are you going to be the highest person on site, like basically the buck stops with you on site?

RILEY: Yes.

VALDES: Okay. Well, you are a very important person.

RILEY: Thank you for saying that.

VALDES: This school is going to rest quite a bit on you. The success of it is going to rest quite a bit on you. Your background is, you said you had three years as a prior principal somewhere else?

RILEY: Yes. I was a principal of one of our Rocketship schools, Rocketship Fuerza Community Prep up in San Jose for the previous three years.

VALDES: So San Jose?

RILEY: Yes.

VALDES: Okay. And what is your educational background?

RILEY: I am an education major from Miami University in Ohio, and then I moved out here and started with Rocketship as a first-grade English language arts teacher.

VALDES: Okay. So college degree?

RILEY: Yes. Bachelor's degree.

VALDES: Bachelor's. All right. How many students are you proposing at this new school?

RILEY: We're proposing with a goal of 242 students.

VALDES: Okay. But when Mr. Carson said…

RILEY: In year one. In year one, and with the hope to grow consistently.

VALDES: You said 240?

RILEY: 242.

VALDES: Okay. But Mr. Carson said that you're going to build your own private facility, your own building.

RILEY: Yes.

VALDES: That's the goal.

RILEY: That's the ultimate goal.

VALDES: And that's the model that you have across your schools. They're all privately owned buildings.

RILEY: 20 out of 22.

VALDES: How many grades do you propose out of those 242 students?

RILEY: We're proposing to open with TK through second grade. However, it will all depend on family demand and we will be responsive to that.

VALDES: Janine, you said something that I think was very important, not only about California law, but what your intentions are. Yes, we're up here to offer opportunities, but delivering results

is really what I took from your presentation. And I like that you emphasize that in your presentation because I am very supportive of the charter community. I vote to open them up, but I want to see test scores across the board just be better. And if you're telling me that you're going to deliver results and Juan is telling me you're going to be first in math and English, this is a very easy yes for me. I like the $55 million in reserves. I like Mr. Carson's plan of owning his own building. And Ms. St. Laurie?

RILEY: St. Marie.

VALDES: St. Marie. You look like you would be a good principal of a school.

RILEY: Thank you.

SHAW: If you have any more enthusiasm, you're going to blast off in a Rocketship here. I mean, absolutely no disrespect to any other school, but I think about every school I've heard of. What's the coolest name? Rocketship. If I was an elementary school student, what school do you go to? Rocketship.

JANINE: And we get to call them rocketeers.

BARKE: I love that.

SHAW: That's fun. You guys are a lot of fun. All right. Well, I don't have any questions. I just want to laugh with you guys, but we'll see you next month, I guess, right? All right.

RILEY: Thank you.

JANINE: Thank you.

SHAW: That will take us to item number 13. It is recommended that the board of education ratify the attached final amended easement for the Rancho Sonado project.

WILLIAMS: Make a motion for staff recommendation number 13.

BARKE: I'll second it.

SHAW: Okay. It's been moved by Dr. Williams, second by Trustee Barke. Any discussion?

VALDES: This is an amending an existing easement, Greg?

SHAW: So this is the…

VALDES: It's an access road to Rancho Sonado.

CHASTAIN: We have Dave here. He can answer the questions.

SHAW: All right Dave, let's make sure we know what we're…

VALDES: What's a meeting without Dave Giordano?

GIORDANO: Probably a good meeting. Thank you and good evening, President Shaw, Members of the Board. It's the final easement amendment for the Rancho Sonado project. This is the easement. When you looked at when we were at the event the other day, we have that access road that leads up to the base camp area at Rancho Sonado. This easement, the access road runs through this easement. And so, at the last board meeting, the board approved the draft easement. This is just the final version and very few changes were made to it. They inserted the date, inserted the exhibit numbers and then referenced the area that covers those exhibits. Those really were the only changes made to the amendment.

SHAW: And is this only during the construction period or is this a permanent?

GIORDANO: This is permanent.

SHAW: This will be a permanent easement.

GIORDANO: Yes. It's a permanent easement.

SHAW: And we're talking about the road to get from the...

GIORDANO: From Santiago Canyon Road, right off of Santiago Canyon Road, all the way up to the base camp at the top of the outdoor science school project.

SHAW: And we didn't have that before?

GIORDANO: Yes, we did. Yeah. We had the easement before, but there were some changes that were recommended by the Irvine Ranch Water District and then the Orange County Fire Authority. And because of those changes, we had to modify the easement slightly.

SHAW: Great.

VALDES: Great.

SHAW: Any other questions? Okay. We had a motion to second. All in favor?

VALDES, SHAW, BARKE, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SHAW: Passes 4-0 with Dr. Sparks absent. Okay, very good. We will go to item number 14, board discussion about the Abraham Lincoln Civil War experience. Trustee Valdes.

VALDES: President Shaw, we are not going to do that one tonight.

SHAW: Okay. Very well. We will move forward to communications information discussion. Do we lead off with Nikki?

CHASTAIN: Yes. The board liaison can come up.

SHAW: Okay. You're on Nikki. You'll do fine.

BAINUM: Okay. Good evening, President Shaw, honor Trustees and Superintendent Bean. Over the past month, my focus as board liaison has been learning directly from schools and community partners, bringing those observations back through the trustee briefs and developing more ways for constituents to connect with the board. I'll share a few highlights and the next steps that I'm working on. In September, I attended 22 events and meetings outside of OCDE. At the OC Workforce Solutions Regional Career Expo, I spoke with employers, including military representatives about workplace readiness and career pathways. Their feedback highlighted foundational skills and habits such as following directions, focus in customer service, and namely math and science and English skills. Other highlights included the Play Great Ribbon Cutting of Santa Ana International Translation Day at PBS SoCal and the Pacific Air Show Welcome Ceremony. The Air Show also created a connection with Sunburst Youth Academy that I'm following up on, and these events help me identify useful relationships and information to bring back to the trustees.

School visits helped me understand both successful programs and current needs. Magnolia Science Academy, Orange County. I learned about its twice weekly STEAM lab and GOALS PE partnership along with space needs as it expands. At CRLA Capistrano, leaders discuss character development and individualized student support. The Friday trustee briefs remain the regular way that I bring this work back to you, including key takeaways, timely education and legislative updates and upcoming items. I'm also coordinating school tours, maintaining follow up and building relationships with districts, elected offices and workforce partners. Rotary and community presentations help explain the board's role and strengthen community connections. For public communications, we are moving to ongoing articles shared through social media with direct links to the full stories under *Board News* on the website. My first post targeted for this Friday, October 9th will explain what OCBE does. Then I will introduce each trustee through a meet the member series with their biography, and then I will cover Rancho Sonado and other events as they come. My goal is to maximize engagement and reach students, teachers, parents, elected leaders, and other stakeholders with timely, relevant stories and encourage them to connect with the board. I plan a post at least three times each week to ensure equal photo opportunities for each trustee, and we'll keep the board news as a title for now with flexibility to customize the content and presentation.

Regular articles let us share information while it's timely rather than wait for a bimonthly or quarterly newsletter. Each story gets its own post and link, creating more opportunities for people to discover and share it. The website provides one place to find the full stories and individual articles are easy to update. I'll use clicks and engagement to help guide future coverage. I'm also working on small scale OCBE hosted events where board members can engage directly with the community. A coffee meet and greet is one example of an approachable starting point. I'm working on a proposed budget and coordinating the details and I'll reach out to trustees individually to get your interest, availability and participation. And my goal is to ultimately create manageable opportunities for residents and other constituents to meet you, ask questions and share what matters to them. Alongside school visits and regular communications, these gatherings are important direction that I see for this position. Thank you.

BARKE: Great job.

SHAW: Oh, you're not getting away that easy. Where do you think you're going?

WILLIAMS: Stay up there.

BAINUM: I thought I almost got away with it.

SHAW: I just wanted to say how proud we are of you and how we really needed someone who's a self-starter and going to really take the bull by the horns and you've been incredible so far. So, thank you for that great report and all the great work you're doing. Did anyone have any questions?

BARKE: And it's great to see you at a community events. Thanks.

BAINUM: Absolutely. It's been an honor so far, so thank you. And especially serving my home community where I graduated from and I owe it all to the people who supported me and my educators. I wouldn't be here without them. Dr. Williams.

WILLIAMS: I am proud of you.

BAINUM: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: You are doing a smash up job. You are taking the bull by the horn. You are doing exactly what this board wanted the board liaison to do. And let me give you credit for that. You're a self-starter. As Tim shared with you, we're really proud of you and we look for better and bigger things.

BAINUM: Absolutely. Thank you so much.

SHAW: Okay. All right. Okay. I think, do we go to Dr. Bean?

BEAN: Yes, we do.

SHAW: All right.

BEAN: All right. The 5-3-1 is going to go over a little bit of a makeover this year. We have changed the order of the triangles along the bottom. In the next iteration, you'll see the next board meeting, the story that really just encapsulates what these triangles are all about. Today, we're going to show you some events around instruction literacy. And the first event is this Rancho Sonado Education Center groundbreaking. I know that President Tim, Trustee Barke and Trustee, what your last name?

WILLIAMS: Williams.

BEAN: Williams. Thank you. Thank you. They all joined at this awesome groundbreaking event in which about 50 guests actually participated. We had several ITO members, many of whom were there who have been there over 20 years and were present during the consequence of the fire that happened about five years ago. So, we are so thrilled that we have an amazing architecture and construction crew to actually build this new amazing facility. So, we're excited about that. The center will also include indoor and outdoor learning spaces along with, of course, stronger fire protections and improved access. Also, we partnered with UCI and Ten Strands to

bring together a TK-12 educators from across Southern California, what we call the Environmental Literacy Across Disciplines as a two-day program in which students came and they watched a screening of a documentary called *The Cigarette Surfboard* at UCI. And then the second day they had lots of featured keynotes and breakout sessions. So, it was well attended, great partnership. Again, this just goes to show that when we talk about literacy, we need all people in the community support with that.

we have higher ed along with Ten Strands to support with that. In the area of guidance and technical assistance for our districts, to make things easier for our districts and our LEA partners, we launched on September 4th, as I shared with you, our new website, which has lots more improved navigation and mobile experience, as well as easier accessibility for people with disabilities. Just so you know how hard this project was, the team, Ian's team had to update and rebuild over 2000 pages in this website. So, it's pretty amazing. So, you can access it now, ocde.us. Very, very mobile friendly. So very proud of Ian and his team for working on that. Mainly it was Shane who works right under Ian. In the area of ensuring student and school safety, we have a few events that we attended. I attended with and partnered with District Attorney Todd Spitzer as he hosted what's called the first e-bike and e-moto buyback on the 13th at Angel Stadium. His office or department was able to give out $100,000 worth of gift cards for anybody who would be willing to return their e-bikes. And he ran out of gift cards, that's how many people attended. Very, very well attended.

It was a part of a broader safety effort involving OC e-bike injury prevention and collaborative. As you know, some districts prohibited e-bikes in their district. Others have prohibited e-bikes in the campuses. So, each district is struggling on how to handle this issue. And so, both the Department of Education as well as the district attorney's office partnered together and will continue to partner together to support our districts around e-bike safety. And happy to report that Orange County Department of Education will be receiving the 2026 Golden Bell Award. And as you know, this is a very high, honorable award that is given to certain districts for certain programs. We are receiving it for our well space because of the support of Trustee Barke when we visited the well space and brought it back. And again, just so we're all clear, well spaces are just those areas in a school where students who are escalated can go and deescalate and regulate their emotions so that they can get ready to go back to their classrooms. And so, we visited the one at Harbor Learning, I think believe South or North and fantastic.

BARKE: And we went to Orangewood as well.

BEAN: And we went to Orangewood as well. Yeah.

BARKE: Very impressive.

BEAN: Yeah. Kind of wish my living room looked like the well space, right?

BARKE: Yeah, me too.

BEAN: But if you've ever been in my office, that's what well spaces are. That's like my office upstairs. So anyways, it's a big honor to receive this award from CSBA. And if you'd like to attend with us, I believe the event is in November in San Diego, so just let us know.

BARKE: Do you know a date?

BEAN: I don't have the date offhand, but we can definitely get you that date and email it to you well before. Okay?

BARKE: Yep.

BEAN: All right. Any questions or any other comments, Mari, about that?

BARKE: No, it was amazing. I was incredibly impressed. I remember taking some beautiful pictures and just was so impressed with the different options and just the welcoming nature. They were patriotic, they were soothing, they were comforting, they were just comfortable. There were a swinging chair and a comfortable chair and just the space was just beautiful. I remember we had lunch at one as well and it was a great experience. It exceeded my expectations. I had a lot of curiosity about it and it exceeded expectations.

BEAN: Yeah. And I just want to acknowledge the leadership of Mayu and Dr. Benaraw who lead this work. And then we were a part of the Angels Baseball Suicide Prevention Event in which OC Youth Council members attended at the Angel Stadium. We spent a lot of time in the Angels Stadiums because we have a great partnership with them and student asked questions during the panel in which Angel players led by OC Health Agency Care Agency were able to answer some of these questions. It was a great event and we were partners with the Angels team. And then last but not least, of course, as you heard earlier, Red Ribbon Week is happening. If any schools, charter schools, private schools have not received their kit, they can go to this QR code and get a toolkit. So that is the superintendent report.

SHAW: Fabulous.

BEAN: Yes, sir.

SHAW: Thank you. Anyone have any questions for Dr. Bean? All right. Aracely, do you have a report?

CHASTAIN: Just that the next board meeting is November 4th. The submission deadline is October 21st and packets will be delivered on October 30th.

SHAW: Very well. Legislative updates.

BARKE: I can do 1082. Do you want me to [several inaudible words]?

SHAW: Yes, please. That'd be great.

BARKE: I'll just update you. I think at the last meeting we passed resolution for SB 1082, and that was to provide more transparency and predictability with interdistrict transfers for parents and families so they would know the process and just really to streamline it. It didn't take away any authority by trustees, but really streamline the process. It was passed and sorry, my alarm is going off because the superintendent debate is going to happen at seven. That's a reminder to me. In any event, it was passed bipartisan bill. Everyone loved it and the governor signed it. It's in

place and I think families will benefit from it and we might even benefit from it because we may not see as many interdistrict transfers the way it'll happen.

SHAW: Thank you for that. Any other committee reports? All right. Seeing none, board member comments. Jorge, do you have anything?

BARKE: I just wanted to compliment the team on Rancho Sonado. That was such an impressive morning yesterday. It was beautiful. It's exciting. Very excited to welcome kids back and it was a great morning other than the, I think it was already 92 degrees at nine in the morning yesterday out there. It was quite a warm event, but it's beautiful and I look forward to more things happening there.

SHAW: It's supposed to be October. I don't know why it's feeling like it's August in Phoenix or something lately.

BARKE: Indian summer, something like that.

SHAW: Dr. Williams, did you have...

WILLIAMS: Yes. The Rancho Sonado event was very moving. Dr. Bean gave some very inspirational words. I actually thought he was one of those inspirational speakers getting up there. You did a great job.

BEAN: Thank you.

VALDES: Tony Robbins.

BEAN: What's that?

VALDES: Tony Robbins.

WILLIAMS: Tony Robbins, yes.

BARKE: You did a great job too. When you had to say your history, you gave a great history.

WILLIAMS: Yeah. For me, we all think about when we die, the legacy we leave. How are people going to remember us? And often think about, okay, life. I'm 68 years of age, you never know when the good Lord's going to take you home. And this is one project that I would like to have to be remembered by because when this first came to us in 2003, it was an opportunity. The individual wanted to remain anonymous. I know his name, but for respect of his family, I will not reveal it publicly, but he is no longer with us. He's in heaven with the good Lord above, but he gave us this legacy, something that we will shepherd, something that we will provide an education in the ecosystem and an educational environment, how important that relationship is with nature. I just share with you because it's not just my vision, not just what I want to be remembered by, but it's this board.

It's Dr. Bean. It's the staff that have done everything in the past five years since it burned down and that fire destroyed the entire building process. We lost many different of our animal

ambassadors and through the decades. We haven't had it recently, but the ITO staff, especially Stephanie Smith, would bring some of these ambassadors. We have these great falcons and we have these incredible animals. I actually started crying with Stephanie because she was there when that fire came down, raging down that mountain, and she has all this guilt that she couldn't save those animals and release them. We shared a moment of crying because it is so sad to think that all those animals lost their lives in this. It was a great event. Again, my congratulations to the staff and everybody who worked towards yesterday's event. And of course, the ribbon cutting, which will be 18 months from now. 18 months from now. I'm hoping to get the St. Michael's Benedictine Abbey involved. The Benedictine Abbey, the fathers and the priests they have out there in Silverado Canyon, which is a canyon next to our Rancho Sonado property. They have a big, big, beautiful facility there. I wanted to bring a more of a spiritual element and then a bronze something that has our name on it for the board members that participated in the creation of it. So just my thoughts. Again, I don't mean to embellish this, but thank you for sharing. Let me allow me to share my thoughts.

SHAW: Thank you for that, Ken. Yeah, it was very neat for me too to be there. As I say, out of the ashes comes new life, new birth, and it's going to be great once we have it all put back together. I wanted to say nice things about Stephanie. It was very moving hearing her comments. I mean, that obviously really impacted her and so she's wonderful. Anyway, with that, I guess we'll stand adjourned until Wednesday, November 4th, right here at 5:00 PM. We'll see you then.