

Well, good evening, everybody. Welcome to our regular scheduled board meeting. Today is Wednesday, October 21. Would you all please stand up for the pledge of allegiance? Thank you. Roll call, please.

Director Espinoza?

Here.

Director Holien?

Present.

Director Alvarez?

Here, present.

President Van?

Here. Director Tidholm has an excused absence. And to my left is Dr. Duran, our superintendent. I'd like to call for any changes or additions to tonight's board meeting agenda. Parents, seeing none. We'll like to start off this meeting. Well, Highline Public Schools received council under Washington State Public Disclosure Commission, or PDC, rules regarding the use of public facilities for campaigning purposes. Speakers at board meetings may not advocate for or against a measure once it is on the ballot.

This means that through November election, speakers may not advocate for or against Highline bond or levy or any other measure on the ballot. If speakers move into advocacy for or against any ballot measure, I'll need to interrupt and ask the speaker to move to another topic. I made this statement prior to public testimony at the last board meeting, in order to emphasize that this guidance applies to all speakers, not just public testimony speakers. I'm making this statement now and will repeat it prior to the public testimony.

We're going to start with our acknowledgment and our appreciation. First up is Bus Safety Week. Can I please have Steve Jones, our director of transportation and our transportation staff come on up?

Right up to the podium right there?

Yeah. We're going to read a quick proclamation, and you guys can speak if you'd like. Director Holien?

Welcome, everybody. I have a feeling you might want to be-- you have early mornings, so there's a little late right now. But thank you all for being here. Whereas each school day in Highland Public Schools, more than 98% school buses provide more than 8,000 students with transportation to and from home, safely traveling over 800,000 miles a year-- wow, that's a lot-- including field trips and extracurricular activities.

And whereas school bus drivers must complete initial and ongoing annual training and provide the highest standard of care for the students they transport, and whereas, the School Bus Inspection Program ensures the safety of school buses and exemplifies astounding interagency cooperation between our school district and the Commercial Vehicle Division of the Washington State Patrol. And whereas school bus driver instructors, shop personnel, supervisors, and support staff perform vital functions in ensuring the safe operation of the student transportation system.

And whereas, ensuring motorists adhere to the rules of the road around school buses during the loading and unloading of students is critical to maintaining safe conditions. Now, therefore, the board and superintendent of Highline Public Schools do hereby recognize October 19 through the 23rd, 2026 as School Bus Safety Week in Highline and urged citizens to join in the special observance. All that you do. Now, let's get a picture.

OK. Do you want to say anything? Would you like to say-- would you like to say something? Yeah.

President Van, Superintendent Duran, distinguished board members, I would like to just say, hey, I am privileged and honored to be able to accept this award to us. It's been 3 and 1/2 months that I've been here. And honestly, I can just tell you right now, this team is class personified for what they do, for what they believe in, to make sure that every single day that our children in the community are taken care of and safe. So for all they do, once again, I appreciate this and dedicate it to them, the drivers, the dispatchers, maintenance, and admin staff. So kudos to them. Appreciate it.

[APPLAUSE]

Come on up for a picture.

[APPLAUSE]

I also want to just say something. You don't have to be a teacher to have an impact on a student. The way you guys greet them in the morning and send them home at the end of the day makes a real difference. So thank you all for giving them their all.

[APPLAUSE]

We have a community partner this evening, Communities of Rooted Brilliance. Can I please invite Aaron Andu? Come on up, please.

Good evening, Superintendent Dr. Duran, President Joe Van, distinguished board members. My name is Aaron Andu, Community Partnership Manager with the school district. Today, I get the opportunity to introduce our amazing team from Communities of Rooted Brilliance. We have Carly Ortega, who is our site coordinator, Mutende Katambo, who is our youth and family service manager. And we have [? Shabba ?] [? Shiroki, ?] who is our behavioral health coordinator, and she supports Mount Rainier and Pacific. If you would like to come up, please?

Thank you for having us. I mean, we are honored to be here. I could briefly say what our program is. We've been in Highline, this is our third year. We're providing after-school programming before, and now we're providing behavioral health/mental health support for refugee and immigrant youth. Our program doesn't replicate or replace many of the great mental health providers. Our work is more so helping students know who is in their building to support them, and also the supports that are outside as well in their community. So yeah, thank you.

Thank you so much, directors. Any other follow-up questions or comments? We don't have any. So I want to have you come on up and accept this recognition and get a picture.

All right, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

So much for that. And we have a school presentation this evening. Can I please have Mr. Gill Parsons, our ILED, come on up here and do some introductions?

Been a while. Good evening, President Van, Superintendent Dr. Duran, members of the board. I have the distinct honor to introduce and bring up to this podium the principal at Bow Lake Elementary, Allie Gaynor. Come on up, Allie.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Jim. Hi, good evening, Dr. Duran, President Van, and distinguished school board members. My name is Allie Gaynor, and I'm the lucky principal of Bow Lake Elementary. This is my 8th year at Bow Lake and 10th year serving in Highline. I feel honored to speak tonight on behalf of our wonderful community. Bow Lake serves 550 students and their families. 55% of our students are multilingual learners. They are supported by 85% dedicated staff members and many incredible community partners.

If you're a part of our community, whether a current or past student, staff, community member, can you raise your hand? I was hoping maybe a student that someone else was like, oh, I was a student for many years ago. Thank you for being here tonight. There we go. As a proud member of Highline, our promise means a great deal to me. I appreciate our commitment to deeply knowing our students, both while they are with us, and centering the most important goal of preparing them for the future of their own choosing.

Over the last eight years, our community has been delivering on the promise by building strong systems for both academic and social emotional learning to ensure students are making growth and mastering essential learning. We work hard to be a community where every student is empowered to be their best self. We are the home of the Wildcats. And tonight, I have several colleagues that are here with me that will be helping to present a lot of the celebrations and work that we have been doing for several years.

Hello, my name is Gared Contawe. This is my fifth year as the music and band teacher at Bow Lake. I also serve as the facilitator of our fifth grade student council. Bow Lake, we work hard to build belonging. We have a strong tiered system for both our social emotional needs and academics. Every student and staff knows our three Bs-- Be kind, be safe, and be responsible. We are the home-- you already said that.

[LAUGHTER]

You didn't hear that. Additional tiered support such as mentoring, social groups, and check-in/check-out are also layered on for all students who need it. As a result, for the past three years, over 70% of our students have reported a high or very high sense of belonging. Our student council worked with me recently and created a video describing what they feel and like about our school, and here's what they had to say. I have to click that, too.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- Hi--

Oh, how do I go back? Oh, back again? Was that it?

Yeah.

- Hi, my name is Muhsin.

- Hi, my name is Amara.

- Hi, my name is Mia.

- Hi, my name is Aubrey.

- Hi, my name is Qanani.

- Hi, my name is Sapania.

- Hi, I'm Ysabella.

- [SPEAKING SPANISH]

- Hi, my name is Emily.

- My name is Makena.

- [SPEAKING TAGALOG]

- Hi, my name is Yusra.

- Hi, my name is Yori.

- [SPEAKING SPANISH]

- Me and my friends feel included because of the welcoming teachers and funny students.

- Because we feel like we all belong.

- At Bow Lake, I feel welcomed and included every day I go to school because it's a safe and welcoming school.

- What makes it safe and welcoming?

- The students, the teachers, the staffs, the principal, everybody.

- By having a good friend who's kind to another.

- I feel included a lot because my teachers make me feel welcome and like I belong.

- Ms. Spradlin because she makes everyone feel good in themselves.

- Mrs. Gracia because she always tries to understand me. She takes the time to listen to my side of the story.

- Ms. Painter knows me more than just my name. I mean, I've known her two years in a row, and she makes me feel loved and appreciated.

- Mr. Contawe, because he was my mentor, and he understands me better than most other teachers.

- Ms. Hanson [SPEAKING SPANISH].

- I like making friends, and I like writing. Yeah.
[LAUGHS]

- It's literacy and art. Literacy because I get to explore writing and literature. And art because I can always use my imaginations to create something new for the entire world.

- My class.

- Why?

- Because I feel good when I'm with my friends.

- My favorite part of school is making new friends, and I also like independent reading.

- Recess because I get to hang out with my friends.

- Learning, I like to write. My favorite subject is writing and making new friends and always including people, treating people how I wanted them to treat me. And, yeah.

- Thank you.

- Thank you.

[END PLAYBACK]

[LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

You never want to be the one to follow a student video or student voices. So I said I would do it for our team. Thank you, Gared, so much for elevating our student voices. Gared, if you don't know, is wonderful at making those videos, and it's really wonderful to have our students' voices elevated in especially spaces like tonight. Tonight, we're going to share two core strategies our school has been focusing on aligned directly to the strategic plan. The first will be language and literacy development and the second, inclusionary practices.

My name is Jessica Barber, and I am a language and literacy specialist focused on tier 2 and 3 interventions. This is my sixth year at Bow Lake. For the past four years, we have been focusing on moving outcomes for multilingual students. Bow Lake's 62% of multilingual students are making progress towards language proficiency as measured by WIDA. Our exiting service rate or proficiency rate is growing year over year.

All students, ML and non-ML are benefiting from our focus on language development. BA scores are increasing. And last year, our average typical growth in reading on i-Ready was 94%. That translates to nearly a full year of learning for every student. To get here, for the last four years, our staff has been learning about language development and grade-level-aligned instructional practices with support from central office specialist and categorical funded substitute partnering with Hilltop and Parkside, teachers have released time to do this work.

We've also engaged in daily targeted language groups and individualized goal setting conversations. While we're proud of this progress, many students still need accelerated growth to reach grade-level expectations. This year, we're focusing on stretch growth, students making more than one year's worth of growth through rigorous instruction, peer-to-peer coaching, and stronger data-driven collaboration. We are excited and hopeful our students will continue to excel.

[APPLAUSE]

My name is Jeff Case, and this is my third year as the assistant principal at Bow Lake. And I am the wildest cat.

[LAUGHTER]

Since I paused for laughter here, too, so thanks, Jeff. A second priority is inclusion. Bow Lake was proudly part of the founding cohort of Inclusion Schools that officially launched in 2024. Inclusion has pushed us how to rethink how, where, and when we offer individualized supports and deepen our appreciation for peer leadership, modeling and teaching.

Believe all the adults in the room, regardless of whether their special education staff or not. Support all students. Intentionally plan classroom clusters. Halftime categorically funded inclusion specialist and an ongoing professional development. This work has not been easy, and it continues to present daily challenges. But our Bow Lake team is relentless in their efforts to find solutions in service of our most vulnerable children.

Our persistence is working. Students who qualify for services are making steady gains year over year. And I already interviewed parents and asked what impact they are seeing. One shared, "Thank you for proving to me what I thought is not possible. Thank you for proving me wrong. She is able to learn." This work is hard and complex. Important work usually is. We must continue clarifying roles, asking ourselves repeatedly, how and what does meaningful inclusion look like? And create space for teaming, consider effective adult supports. This is the right work.

[APPLAUSE]

I want to close by saying, thank you. First, thank you to all who have stepped up to speak today. You guys are somehow very intimidating, but I'm so grateful that you all have been able to support and speak on behalf of our community. I also want to thank our students who show up every day. Thank to our families who may be here or watching for trusting us with your children.

Thank you to the Bow Lake staff who are here and not here right now for carrying the weight and responsibility of our work, which is heavy. And they do it with grace and positivity every day and are really, really inspiring and very grateful to work alongside such incredible professionals. And thank you to Dr. Duran and the board for your support and leadership through some difficult times. We really are grateful for that as well. So thank you. I'll open it up to questions or comments at this time. I don't know if we have time or not. I know you have a tight--

We're going to make sure you have time. So thank you so much for being here. Directors, any follow-up questions? Director Holien.

Thank you, President Van, and thank you to you and the rest of the Bow Lake staff and the ones that are not here. One thing that really struck a chord with me after watching the video that was very well put together-- great job-- was there was a common theme that I noticed. And the last speaker, the last student, one of her comments was always making people feel welcomed.

And that was a common theme throughout every student of wanting to be with my friends, making friendships. And that doesn't just happen. That is sort of inclusion 101, and you have to instill it. And I think that's what we at Highline want to include. We want to have students that want to make friends with newcomers, with people from different backgrounds, maybe even students that don't speak the language that the one student does speak. And so that just really struck a chord for me. So thank you for all the hard work that you all do every single day that you're working, and also the nights that you're not. So thank you very much.

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

Yeah, thank you for sharing more about your school and the great efforts that you're putting forth. I have a few questions, if you don't mind. OK. So in the what's next slide, you say that you will build upon using data to drive instruction. So I'm wondering how that's already happening and what are you building towards? And what changes do you anticipate?

Yeah, that's a great question. We, this year, are focusing on teaming and teaching teams how to use both classroom-based assessments that they have maybe designed related to an essential standard, or a more of like a broad i-Ready, UFLI, different types of data that we might be collecting that is aligned with district as well, and using that in a team meeting to discuss, one, to get calibrated. Like, are we saying the same things?

When you have professionals working in spaces that are in their own classrooms, it can be hard to understand exactly what a 3 might mean in terms of proficiency. So teams have lots of time to calibrate and get connected and ensure that they're all saying the same thing when they're looking at student work. So they'll get calibrated on those pieces, and then they also can brainstorm and connect on how they might move forward when they see that kids are still not hitting it yet.

They're not hitting that goal. So they're both analyzing the data and the team, and then they're building next steps and strategies of how to shift both their tier 1 instruction and then also as they plan small groups and interventions.

OK. Thank you. One more question. So on the slides where you talked about your inclusion work, you say-- on the what's next slide for inclusion, you say that you will continue to refine adult roles and responsibilities across work groups. That seems to be very important.

Yeah.

So what do you mean by that? What are you trying to accomplish with that?

Yeah. I'm happy to answer it unless you want to do it. I'll take it.

You go.

I got it. I just want to open it up in case anybody else wanted to share. I don't want to hog the mic. When you do inclusion, things shift, right? You have people all in the same space. You have adults that are working together with lots of different students. And when we said here that we do believe all adults in the room, regardless of whether they're special education staff or not, support all students, it requires you to rethink, like who then is going to be supporting which students? What does support look like?

You have to really rethink how adults connect in a space, how they have time to collaborate and talk about kids, and how we're going to support who's doing what to be consistent. And that's just new for us. We used to do things a lot more in silo. And you'd have a special education teacher with students in a class, and then you'd have paras. And the roles were very defined. And we've changed that, and it's for the better for kids.

They're in their spaces with their gen ed peers of the much increased amount of the day. And that requires adults to have conversations about how and who is supporting kids and when, and to be consistent. Because you don't want the same adult just working with one kid. They can now work with a lot of different adults, but that requires us to get really clear on our roles.

And sometimes that means the gen ed teacher is a good lead person. And sometimes it means like a paraprofessional is actually a really good lead in those moments of response, because they actually might know some skills that are a little bit more refined for that kid in general.

Thank you so much.

Yeah, I hope that answers.

Thank you so much, Dr. Espinoza. I want to thank you for and appreciate how the presentation connects school priorities and the student outcomes. Really encouraging to see both the strengths being celebrated and the areas where the school is focusing on, on improvements. So Dr. Espinoza did ask some of the questions I was alluding to. So at the end of the day, you're talking about all of these bullet points and what's next. What support do you need from the district and the board to ensure that this continued success happens? And kind really think outside of the box. We don't have a blank check book, but how can we support that?

My gosh, I don't even know how to begin. We have received a lot of support from central office in general, as we've been starting to pave the way with these. Giving us the space to do inclusion, I think is a really powerful thing that our district has said, yes, we want to do this. And we believe in it and funding it and putting money behind it is really supportive. And language and literacy, like acknowledging that this is a huge part of our work and having so much central office support around language and literacy has also been really supportive.

And there's probably a lot of things that I could ask for if I would have prepared for this question to be like, what do I want to ask when I have this audience? And everyone at my school is going to come back and be like, you have asked for this, this, this, this, an entire laundry list. But I think knowing that this is the right work, getting landed in that language and literacy development is really, really important for us. And inclusion work continues to still be hard.

So both of those things being true, like the work is hard and we need more time and attention on those two buckets, at least for our school, because it's been such a big part of our work. And it's very real for our community. We have a lot of students that have special ed services. And we have a lot of students that are multilingual, and students that have both. We're thinking about that like crossover for students.

And so having support in space and guidance on this journey when inclusion is really new and requires some innovative thinking. We just need more space, time, collaboration, and support, like continued ongoing support to maintain the structures that we have already built. I think that would be my ask and I will send you an email follow-up. When I go back to my school and my staff are like, no, you should have done that, this, this, and this, I will email you directly.

Thank you so much, Directors. Thank you, Allie and the Wildcats. Thank you so much for being here this evening. Everybody, give them around of applause.

[APPLAUSE]

President Van, Director Alvarez has left the meeting.

Thank you very much for that. And that concludes our acknowledgment and appreciation for this evening. We're going to move on to our superintendents reports. Dr. Duran?

All right. Thank you, President Van. I want to just thank everybody for being here. Before Bow Lake goes out, thank you for the great presentation. It was really wonderful to have you here this evening. Last week, we had the wonderful opportunity to spend time with our Muckleshoot tribal partners. Dr. Espinoza, Kisa Hendrickson, Bernard Koontz, Juan Lozano, Sara Marie Ortiz, Dr. Benitez, Dr. Grubb, Dr. Tanisha Brandon-Felder, Joanna Rodriguez, teacher at Puget Sound Skills Center, and I met with tribal leaders to deepen our relationship and learn from one another and explore some new opportunities to work together.

One exciting area is the tribe's plan to build a salmon hatchery that will create learning opportunities for their students. We visited the Puget Sound Skills Center Marine Technology Center at Seahurst Beach to share what we have learned from our own work in Highline. As the project moves forward, we will share blueprints and lessons learned while also approaching this as an opportunity to learn alongside our tribal partners.

I left the visit grateful for the relationship we are expanding and excited about what we can learn and accomplish together on behalf of our students. I want to quickly highlight one item on tonight's consent agenda, a \$30,452 donation to the Puget Sound Skills Center Marine Technology Program for the Olympia Oyster Restoration Project. Approval of this motion would accept a donation of supplies, materials, and equipment from Puget Sound restoration.

I also want to take a moment of privilege. I don't get this opportunity often, but I would not be Dr. Duran today if it wasn't for the first Dr. Duran to accomplish that work. And I just want to acknowledge my sister, Dr. Georgia Duran who's here visiting. So thank you, Georgia for--

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, [? Miravano, ?] for all the work you've done. She's here to celebrate our youngest son's birthday this week. I'd now like to welcome Jeb Binns, President of the Highline Education Association, to the podium to share a few remarks. Welcome, Jeb.

Thank you, Dr. Duran, President Van, members of the board. Great to see you. I want to start off today with a thank you to someone who's actually at almost every one of these school board meetings, helping to make sure that all things technology run. And I'd like to thank Juan Gonzalez, who-- and actually, you know what? I think I'm going to give you a Highline pin. And I have one in my bag.

And it was just the grace that one has to deal with so many people like myself-- I got it now-- who click the wrong thing and disconnect the login to the thing. And he has such patience and grace to realize that all of the things that he could be saying right now is, that was really dumb. And instead, he says, oh, just do this. And I felt just like very-- I'm so appreciative of the fact that he made me feel good about the fact that I didn't know my own login, and we got through. So I want to just thank you for this. And I see you help people. And while I sat out there, you helped three other people. So thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

All right. On to other things. Great to see so many people out in the community this past weekend. I really appreciate our friends at Stevie's Pizza and Centro for being great community partners. I just had a great time seeing and visiting folks throughout the district, speaking of which, I visited many schools over the last two weeks. And it's just what I really appreciate is the welcoming atmosphere I have when I come into buildings.

I love seeing members. I love meeting and talking with administrators and just seeing what we can do in the partnership that we have to make sure that all of our folks in our district are taken care of. We had a wonderful CBA training on Monday. We packed unbelievable quantities of humans in this room and went over the collective bargaining agreement. Everyone but one school showed up, which I think is great in a system as large as we are. So that was wonderful.

And I really like the idea that we're on the same page, and we're looking at the things through the same lenses. And I want to give a special shout-out to Sara and to Kimberly and Bernard and Elizabeth and the members of the [? HEA ?] and HSD bargaining teams for grabbing a slide, jumping in at some point of like, hey, you're going to do this one. And they're like, cool. And they jumped in and talked about their expertise. So I really appreciate that. So that was pretty hot.

For things that were hot and not, we do have some HVAC issues that we really do need to work on across the district. We do have some schools that are in the upper 70s still, even though the temperature outside is in the 50s. And I realize there is some communication issues between remote people who have terrible cybersecurity platforms. So we don't let them play with our systems anymore, which makes sense to me. But also, 78 is too hot for kids to learn.

It's a weird thing with schools. There's a number that says you can't be colder than, but there's not a number that says you can't be warmer than. So that's an interesting thing. So magic 60. And then speaking of which, we have a school that's under 60, even though it's only 50 degrees outside. So we're working on these things, so hot and not. See how I did that? OK, cool.

Some additional things. Key cards. Who would have thought that key cards would be as challenging as key cards are? We have quite a few key card issues in terms of that, in terms of people having access and not having access. And we have some schools where some new employees still don't have access to be able to work systems. So we're working on that. I appreciate the tickets that are in and the people who are working on that, but it's something that we just need to continue to prioritize to that.

Thinking about conversations that I'm looking forward to having, I'm looking forward to having conversations around factor 1, 2, and 3 staffing and the clarity of how that looks and how that's playing out, to make sure that everybody understands clearly and precisely what these things are and are not. Because I think that some of the narratives that we've got running is that this thing is this, but it's also this, and it's not this, but it should be this. And we've got to make sure that everybody is aligned as to what those factors for our staffing is to help serve our kids.

We talked about the idea. We just heard Principal Gaynor talk about the challenges around inclusion. And some of that is, do we have the staff and the humans to do the right thing for kids? And I think the answer is we will, and we just need to make sure that everybody sees it the same way so that we're going forward. In terms of other things around schedules, I appreciate the vast majority of our school sites that submitted documentation at the conclusion of Clinton Day.

So really appreciate that. Looking forward to the few folks who are going to submit those schedules and plans to us. Dr. Baker and I spent a significant chunk of time today reviewing multiple plans from multiple schools. So thank you for the time and the partnership, Sara, as we sat down and waded through all of those things to go through. Another thing to think about we've got going on, we have a new evaluation program that we're using for our professional evaluations, which I think is great.

I'm super happy we are not spending money on this to that other company that shall remain nameless. And we're working on the state's funded platform called Eval, which is going to be great. We just need to make sure that we spend the time to not only appropriately train our educators, but also appropriately train our administrators as to how to use that system. It's great. It's more intuitive. It's better than the last one. But any change is scary. Change is bad. Change is what? All the things. So taking the time to do that.

I can only advocate the periods of time. And I can say that it would be lovely if people would collaborate to learn about that on collaboration days. And I can't advocate necessarily for what people do on PLN. But, hey, it might not be a idea either, to give some principals some time to work on that one. We are two-thirds of the way through October. The [? Van ?] Burien is this weekend. It's always fun. And don't forget to pay your property taxes by the 31st of October. Thanks.

[LAUGHTER]

Wonderful. Thank you, Jim. Right, and now, I'd like to welcome our chief financial officer, Jackie Bryan, to give a budget update. And as she's coming to the podium for our community, this, again, was put in place to ensure that we are being transparent with our community about where we are with our budget. Welcome, Jackie.

Thank you. Good evening. This is the very first of our monthly updates for 26/27. So because it's the first month reporting out, we don't have a lot of numbers. But we'll go over year to date information. And then we'll also talk through what we're really working on right now, which is year end for 2025/26. So 26/27 October enrollment, we reported our numbers last week. We came in slightly under projection, 263 FTE under projection. It's about 2% under our projected FTE.

We will keep an eye on that. Things change a lot at the beginning of the year. So we'll look at it again in November and do some additional analysis. You can see 240 less in elementary school. So that was the area where we saw the biggest projected loss. And then choice schools, you'll notice there's an asterisk next to that. That includes some of our satellite students. So that's why that number is higher. We don't include those in our projections. We just include it when we report out to the state.

Our year to date numbers are not really that exciting yet. It's been one month, and you can see our revenue. We've collected \$25 million. And our expenditures, we're at \$41 million to date. When we look at revenues, the only thing that we have in the books right now for September is state apportionment. So because the business services team is really busy with finalizing 25/26 year end, which is due in November, we focus on that.

And then once that's in towards the end of October, is when we start collecting and putting in all the revenue from the beginning of this school year. So you'll see that increase pretty dramatically over the next couple of months. Year to date expenditures is exactly where we would expect right now. We are trending in the same direction that we have trended every other year, so nothing out of the ordinary. And you will see those as well increase over the next few months.

So our next steps, November 15, as I mentioned, is when our year end documents are due to OSPI. So when we come and present the budget every June, we show you the F-195 and F-105F and all the state reports that we need to submit to OSPI for budget. Well, we have very similar reports for year end each year that are due in November. And so those are really large, intensive reports that take a lot of time. So those will be due November 15. We're actually turning them in early. So those will be submitted by this Friday.

And then on November 18, we have our first work session of the year around budget. And that is when we'll have a lot more analysis kind of done, we'll have all the year end actuals for you for 25/26. So we'll share that. We'll have some additional analysis done around enrollment using November numbers as well as October and September. We'll go through some initial projections for 26/27. And then we'll go through also the budget development timeline. And that is, again, the first work session. And then we'll have another one in March, another one in June. Answer any questions.

Thank you so much, Jackie. Board directors, any follow-up questions?

Yes, I do have a question. So on the slide about enrollment, so what impact are we expecting for the variance in enrollment in terms of funding and staffing?

So we're working on that analysis right now. We usually look at October numbers and do our initial projections. But this year, we're also going to include September, October, and November. So we have a trend analysis. There were some adjustments still being made to October after we submitted, which is normal because the beginning of the year, there's a lot of changes, students coming in and out, and a lot of reporting that has to be done. So we're going to take October, November and do our initial projections off those. And we'll share those with you at the work session.

OK.

I think that's it. Thank you so much.

Thank you.

Thank you.

All right, that concludes my updates tonight. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Dr. Duran. We move on to our director's report. So I'm going to start with Dr. Espinoza.

OK, thank you. I took some notes so I wouldn't forget everything that I wanted to share. So over the past few weeks, I've had a couple of opportunities to connect with school communities and to celebrate the good work that's happening in our schools. I mentioned at the last board meeting, but I did attend the Hispanic Heritage block party at Seahurst Elementary, and I saw the collective effort to honor and celebrate the school's important work in building community and fostering pride and belonging among students, and making families active partners in their students' learning and growth.

I also joined Dr. Duran and staff in being in community with the Muckleshoot tribe. And we went to our Environmental Learning Center at Seahurst Beach. This was an important moment and an opportunity to strengthen our partnership with the tribe by creating educational experiences that honor the traditional ecological knowledge of the original stewards and protectors of these lands.

Earlier this week, I visited Parkside Elementary and Madrona Elementary. So a few weeks ago, Parkside staff came to a board meeting and invited us to see firsthand how inclusion is being put into practice, along with the challenges and opportunities they are navigating. So my visits to these schools, together with conversations with staff and families and students, the voices that we hear here at the board meetings have reinforced for me that I need a deeper understanding of how inclusion is being implemented across the district, the resources and support available to schools, and the challenge and opportunities that educators face.

I also want to learn more about how we are moving this work forward in service of our Highline promise. So ultimately, our goal, I believe, is to create the conditions for every student to thrive. And to do that, we need to understand what inclusion feels like in practice across our schools and to hear directly from the people doing the work and those experiencing it. So as I raised last month at the meeting last month, I'm asking the board and Dr. Duran to support a work session focused on inclusion.

I believe that this should be an opportunity for board directors to engage in meaningful dialogue, not only with administrators in the district, but also with teachers and families, because their experiences and perspectives are essential to understanding where we are, what is working, what remains to be improved, and what support is needed to move this work forward with our students. Thank you.

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

Thank you, President Van. Wanted to give a slight update on the Pacific Middle School construction. The school staff toured the new school to see construction progress. Classrooms, library, and shared spaces are taking shape as we speak. Crews are painting, installing glass ceiling, storage. Work continues on the athletic facilities, the utilities, all the outdoor spaces. And one really cool experience is that the Highline High school construction class also toured the site this week. They were able to work with the crews on site to learn more about construction trades.

The last and not least, especially given the next couple of weeks, the school remains on schedule and on budget to open next fall. The one thing that I wanted to also bring up was there was an event at Mount Rainier High School that showcased the women's volleyball team and brought together the community, and they coined it the Little Rams Night. And it seemed like it was a very good community-building event that brought together future Highline students.

And it was very cool to see how we can come together as a community over volleyball. I saw some pictures, and it was a packed house. So I encouraged some of the other middle schools, high schools to also try to throw an event similar to that across Highline. So that's all I have. Thanks.

Thank you so much, Director Holien. So, Evergreen High school just recently dedicated South Commons in honor of alumni Paul and Darlene McTaggart. The South Commons is the open space around the school's large staircase. McTaggarts graduated from Evergreen in 1959 and 1961, and they established the school's first endowed fund. This fund will provide financial support for programs that build school spirit and a sense of belonging for years to come. So you haven't seen it, please go check it out.

In addition to that, our Capital's Facilities Advisory Committee, or CFAC, held its first meeting of the school year. Members received updates on the 2022 bond projects, including the athletic fields at Evergreen and construction progress at Pacific Middle School. The committee also reviewed the school construction bond on the November 3 ballot. So a membership lottery to fill open seats is planned for December. So with that, thank you so much.

Adding into what Dr. Espinoza was talking about, I had the opportunity to meet with a few friends that are teachers within Highline. And like Allie shared earlier, the work is hard. The inclusion work is hard, but it is fulfilling. And I will support you, Dr. Espinoza on working with Dr. Duran and staff on creating that space for us to learn from staff, teachers, district leadership on how we can support and learn from them with that.

OK. And that concludes my director's reports and our directors' reports. And then we're going to go to our scheduled communications. As I mentioned at the beginning of this meeting, Highline Public Schools received council that under Washington State Public Disclosure Commission rules regarding the use of public facilities for campaign purposes, public testimony may not be used to advocate for or against a measure once it's on the ballot.

This means that through November elections, speakers may not use public testimony to advocate for or against Highline bond or levy or any other measure on the ballot. If testimony moves into advocacy for or against any ballot measure, I will need to interrupt and ask the speaker to move to another topic. With that, you'll notice that our norms and guidelines are displayed on the screens for your reference. Please remember that you are addressing the board, and there may be students present or watching who are listening to you carefully.

Please note while the board is unable to respond directly to your testimony during the meeting, we value your input. And thanks again for being here and speaking with us. Our first speaker tonight is Deborah Lipp. Hold on real quick here. OK.

OK. Good evening. My name is Deborah Lipp, retired school bus driver, 20 years. And I have grandkids in the district. The last board meeting, there was okayed, and I saw you clarify that tonight. Thank you. But just saying, oops, when somebody talks about the bond and Levy and they were going out to vote yes, and I think no. So you need to be truthful and honest to everybody. You can cut my microphone off really fast. And I understand that. They should also not be allowed to talk.

The other thing is highly capable. I talked on this a couple years ago. I looked up your highly capable, your bylaws, what you say. I agree for all kids to learn. I don't care what, IEP all the way to highly capable. And I've always supported the district in this. But when people like Muckleshoot and people give money, they want it to go where it should go. Highly capable is for those that really excel.

I'm thankful for that. I have kids that are in that category, and they should have had that right to learn above and beyond. And that's what people gave money towards. And if you look at what you're giving it to, IEP kids and what the lady that spoke talked about was giving it to social and emotional kids. That's not your job as a school district. Tonight, all this inclusion, I want to talk about my inclusion. I have 20 seconds.

In Christ, we're blessed with every spiritual blessing. In Christ, were chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless. In Christ, we have redemption. In Christ, we have received an inheritance. In Christ, we bring praise to his glory. In Christ, were sealed with the Holy Spirit. That's my conclusion.

Thank you. And also, as a reminder, public testimony may not be used to advocate for or against the measure once it's on the ballot. This is going to be the last reminder this evening. Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Devin O'Reilly.

[LAUGHS]

Hello. My name is Devin O'Reilly, and I'm in my third year as a science teacher at Glacier Middle School. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak both to the importance of the BEST grant funds and more generally, about the good things we see happening in NorthSeaTech. I've been a Highline employee for 13 years, mostly as a paraeducator and avid tutor. When I got my teaching certificates, I used my sub cert to roam around and covertly check out sites I did not know as well.

I definitely knew Glacier had a euphemistically difficult reputation on my way in. And sure, I found it to be well earned. I also found a staff of professionals, young, old, and smack in the middle, committed to figuring out how we could ride the ship together. One of my strongest allies in this effort doesn't even work in our building, my peer mentor, Desiree Robinette.

Highline offers new educators the opportunity to participate in invaluable onboarding and counseling experiences through the peer mentor program. The Beginning Educator Support Team grant from OSPI under consideration today directly supports the program, ensuring other incoming educators receive the same warm welcome to the classroom. I deeply appreciated from Desiree. Wasn't the only new educator working with Des at our site, which made it so much easier to start to stitch together a supportive community that best leveraged our skills to build something better for ourselves in collaboration with admin.

Our systems are well established now and well executed by caring professionals with deep trust in each other. Glacier today is an inspirationally functional machine compared to where I arrived in 2024. To say nothing of what I hear about the past, and I cannot wait to see where we get in the next three years. Thank you for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

I yield my 12 seconds.

Thank you very much. Jeff Paulson?

Good evening. My name is Jeff Paulson.

Can you speak into the mic a little bit more?

Certainly.

Thank you very much.

Good evening. My name is Jeff Paulson, and I'm a frustrated parent. I feel that the board is not doing a good job of keeping the first things first. Your job is to create an environment where students can learn and teachers can teach. You are here to remove the roadblocks for the teachers and the students so that they can focus on the most important thing, which is their education.

Hope and expectation is that your decisions will give the next generation the quality of a fair shot and the equity of a fantastic education that brings up each and every student. The decisions I see, you are falling short of this goal. For example, the Aviation High school is ranked number 3 in the state by US News and World Report for reasons that you won't share, even under the public records act. You have removed the principal from her position as a leader in that school and put her in admin work. Why?

On tonight's legislative agenda, you have introduced two policies that are self-serving. One is the update to the public records act. I want to pass a rule that if the requesting party does not answer a single question, you do not have to answer their question. This is a bureaucratic tactic to remove the requirements to answer to the public. Why the principal was removed? You would only do this if you were hiding something. Why?

Number 2, you want to reduce the threshold to the bond approvals down to 50% from a supermajority. You snuck that in the minutes as a voting item because you're asking for so much money. Instead of looking in the mirror and giving the voters a bond that is reasonable and address the major infrastructure issues given us costs and in my opinion, poor planning. I wish you were as crafty at getting students to learn as you are putting measures like this into the agenda.

Do better so that more than 24% of kids in the district are at grade level in math, and more than 35% of the kids are at the district level at reading. I implore you to keep the voting threshold high so that you sharpen your pencil and give us a bond package that's good. I implore you to keep the records act as a state intended when passed in 1972. I encourage you to spend your time working on important issues that will drive our students forward, real policies like cell phone policies, like attendance gaps, like letting our teachers [MUTED].

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Our next speaker is on the phone, Kirsten Price.

Good evening, speaking tonight. Leadership modeled this agenda on North Shore and Bellevue. Highline is not the East side. Copying the lobbying priorities of the wealthiest communities in our region ignores our working families. You are an independent oversight board, not an echo chamber for central office. I urge you to strike two unacceptable requests.

First, strike the request to lobby to weaken the public records act. Self-reported data shows Highline is the single least efficient agency in Washington, earning nearly \$4,000 per request. Today, after stalling for six months, the district released records exposing why leadership fears transparency. The paper trail of how central office silenced and removed Aviation High School's successful principal rejects their playbook of weaponizing bureaucracy until taxpayers give up. Demand the district fix its broken process instead of lobbying Olympia to conceal its dysfunction.

Second, strike the recommendation to lower the bond approval threshold. While actively asking taxpayers for a massive capital funding, central office proposes lobbying to strip away voter checks and balances. Genuine servant leaders build trust and answer to the public. They do not lobby to weaken voter leverage. Same contempt for the public is why our educators are silenced. Aviation's principal of 10 years is still held at the district office for communicating transparently with her school, instead of pushing district propaganda.

Records released today show hundreds pleaded to protect their career center. Rather than engage, the superintendent refused to meet with Principal Tipton and had his deputy place her on leave and demoted her. District records reveal a calculated week of silence directive to stonewall questions and central office tracking students asking where their principal went. For these two items from the legislative agenda, apologize to the Aviation community and reinstate their principal. Thank you.

Thank you. Josh Schumacher?

Good evening. My name is Josh Schumacher. Tonight, as you consider the 27 legislative agenda, I urge you to strip away secondary distractions and put every ounce of Highlands lobbying weight behind full-state funding, beginning with the Paramount obligation to fully fund special education. When the core foundation of our classrooms is cracking, we cannot afford to exhaust our political capital in Olympia on secondary requests.

Two weeks ago, I was impacted by the testimony we had in this room here from educators at Parkside Elementary. Since then, I've spoken with staff members across several other schools in our district. And one thing is unmistakably clear-- something in our classrooms is fundamentally not working. Your teachers, paraeducators, special education staff, and building administrators are struggling and burning out at rates well beyond historical norms.

Inclusion lacking the essential staffing resources and structural support is not inclusion. It sets both of our educators and our students up for failure. As we press forward with full inclusion, we must confront critical questions. Is this primarily a failure of funding? Is our hiring pipeline broken? Are schools simply unequipped in the current implementation of inclusion? Or do we require a fundamental shift in how we structure and support our classroom environments?

Well, I do not claim to hold the answers. I know we must address these realities immediately. That said, thank you, Dr. Espinoza. Wow. Based on your direct report tonight, you're on top of this and moving things in the right direction, and I applaud you. From here, I implore the board to take decisive action now. Commission an immediate, unfiltered assessment of classroom conditions across the district.

Schedule a dedicated board work session to establish immediate, short-term stopgaps to stabilize our classrooms today. And lastly, identify viable long-term solutions before it's too late for our educators and our students. And again, I just want to applaud and thank you again, Dr. Espinoza and Dr. Van, for following up with educators and continuing down this path. I think that this is critical, and I think that there's something systematically broken, and hopefully, we can figure this out before it's too late. Thank you.

Thank you for that. Anne Hickey?

Good evening. My name is Anne Hickey, and I am a speech and language pathologist, as well as assistive technology specialist here in the district. I'm here to call attention to October being Augmentative Alternative Communication Month, standard AAC. AAC tools and devices are assistive technologies we put in place in order to support our minimally speaking and non-speaking students.

It is only in using AAC tools and devices do students have access to robust language like their neuronormative peers. The focus of this work is to support students in developing their communication skills so that they can say what they want to say to whomever they want to say it whenever they want to say it, wherever they want to say it. AAC tools and devices run the gamut from low tech paper based supports to high-tech devices, which, again, provide our students with robust language that they otherwise would not have access to.

These tools and devices are used by nearly 400 students in our district and counting. Being accessed by touch, by switches, by eye gaze. Being used by students at all age levels and in every school building in our district, with a few exceptions. Of course, teaching an AAC user how to use their device is not done in isolation. It can't be, for communication does not happen in isolation. Instruction is led by a student serving SLP in partnership with other certificated and classified staff members.

It is powerful work. Meaningful work. Giving a student an alternative way to protest has long-term implications in supporting students in developing their voice and agency over their world. Students having a robust communication system is inherent to supporting the evolutionary journey that our district has deeply committed itself. AAC tools give our AAC users a way to use their academic knowledge and enrich social interactions with peers and adults. Thank you for your time.

Thank you very much? Rehan Vahora?

[CHATTER]

My name is Rehan Vahora. I'm in eighth. This is my second year in Glacier Middle School as a 14-year-old. When I first started doing esports, I was pretty much scared. But it did teach me a little lesson along the way. It isn't about winning. It's mostly about respect, honesty, online or offline, and making new friends. That specifically means we can't-- it doesn't specifically being about winning. You can win, lose, and you can still get back up and keep on winning. And thank you for having me here.

[APPLAUSE]

Cheering on for being here tonight. Next speaker is Margaret Saget.

Good evening. My name is Margaret Saget. Last year, at one of your school board meetings, I heard a member repeat the slogan, no one is illegal on stolen land. I wondered about that statement. First, it sounded illogical to me. Then I wondered, do we really live on stolen land? Also, I questioned that even if it is true, does that mean that any action committed by another couldn't be considered illegal?

The slogan oversimplifies a complicated history. Even though that history is complicated, I want the students in Highline School District to be taught the truth as much as possible. So let's look at it. We should acknowledge that Native Americans were treated unjustly at many points in our history. Treaties were sometimes broken and people were forced from their homelands. Those are genuine historical wrongs.

Saying America is built on stolen land as though one unified group of Native Americans owned the entire continent is historically inaccurate. There was no single Native American nation. There were hundreds of distinct tribes with their own territories and histories. Natives also fought wars, conquered territory, and displaced other tribes. That does not excuse American injustices. It simply means history is more complicated than the slogan suggests.

Much of the land that became the United States was acquired through purchases, treaties, and land cessions. Some agreements were coerced or later violated. But that is different from saying every American today is living on stolen property, and no one is illegal on that property. Even if all America land had been stolen, it would not logically follow that the immigration laws no longer matter. One wrong does not erase another.

A nation has the right to establish its boundaries and determine who may legally enter. Our immigration laws cannot be dismissed simply by saying, your ancestors did something wrong centuries ago. We can acknowledge America's past wrongs without declaring America illegitimate. We can respect Native Peoples without pretending they were one nation that owned an entire continent. And we can have compassion [MUTED].

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. Debra Strayer?

Good evening, school board members and Dr. Duran. My name is Debra Strayer, and I'm a former full-time teacher in the school district and an alumni of Highline High School, class of 1971. So that means I've been in this district since 1958. So a long time. I'm here today to let you know about the great things that are happening in the Highline School District. I have a unique opportunity to spend time in a number of our local schools. I substitute, and I also work as event staff.

For athletics, today, I got to work at the middle school track meet. The students are so excited and engaged in what they are doing. Athletics have a great deal to do with students' enjoyment of school. This year, we have some schools whose teams are doing well. Volleyball is doing quite well, and some teams that are not doing that well. So we won't name those schools. OK.

But today, I would like to take the opportunity to invite the school board members and district administration to come join me on Thursday to watch our volleyball team at Mount Rainier High School. They are undefeated. Ranked eighth in the state. This is a wonderful feat that they have done. It comes from hard work and talent. So Thursday, see me at the pass gate at Mount Rainier High School at 7 o'clock.

If you get there at 7:00, you can get a good seat and watch our championship volleyball players. If you can wear blue, support our Rams. It's Staff Appreciation Night, and next week is Senior Night. Go Rams. I will not be there next week because I'm going to Mexico. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much. And that concludes our communications for this evening. With that, move to our consent agenda. Any questions or comments before we approve them? With that, can I please have a motion to approve?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the consent agenda. Do I have a second?

I'll second.

Roll call, please? Oh, all--

This is a voice vote, President.

All right. All approved?

Yes, in favor.

I'm sorry?

All in favor.

All in favor?

Yes.

Aye?

Yes.

Any opposed? Seeing none. It's been a long day. Thank you very much. We had nothing removed for the consent agenda. As we move into our action item 8.1, this is motion to approve acceptance of State Transitional Bilingual Program, the STBP funds. Any questions or comments? Hearing none. Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the acceptance of the 2026/27 State Transitional Bilingual Program grant funds in the amount of an estimated \$12.3 million in revenue. May I have a second?

I'll second.

Roll call, please.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

Director Holien?

Yes.

President. Van?

Yes.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. 8.2 motion to approve the highly capable annual plan 26/27. Any questions or comments?

I do have questions.

OK.

Oh, do I just say-- OK. [LAUGHS]

So this is to approve funding for the plan.

Part of the plan in order to get it approved is that the board approves the plan, and then we get the grant funding. So it's a little of both.

Yeah, and I asked questions around the plan last time when it was introduced. So the funding, where does the funding come from?

The funding comes from the state. It's the OSPI guidance that we follow in order to apply for the grant. And so we have to be-- they review our plan both that it was approved by the board, but also that it meets all of the OSPI guidelines.

Right. So it comes from the state.

Yes.

This is not private funding?

No.

Donations?

It's a state grant, yes.

OK. Thank you.

Any other questions or comments? Seeing none, can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the highly capable annual plan 2026/2027.

Second, please.

I will second that.

Roll call?

Director Holien?

Yes.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

President Van?

Yes.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you for that. 8.3 this is motion to approve acceptance of the 26/27 OSPI Beginning Educator Support Team, BEST, grant funds. Any questions or comments?

I just have a comment. I had a question last week or last meeting. I apologize that I asked about the retention rate for teachers that engage in this program. And Dr. Baker got back to me that overall, those who participated in BEST had a higher retention rate year over year than non-participating peers, which was really wonderful to hear. In 23/24, it was an increase of 2.7%. 24/25, 7.2%. And 25/26 was an increase of 3.8%. And then we retained 88.5% of those teachers that were in the program versus 85.4 that were not. So it seems like a very great grant to be taken. So that is all I have.

Thank you so much for sharing that, Director Holien, follow-up question on that. Any other comments with that? Can I please have a motion?

I move the Highline School Board approve the acceptance of the Beginning Educator Support Team, BEST, grant funds in the amount of \$257,000 for the 2026/2027 school year. May I have a second?

I second.

Roll call, please?

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

Director Holien?

Yay.

President Van?

Yay.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you. Action item 8.4, motion to approve CP250015. This is closeout of the formal contract for the Southern Heights demolition. Any questions or comments on that? Hearing, seeing none. Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the closeout of project CP250015, the Southern Heights demolition completed by former construction company inc. and authorizes the district to proceed with the remaining contract closeout requirements.

OK, please get a second.

I will second that.

Roll call, please?

Director Holien?

Yay.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

President Van?

Yay.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you very much. 8.5, this is motion to approve CP250063. Close out at Beverly Park at Glendale low-slope roof replacement. Any questions or comments on this?

Oh.

Go right ahead.

I do have a question. So let me just--

Looks like Jackie might be running down.

OK. So it says that the restoration or the-- is it a replacement or restoration?

Replacement.

OK. So it says that the replacement was identified. But we've also heard testimony from folks in the past saying that there are current leaks in school store buildings. So how does the replacement or the restoration-- is there a priority list or how do those things get resolved?

Yes. And so our capital team and our executive Director Allie does a great job of prioritizing. So they take all the potential projects and prioritize based on need and based on the funding that we have at the time. And so Beverly Park was one of the schools most in need of a replacement.

OK. OK, thank you.

Welcome.

Any other questions or comments? Hearing none. Can I please have a motion?

I move that the Highline School Board approve the closeout of project number CP250063 dash Beverly Park at Glendale low-slope roof replacement completed by Garland/DBS Incorp. And authorize the district to proceed with the remaining contract closeout requirements. May I have a second?

I second.

Roll call, please?

Director Holien?

Yay.

Director Espinoza?

Yes.

President Van?

Yay.

This motion passes three to none.

Thank you very much. And that concludes our action items for this evening. I don't have any intro or action. We're just going to move right into introduction items of the three. Tonight, we do have presentations on all of them. 10.1, this is motion to approve the 2027 legislative agenda. Holly Ferguson, come on up.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak on this tonight. The legislative agenda is one of the most important things that the school board can do prior to a legislative session. And it can be confusing because it is complex. So I appreciate the opportunity to say a few things and answer any questions that you may have. I want to say that kind of the theme behind this year's legislative agenda is fixing the un- or the underfunded mandates that have come from the state by either adding funding or reducing burdens on school districts.

For our usual practice, and some of you know, I've been up here doing this every year since, I think, 2015. May have been 2014. I reviewed available draft agendas from other school districts. Not everything is available in the end of August or early September when I start looking at things. So I looked at North Shore and Bellevue. Those were available. The other ones that were available were the agendas for WSSDA and the PSESD.

And I do that to make sure we have found historically, the more commonality we have between and among school districts and education agencies, the easier it is for our ideas to get traction. Some of you may remember the last few years the big three were our themes, special education, MSOCs, and transportation. So again, I was looking across agendas to see, what are the themes that districts are looking at this year? Some of these are not new, but I'm going to speak briefly to each item.

This was mentioned earlier, MSOCs, Maintenance Supplies and Operating Costs. They continue to rise without a related increase in state funding. Just like the cost of gas is more expensive for us, the cost of eggs is more expensive for us at home, it's more expensive here at school. Insurance premiums alone, and I mentioned this in the agenda, have increased 85% over five years, again without the concomitant increase in funding from the state.

Legislature's failures here means more money is taken away from students in schools because we have to use our basic education money to fund insurance, which we know we have to have. Lack of special education full funding is another thing that people have heard me say every year when we stand up here. Special education is general education. The legislature's failure to fund that is a breach of their paramount duty, and it's important to remember that we are the only state in this country that includes full funding of K-12 education in our state constitution. Again, their failure is costing our students and our schools having an impact.

Transitional kindergarten, which we call Ready K, this is a new item this year. We have been advocating for increased slots in the Ready K program. That's a program that lets students enter kindergarten early, receive full-day or all-day education from a certificated teacher using state standards at Highline-approved materials. Last year, the state said they needed to save money, cut costs. They cut 20 of our transition K seats. That doesn't sound like a lot of seats. That's 20 of our youngest learners who are not getting access to this high-quality program. Cutting early learning today will cost the state money moving forward. It's an important thing for the state to hear from us.

The next two items actually were new to me in terms of CTE funding. I did not realize, and I've been doing K-12 for 25 years, that the state doesn't fund CTE enhancement for courses taught in alternative learning programs or in sixth grade. These courses aren't any cheaper when taught to sixth graders or in alternative learning programs. Why don't we get the enhancement for that? We'd like the state to fully fund that. That is a classic underfunded obligation.

Also new to me, and this blew me away-- and I had to have Jackie and her budget folks really explain it to me. So thank you for that. Certificate and classified staff are entitled to 10 days of leave per year. We're funded for four days for classified staff-- or excuse me, for certificated staff, and zero for classified. I didn't do the math on this, so thanks again for Jackie's team. But we have about a \$6 million shortfall to pay for the leave that the state says we have to grant our staff.

So those are some areas where we're asking the state specifically for funding to solve these problems, these shortfalls. We've also identified two areas, and these are really complex. And you heard testimony today, so I want to make sure that I explain these. But the legislature could reduce the burden on districts with no cost to the state. The first one is reducing bond approval to a simple majority. I want to be clear that this has been an agenda item on our legislative agendas since the first one that I did. It is an agenda item across pretty much every district, the 205 districts in Washington State, as well as every educational agency.

Bringing approval down to a simple majority would bring bonds in Highline with the approval amount needed for levies. And what we're really doing is asking legislators, give us the same thresholds that they have to pass in order to get elected or to pass the state's multibillion budget. Why are we being held to a higher standard than our elected officials? I also want to make a note of the request here is for the legislature to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot to reduce the local levy or the local bond amount.

It then would have to go to a statewide vote. It's not something the legislature does. The state will get an opportunity. The voters in the state will get an opportunity to say yay or nay if they think it's a good idea. But given that most school districts in the state seem to think it's a good idea, we think it's pretty important to keep talking about. And the last one, and public records is complex. And you all have heard me talked about this in the past. I'm not going to talk about all of the complexities right now.

But the public records item is another way for the state to relieve burden on school districts without any cost to them, allowing us to pause certain requests. I wanted to say that hyaline is on track to receive a record-breaking 300 requests this year, up from about 50 10 years ago. Each request takes significant staff time and money. And we have a duty to work on each request until it is either closed or withdrawn.

Three ways a request can be closed. Either we give the information out, or we tell the requester that there is no information. Or we seek to clarify the request and the requester doesn't respond, or we tell the requester, we have records. Here's how you can pick them up, and they fail to respond. In those latter two cases, we can close the request within 30 days.

Occasionally, we have a request that comes in where we provide communication to the requester, and we never hear back from them. As an example, this year, we had a request for a year's worth of records from-- excuse me, from 2005. Records were located on cassette tapes. Right there caused a problem. We needed to figure out how to take 20-year-old cassette tapes and digitize them so we could get them online.

We identified a product that would allow us to do that, and we began digitizing the cassettes. Throughout the process, we were communicating with the requester, updating the timeline, indicating that there might be special charges since we actually had to buy a piece of equipment to digitize these cassettes. We never heard from the requester the entire time. The first installment was ready about four months after the request was received, and the requester was notified and invoiced. Again, we never heard from this person.

So finally, after five months, 30 days after they were notified that there was an installment ready for them, we were able to close the request. There were tens and tens of staff hours, 29 from one staff member alone, simply for digitizing these cassettes as far as she got before we were able to close it. By allowing districts to pause requests-- and I'm saying pause, not close. Pause-- after a requester is non-responsive, we can focus our time on the active request, where we know that people are actually wanting this information and going to pick it up.

The goal is by focusing on active requests, we will be able to prioritize those and hopefully, get to them faster. Frankly, this is five months of staff time and resources spent on a request that went unanswered. We tried to be good stewards of public funds, and especially in times of budget considerations. This was time that could have been better spent on other requests. Happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you so much for that, Holly. Board directors, follow up questions on the legislative agenda?

I have a handful of things that I would like to comment, ask, and clarify. Thank you very much for explaining a lot of that. We heard from numerous people regarding putting more emphasis into our schools, our districts. And you read, let's see, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 specific things that we are asking the legislature to focus on that is directed towards education. Is that accurate?

Yep, I would say so.

OK. And all this information was provided on the bar. Is that correct?

Correct.

Great.

Thank you. I just want to make sure that we are looking at trying to better the students and our school district by advocating for these things of transitional kindergarten slots, fully funding special education. Ensure that the MSOCs are keeping in pace with inflation all that we want as just citizens. The other thing that I wanted to bring up regarding the bond approval, I thought that your example of being in line with passing a multi-billion budget should be applied to this as well. Do we know any other states that have the same bond levy passage rules? Or do you know that? I'm sort of throwing that out there, but--

I don't know that offhand, but I know that I can find information on it. So I'm happy to do that before this comes up for action.

I'm just curious how other states are looking at it. And I think that you mentioning that this has been asked since-- you've had 2014-ish, 2015. It's nothing new. Regarding the public records request and the increasing frequency, I think you outlined the amount of time that it takes for certain requests, whether they-- of course, we want to abide by the rules, regulations. And we're not arguing against any of that. But pausing requests would put the priority back onto pressing requests. Is that correct?

Absolutely.

Great. That's sort of what I'm gathering here. Really reading the bar, it doesn't really say that we're trying to not be clear or anything that would indicate that we're not being honest.

I will tell you, I believe so strongly in government transparency. It's not something I talk about because I think it's just something that we do as a matter of course, and try to release things as quickly as we can. We are getting requests that are extraordinarily complex. They may not sound that complex when you look at them on paper, but when you try to actually implement, start collecting documents and talking to all the people that you need to talk to, they are complex.

And when we have requests like the example that I gave that just simply sit there and yet people spend time working on them, I don't have time to spend an hour doing something that's never going to be looked at. And I know the rest of my staff, my colleagues don't either. And so, again, the idea if we can put something on pause, that could be resurrected with a simple query into the portal would be a way to let staff know, OK, I can put that one over there for the time being and wait for it to get resurrected.

That seems like a good use of taxpayers' dollars to maybe look at something like that then, huh? Great. Thank you very much, Holly.

Thank you.

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

Thanks, Holly, for all that information and for your work. So I have some notes so that I wouldn't forget what I wanted to say. So I want to share some of the context about what has shaped our agenda and how the priorities reflect both the work underway in Highline and what I have heard from students, school leaders, teachers, community members, and the districts across Washington.

So I took on the role of legislative liaison in the summer. Preparation of that role, I visited a civics classes and participated in policy workshops with high school students across Highline last spring. These conversations were an intentional part of preparing for the role, and helped me hear directly from students about the issues that matter to them, including the importance of career and technical education and pathways that prepare them for different opportunities after graduation. That is a priority for our Highline students.

My ongoing school visits have also informed this work. They allow me an opportunity to hear from school leaders and teachers about the challenges they face and the supports that our students need. They have emphasized time over time the importance of early learning. Families have also brought forward the need for strong special education services and support through their advocacy at our board meetings. And we heard that today again, loud and clear.

I also attended two WSSDA convenings. And WSSDA is the Washington State School Directors Association, where I heard from districts across the state. We learned about priorities. Many have the same priorities or very similar, and that reinforced what our priorities are here. We are all swimming in the same waters. We're all facing challenges us in public education throughout our state and decreased funding.

Want to be clear, this is very important to me. I try to be intentional in the work that I do and in my responsibilities as an elected leader. Our priorities here build on these conversations and the work that Highline is already advancing. As I looked ahead, I'm also reflective, and I know that there are opportunities to strengthen how we develop our agenda. Created a rigorous process for students, staff, and families to meaningfully shape priorities from the beginning.

There are many existing committees and advisory groups and other structures in place that can help bring these perspectives into the process. So once again, I'm asking Dr. Duran and my colleagues on the board to work together to strengthen this approach, not only for my tenure as the liaison, but also for future leaders who will carry this work forward. Ultimately, I believe our policy and our legislative agenda should be shaped by the people closest to the issues. And those are students, staff, families in our district. Thank you.

Thank you. And I'm remiss I did not flip over my page. I should have ended by saying that I look forward to working with you as our legislative liaison as we start session in January, and really thinking about, how do we get in front of our students and our staff and our families about this to help them help us further our interests?

Thank you.

Thank you so much with that, Dr. Espinoza. And I think you have my support on working with the other board directors and Dr. Duran and staff on bringing that forward. Thank you so much, Holly, for sharing how we all came up with our legislative agenda and our priorities. I just want to talk about the records requests. And just from a dollar perspective, we had a speaker earlier talk about the average cost is \$4,000 per request.

Just breaking it down for-- so if one person has 30 requests out there to 120,000, 300 that you shared, \$1.2 million, we have better things to spend that on. I'm not saying that all public records requests are-- we're not trying to hide anything. It's just making sure that it's being respectful and good stewards of our taxpayers. I want it. OK. Other than that, so board directors, if there are any other follow up questions on the legislative agenda, anything else that we would love to push to the Hill? Please work with Dr. Espinoza and Holly, and we'll go there. We'll make that happen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Our next intro item is 10.2, motion to approve amendments to board policy 2197, Native Education Title VII program. Sara Marie Ortiz? There you are.

I prepared comments because I know my time is short. But hopefully, there will be some questions or comments after I deliver my statement. Good evening, esteemed board directors, community members, and Dr. Duran. It's my honor to share a little bit about our Native Education policy 2197 and the introduction of its redraft tonight.

The original iteration of policy 2197 was co-designed and carefully vetted by the parents and guardians of American Indian and Alaska Native students in Highline, Native elders, the Highline Public Schools Native Education program manager, Highline Public Schools policy director, director of Student Advancement, and the Indian unit of Northwest Justice Project. Ever since I began my tenure in Native Education, I've been very interested in the intersection of federal and state legislation, LEA policies and practices, and their negative and positive impacts on the educational experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native students in public schools.

Primary changes to policy 2197 include key changes related to new state and federal requirements, and important recommendations made by the Highline Public Schools Native Family Advisory Council, as well as key officials in education with the Muckleshoot Indian tribe and other policy experts, including, but not limited to, our Highline chief policy and strategy officer, the OSPI Office of Native Education.

Some of the primary legislative changes are the mandates around LEA tribal consultation and the full and ongoing implementation of the Washington State John McCoy, lullas, Since Time Immemorial Tribal Sovereignty curriculum in all public schools across the state. The impacts of policy 2197 are profound and ostensible, and we know the redraft will be meaningful for years to come. Thank you so much for your consideration. And if there are any questions or comments.

Thank you so much for that. Directors, any follow up questions?

I thank you, Sara, for your great work. I just want to ask, sometimes there's a notion that Native people existed in the past. And Native people are alive and well. Why is it important to have a narrative that says that Indigenous and Native people are here and well? And is it important to teach the accurate story of colonialism in the US?

Thank you so much for that question. It's codified in the legislation. The foregrounds, the since time immemorial curriculum that every citizen in Washington State should have a working and shared understanding of what tribal sovereignty is, what treaties are, the original laws of this land. The comments that were made earlier about a sort of conglomerate Native nation, that's not being taught. And if our families, which we implore them to dig into the curriculum that was written years ago and continues to be updated, but also as the Highline specific content that we've worked diligently with Muckleshoot to create and get into our classrooms.

It's clear that the more we understand about our shared histories, pre-settlement, pre-United States, and on into the current day, we're a stronger citizenry. Our students have super superpowers beyond our imaginations. And we want to increase those superpowers and grounding in really meaningful, deep grounding in history and the culture of our people from way, way back since time immemorial when it was nothing but Indigenous peoples here.

It's believed by-- I know it's not just my own personal belief, but by elders and policymakers, tribal leaders, educators across the state that it's so central to having a deeper connection with our lands, with our waters, with our communities. When we don't have the understandings about how history happened, it's not a comprehensive history. A lot of times it's an inaccurate history, and that has been portrayed in K-12. It causes great harm, and it disconnects us from land, from our communities, from one another.

Thank you, Sara.

Thank you so much. Director Holien.

I think just to-- I want to say thank you very much for all the stuff that you do, all the work, hard work. Emotionally hard, and this is not easy. And I think to sort of tack on the question that Dr. Espinoza had of, why do we want to do this? But I think some comments that this is exactly why we should be having this type of conversation to our students, to our children. And I really wish-- I grew up in North Dakota, where there is a multitude of different reservations, different Indian tribes. And we didn't really learn that much.

It was what I did on my own as a teenager of learning about the different tribes and everything like that. And I'm very grateful that Highline and the rest of the state is also looking at the historical context of different tribes. So thank you very much.

Absolutely. Thank you much. And I wanted to say very quickly also that what's good for Native students in Washington State is good for all students. So that comes to those deep historical groundings and making sure that our students have all the accurate information. It's really important. And Highline, though we're very special, we are one of the only districts in the entire nation that has a policy on the books that's specific to American Indian and Alaska Native students and the way that their education experience is going.

And very special and distinct demographics-wise that we are one of the biggest populations of American Indian and Alaska Native students in an urban, suburban exurban setting. We have over 80 tribal nations represented amongst our native student population. That including their families and their communities and their tribal communities in any given school year. So that's why this policy is particularly important and will be impactful and has been impactful for the past 13 years in the lives of our Native students and families.

Thank you. Thank you so much, Director Holien. But, Sara, I just want to follow up and thank you. Thank you for helping the board revise our policy. It's been 13 years since we adopted it in 2014. It looks like 2014 or--

2014.

Yeah, it's been a long time. So thank you so much for all that you do and help our students and our community. Appreciate that.

Absolutely. Thank you so much.

Thank you. 10.3 this is motion to approve the KCDA contract and total project budget for Evergreen Aquatic Center HVAC replacement indoor air quality improvements and associated facility improvements. Hi, Jackie.

Hello, good evening again. The Evergreen Aquatic Center is located in White Center and serves as an important community resource, providing aquatic programming, swimming instruction, and recreational opportunities for students, families, and the community. This facility has been in service for many, many years and has many systems that are well past their useful life. The biggest one that we've identified is the HVAC system. As you can imagine, for an indoor pool, you need a pretty robust HVAC system that can dehumidify the air as well as circulate the air. The current HVAC system has fully exceeded its service life.

So we are bringing forth a proposal of a project to replace the HVAC system at the pool. If you turn to-- we've broken down the budget pretty well in the fiscal impact section of the bar. So one important note is this \$2.7 million portions of that are funded from two separate King County grants that we've already received approval from King County. So you can see there's the \$750,000 grant and a \$765,000 grant. So in total, we have roughly \$1.5 million in grant funding to do this work.

In addition to that, we are going to invest an additional \$1.2 million at the most of capital bond and non-bond dollars to not only replace the HVAC system, but do some other work that needs to happen in order to have that HVAC system have a long service life. So you can see there's a breakdown there. The one contract within this that we're asking approval for is the \$1.68 million Hermanson HVAC contract. The rest of these are work that we anticipate will need to be done as we start that project. So we may not end up using all \$2.7 million, that is the maximum amount that this project could cost.

Thank you so much for that. Directors, any questions?

So just to reiterate, there's grant funding totaling \$1.5 million?

Yes, yes.

And so is that funding to update or replace equipment? But it's not enough--

Correct.

--towards what the need is?

Yes.

OK. And do we expect closure of the facility while this is being done?

So we actually have a tenant that leases the pool and runs all the aquatic programming on-site. We're working with them closely to notify them of the closure dates. There will be some closures, but we're going to try and work around swim team practices and all the things that happen at that pool. So it could be possibly over winter break may be the best time to do some of this work.

OK. Thank you.

Welcome.

Jackie, I do have a question in regards to the two grants. Since they are King County grants, what kind of contingencies or rules do we have with the pool? They're not going to give us money just because. I just want to know if there's anything else on the backside on that.

There is. We are actually working now with our tenant to update the lease, because with the King County grants comes some rules around how we have to own and operate the pool. So I can get the exact wording of those two grants, but there are some requirements that we have to fulfill as we move forward with these grants.

Thank you so much for that. Directors, any other follow up questions for Jackie?

Thank you.

Thank you very much. All right, that concludes our introductions this evening. Any calls or any additions to our upcoming consent agenda?

No.

No? Good deal. I do have a point of privilege. So the first Dr. Duran, Georgia, we got to talk after because I want to see how your brother was when he was younger. So with that, can I please have a motion to adjourn?

I motion to adjourn this meeting.

Can I please have a second?

I second.

All those in favor?

Aye.

Yes.

Any opposed? Hearing, seeing none. Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody. Have a great evening.