

**Transcript of the Orange County Board of Education Meeting held on February 2, 2022.**

**BARKE:** [Strikes the gavel] Opening the meeting. Roll call.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Sparks?

**SPARKS:** Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Williams?

**WILLIAMS:** I am here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Barke?

**BARKE:** Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Shaw?

**SHAW:** Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Gomez?

**GOMEZ:** Present.

**WILLIAMS:** I make a motion to adopt the Agenda, President Barke.

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** So moved. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor?

**SPARKS, WILLIAMS, BARKE, SHAW, GOMEZ:** Aye.

**BARKE:** Did I hear an “aye” Beckie?

**GOMEZ:** Yeah.

**BARKE:** Okay. All right. Passes 5-0.

**WILLIAMS:** I move to accept the Minutes for the December 21st, 2021, as well as January 5th, 2022, meetings.

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**GOMEZ:** I have just a quick question about the January 5th Minutes.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**GOMEZ:** I'm just going to get to it here. Give me a moment. On page 8, do we normally put the church's website in the Minutes?

**BARKE:** Is that for the invocation?

**GOMEZ:** Yeah.

**BARKE:** Oh, I don't know.

**GOMEZ:** I don't think I've ever seen it.

**SISAVATH:** Because you didn't have an address on the Agenda.

**BARKE:** Oh, okay.

**SISAVATH:** I just left it as is on the Minutes.

**GOMEZ:** Okay.

**BARKE:** Yeah. I mean, it doesn't bother me unless it bothers anybody else for a reason.

**GOMEZ:** Well, only because if we were not doing it before, you know, then it looks like we are kind of singling that person out.

**BARKE:** Gotcha, so we just did it in place of an address. Are we comfortable with that?

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Yeah. I just wanted to understand that.

**BARKE:** Okay. Okay. Any other questions? Okay. All those in favor?

**SPARKS, WILLIAMS, BARKE, SHAW, GOMEZ:** Aye.

**BARKE:** Okay. Passes 5-0. Any comment cards for public comment before the closed session?

**BOYD:** There are none.

**BARKE:** Okay. Then, I think we will go ahead and move directly into closed session.

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

**BARKE:** Welcome. Always great to see a full house. We love having people come and talk to us, so welcome. We unfortunately have had a cancellation with our invocation tonight. Is there somebody out there who would like to volunteer? The first hand up gets to do it. There we go. You are it.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**WILLIAMS:** You are it. Say it from your heart.

**MADISON:** All right.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah.

**BOYD:** If you could just state your name?

**MADISON:** Hello. My name is Madison Miner, and I live in Villa Park, California. I'm going to go ahead and lead us in prayer.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**MADISON:** Thank you. Father God, I thank you so much for this evening. I thank you for this school board, and all they do for our children, Lord, for each of them. I pray that you just continue to bless their lives and to be with all of our students, be with all the staff and the teachers that are affected by their decisions. Lord, I just thank you for this evening. Thank you for everyone that came out here tonight, and I pray that you help all of us just to continue to be wise and have integrity. We thank you for all that you have given us. In your name I pray, amen.

**WILLIAMS:** Amen.

**BARKE:** Amen. Thank you, Madison. We appreciate that, especially on such short notice.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**BARKE:** Next, we are going to have our esteemed colleague, Tim Shaw, do the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SHAW:** Thank you. Please stand if you are able. Ready? Begin.

**SHAW AND THOSE PRESENT:** 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.

**WILLIAMS:** I love that energy. It is palpable.

**BARKE:** All right. As I did a few months ago, I'm going to make a statement about item number seven, I believe it is on our Agenda today.

**WILLIAMS:** That is correct.

**BARKE:** I'm going to make a quick statement. Here we go. Although neither I, nor my husband, who is a member of the board of directors for the school, have any personal financial interest or potential for personal financial gain from the granting of the petition, I will recuse myself from all discussion, comments and votes concerning this school. I do this to avoid any appearance of impropriety, and because of the common law prohibition against conflicts of interest, which may be non-financial matters of personal interest. Just wanted to remind you guys of that, but I have wonderful colleagues here who I have complete trust in handling this matter. When we do get to number seven, I will hand the gavel over to VP, Dr. Ken Williams. Thank you again for attending, and we will get on with the Agenda.

**WILLIAMS:** Introductions. Nina (inaudible)?

**BARKE:** Okay. We like to do a report out from our closed session, please, Jonathan Brenner.

**BRENNER:** Good evening, members of the Board of Trustees. Good evening, Dr. Mijares. This is the report out for closed sessions 1, 2 and 3: The Board had a discussion with counsel. With respect to closed sessions 1 and 3, the Board approved Epstein, Becker and Green's invoices numbers 1074011 and 1074012. The Board had a discussion with counsel as to all three closed session matters and took no other action. The votes on the approval of the invoices were 4-1: Trustees' Shaw, Barke, Williams and Sparks voting in favor; Trustee Gomez voting against. That is the report out for the three closed sessions. Thank you very much.

**BARKE:** Thank you very much. Nina, are there any introductions?

**BOYD:** No. There are no introductions at this meeting.

**BARKE:** Okay. Then we are going to move into public comment.

**WILLIAMS:** Very good. Again, welcome. What I'm going to do is read two names. The first name will be at the dias. The second name, you will be following up and you can stand a little bit behind them. You will get a full three minutes. We do have eight public comments under general comments. Then, the charter comments, when we get to that portion of the meeting, everybody who put a card in, you'll have an opportunity to make your comment at that time. The first up will be Ellisa Kim, and then after Ellisa will be Mr. Eddie Kim.

**ELISSA:** Hello esteemed Board. I'm here to call to your attention substantial violations of the Ralph M. Brown Act. One that jeopardizes the finality of the action taken by the County Committee on January 27, 2022. The violations are as follows: Number one, item (8)(a) provides for a staff report. There was no staff report attached to the County Committee Agenda. Number two, item (8)(d), entitled vote on redistricting plan to adjust the Orange County Board of Education trustee area boundaries following the 2020 Federal Census action. On January 27th, 2022, the aforementioned vote took place. However, there was also a resolution subsequently read into the meeting record. The resolution was similarly not included on the County Committee Agenda. Number three, item (8)(d), the resolution was also not subject to a motion or second, instead it was simply mentioned and read into the record by the County Committee Council. Number four, item (8)(d), Serial Meetings and Communications, Government Code

Section 54952.2 (b)(1) prohibits a majority of members of a legislative body outside of a lawful meeting from directly or indirectly using a series of meetings to discuss, deliberate or take action on any items of business within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body.

Paragraph (b)(2) expressly provides that substantive briefings of members of a legislative body by staff are permissible as long as staff does not communicate the comments or positions of members to any other members. On January 27th, 2022, County Committee member Kathleen Heard, read verbatim into the record a prepared motion that was obviously created in advance of the meeting. This motion reflected a predetermined outcome. I request to examine the exact document, heard/read in full view of the public, also in the absence of a properly and legally publicly posted resolution, which ultimately approved Map 9B (v2). The illegal resolution reflects that the resolution was prepared in advance of the County Committee meeting to produce a prearranged outcome. This is circumstantial evidence that the County Committee consulted, considered and predetermined the outcome of the meeting outside of public view. Pursuant to Government Code section 54901--

**WILLIAMS:** Fifteen seconds left.

**ELISSA:** Okay. One, I demand that the County Committee cure and correct the illegally taken action by invalidating the County Committee approval of Map 9B (v2) on January 27th, 2022. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**EDDIE:** (Inaudible).

**WILLIAMS:** Mr. Kim, if I can, just for protocol sake, I need you to go up to the podium, introduce yourself and then you can do whatever you have to do.

**EDDIE:** Okay. I'm here to speak regarding the Ed. Code that has been so hotly contested. It is Ed. Code 1002 (b) that the County Commission believes that they have the right to redistrict the map that we all approved--that OCBE approved. I want to go back to (a), which says "upon so requested by the County Board of Education, the County Committee on School District Organization, by two thirds votes of the members, may change the boundaries of any or all trustee areas of the county or proposed increased or decreased number of members of the county board of education or both." I wanted to ask Orange County Board of Education, did you have a majority vote or request that the County Committee take action? I know you can't answer, but I'm putting it on record.

If you did not, why is the County Committee getting involved when OCBE did not make a formal request? According to Ed. Code, again, it says "upon so requested by the county board of education" so that falls on you. Did you ask them or not? We want to know. Again, (b) is predicated on Ed. Code (a); (b) does not go into action unless (a) has been activated by OCBE. The rest of you that are here for the Orange County charter approval, please pay attention to the

people that are approving and against charter schools and parent choice. The people that are against parent choice, we need to get them voted out. You know that they are against parent choice, and they are for their school districts and unions. If you see people that are against parent choice, as a collective, as a whole, all the people that are watching, you know who is against parent choice. We need to get them voted out, so pay close attention. I will be serving Jeff Riel these papers. I have Sheila Benecke's copy and Howard Mariners. I also sent a copy to the Orange County Board of Registrars to Neal Kelley.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause and hoots].

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**EDDIE:** Can Jeff Riel deliver these, or do I need to deliver them individually?

**GOMEZ:** We can't answer that.

**WILLIAMS:** I can't answer.

**EDDIE:** All right. Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause and hoots].

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Next up on the dias will be Mr. Edwin Chiu, and that will be followed by Tony Macias from Chipwood Street in Orange. Mr. Chiu, you have three minutes, sir.

**EDWIN:** Thank you. I'm here to speak about Irvine International Academy. My child attends the school, and my concerns are related to the executive director and the board. I started having concerns about Mr. Michael Scott's personal beliefs putting students in harm's way during a tour in July as well as the first day of school. In the tour, he told a classroom full of parents that children have a 0% chance of contracting COVID. He also said that CO2 buildup occurs from wearing masks. When I confronted him on the first day of school, he tried to discredit me asking me if I was a doctor, which I told him I am not. He also said that he cannot transmit COVID because he already had it. I went to the next board meeting in August and told the--I informed the board about this concern; however, the board did not acknowledge that they would follow up with Mr. Scott or keep him accountable to follow simple state mandates. I addressed the board because I thought that they were the people responsible for parent complaints and holding admin accountable.

Since August, parents have also raised concerns to the board regarding Mr. Scott's financial decision making. It is worth noting that Mr. Scott has a former charter school that failed because of his own financial mismanagement. One specific financial issue this year was Mr. Scott spending \$26,000 of a \$50,000 grant from Larry and Helen Hoag. It was spent on instruments. IIA now has nine electronic pianos, an upright grand piano, as well as various other instruments, but no specific school music program, only an afterschool vendor with OCMD. Parents have repeatedly asked the board for education related supplies such as TA's. It is worth noting that the

\$50K grant did state that it could be used on faculty. I question how complaints are handled by IIA Board.

In addition to the COVID and financial related complaints, recently, an anonymous letter was written on behalf of a group of teachers regarding Mr. Scott that was sent to the Board Chair Doug Houston. However, this got leaked to Mr. Scott and other teachers. There are now other teachers attempting to locate the author of the anonymous letter. The board chair should not have leaked the letter, especially to the Admin. Mr. Scott of whom the letter was complaining about. Teachers and staff should be able to write complaints without threat of retaliation.

In closing, I'm asking this board to look into the IIA Board and Superintendent Mr. Scott over concerns about poor oversight, a hostile work environment for the staff and financial mismanagement. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Very good. Tony Macias from Chip Wood Street in Orange. On deck, after that is Nanny Sue who lives on Sugar Cane in Irvine.

**TONY:** Okay. Esteemed members of the Board, my comments are related to item seven. I put it on the card. Should we defer or continue?

**WILLIAMS:** We can change you to that part of the meeting when we get there.

**TONY:** It is more relevant.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

**TONY:** If you don't mind?

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** No problem.

**BARKE:** Sorry about that.

**TONY:** Okay.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. We have--I know I'm a doctor and I don't have very good legibility, but this one is hard to read, Nancy Sue on Sugar Lane in Irvine. Is Nancy? Help me, phonetically. Is it Nancy Sue?

**NANCY:** Nancy Lu. Yeah. Good evening, everyone. My name is Nancy Lu. I admire myself for having the courage to come here, because I'm the first generation of immigrant. I'm still learning English, so sorry about my poor English. I have two kids in IIA. The purpose of sending my children to the school is to let them learn English and Chinese, both languages. I hope they can

communicate with my family members for better communication. The founding of the school, purpose of the school is bilingual teaching in Chinese and English. Principal Truong also adheres to this teaching purpose. My children's Chinese has made great progress, and we very thanks to the efforts of the Chinese teachers. In the past several months, we have also found a lot of bad problems in the school.

Coming here today, I also have some doubts about this school. The school asks parents for every donation including almost everything, even the pencil sharpeners in the class. I'm thinking about this. The kids come to this school. Did the government give the board money? If so, where did the money spent? The school doesn't have a school nurse. The teachers don't have any teaching assistance. But our board of directors, they have the money to quickly hire a director without the parents knowledge. The director doesn't understand Chinese at all. I don't know how she will guide the Chinese teachers for teaching. This is my problem. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Donna Lea. After Donna Lea will be Lynn Hwang.

**DONNA:** Good evening, Board. I never thought I'd be here today, but here I am. I'm here today because I'm a mom of a kindergartner. She's my first kid. This is my first exposure to public schools. When we first heard of a new charter school 10 minutes from home that is a Mandarin emergent school, we couldn't believe our luck. We were literally driving 35 miles one way last year for another Mandarin immersion public school, so I literally just saved myself two hours a day. We quickly Googled the principal and found Principal Truong to be stellar. He has an awesome reputation, impressive track record, Blue Ribbon school. We enrolled right away and prayed that our name would be in the lottery system. There was so much excitement and potential for this school to not only excel in academics, but Chinese language and culture in bringing up the next generation of children.

Six months in, I am beyond disappointed in the school. It has literally been one thing after another, starting from even before school started. I received a late night phone call, after 10:00 p.m., on my personal cell phone from the executive director asking about my views on COVID. This unprofessional conduct was just the beginning. Later, I would find out that the executive director does not even have a PhD from an accredited school, but he continues to hold himself out to the public as a doctor. It is ironic that this would be allowed in the field of education. Regardless, one of my biggest concerns about the school is the multiple conflicts of interest and nepotism the school has. I'm sure it is not every charter school, but charter schools in general, it is an area where there can be a lot of financial mismanagement, fraud or money laundering.

There was a parent complaint earlier this year that sparked an internal investigation. My concern is why Brett Freeman was appointed to be the lead investigator when he was one of the issues on the complaint? He is an IIA Board member. His father is the CEO of OCMD, both of them sit on the board of Larry and Hoag Foundation, an over \$100 million foundation. The school routinely purchases instruments from OCMD and hires OCMD staff for music classes. This is clearly a conflict of interest.



The other recurring issue is nepotism. It is well known that three of the seven IIA Board members have personal relationships with the executive director. That fourth one is Brett so that is four out of seven, which brings it to a majority. He has also hired the executive director. He has also hired multiple staff that he knew previously. His own son, given IT contracts to people he knows with these many relationships. It is difficult to have our parent voices heard. Many parents have brought up many issues, none ever get addressed. I hope this board will help our parents get our voices heard. Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Thank you. Lynn Hwang, and after Lynn Hwang will be Jenny Golden. That is the last public comment.

**LYNN:** I'm here as a parent of two children at Irvine International Academy in Irvine. I believe that Michael Scott, the executive director of the school, may have violated the California Equal Employment Rights, violated Irvine International Academy's Anti Nepotism Policy and exhibits a pattern of conflicts of interest. The most recent example of these violations is with the hiring of the new Director of Instruction and Curriculum Ms. Kennedy Rocker. Mind you, IIA is a public school and receives public funding. Mr. Scott, number one, did not obtain the board's approval to hire a director of instruction and curriculum. He was only granted to hire a full-time HR personnel. Number two, there was no job description, no job posting or any advertisement for this position. Three, there was no panel interview with qualified interviewers. Four, the most qualified person in the school is Principal Chuang who was out of the country on family leave during this whole entire hiring process. Principal Chuang is the most qualified person as he was the curriculum director and teacher trainer at the School District of Philadelphia. He also won the Blue Ribbon for his school. Why was he not part of the hiring process?

Five, Ms. Kennedy Rocker was the substitute principal in January. She interrupted my son's class three times to pull out groups of children during instruction time to move and rearrange furniture. There was no performance scheduled at the school. There was no hazard at the school with the furniture. Ms. Rocker has a personal relationship with the Executive Director Michael Scott. This clearly is a conflict of interest, and it violates the Equal Employment rights. Seven, Ms. Rocker's qualifications are questionable. Her school, Doves Landing School, was established in 2020. In 2021, the total enrollment was 26 students in the entire school ranging from kindergarten to ninth grade. The average class size was two students. I was not able to locate any California test scores for performance. Ms. Rocker does not speak or read Mandarin, and this is a Mandarin immersion school. Despite not giving approval, the school board hired Ms. Kennedy any way. Multiple board members have a conflict of interest with the executive director. Thank you very much.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Lynn. Last up is Jenny Golden. Is Jenny here? This will be the last one Madam President.

**BARKE:** Great. Thank you.

**JENNY:** My name is Jenny Golden. Ladies and gentlemen of the Board, thank you for this opportunity to address you. I rise in opposition to your rejection of the district map approved by

the County Committee on School District Organization, a nonpartisan group, which reviewed the demographic changes which have occurred over the last decade, and which were confirmed in the 2020 US Census. The map which they approved takes into account the new demographic reality of Orange County. As a resident of Orange County, and the city of Tustin and as a US citizen, I reject the idea that elected officials may choose their electors. In our country, citizens elect board of education members, not the other way around. The map which the Orange County Board of Education proposed to impose is based on a calculated probability of the reelection of the majority of the incumbents. This is not only undemocratic, but un-American. It is also insulting for board members to declare that they are supporting local control, when in fact, they are doing the opposite. Furthermore, it is offensive for the Board to spend taxpayer dollars on litigation to achieve their political ends. I call for the Orange County Board of Education to cease and desist their opposition to the County Committee's approved district map.

**AUDIENCE:** [Hoots and applause].

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Jenny. Okay. Now we go on to Consent Calendar. Can I make a motion to adopt the Consent Calendar as is?

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor?

**SPARKS, WILLIAMS, BARKE, SHAW, GOMEZ:** Aye.

**BARKE:** Okay. Passes 5-0. All right. Next up is Aracely.

**WILLIAMS:** Charter submissions.

**BARKE:** Oh, I'm sorry. Are there any charter submissions?

**BOYD:** There are no charter submissions.

**BARKE:** Okay, so now next up is Aracely.

**CHASTAIN:** Good evening, President Barke, Trustees and Superintendent Mijares. Today, the Board will hold a hearing to grant or deny the material revision to the Oxford Preparatory Academy-Saddleback Valley charter school petition. OPA-SV is requesting to add an enrollment preference for students who reside within the boundaries of the Saddleback Valley Unified school site where the charter school is currently located. A public hearing was held on December 1st, to consider the level of support for the material revision in accordance with Education Code.

The Orange County Department of Education Staff Report was published on January 18. Orange County Department of Education staff recommend that the Board approve the OPA-SV material revision. Staff determined that the revised OPA-SV charter petition meets the standards outlined

in Education Code 47605. Adding the enrollment preference will allow the school to meet the needs of the community as outlined in the updated charter petition. Representatives from OPA-SV have declined to utilize their allotted time to provide evidence and testimony in response to the Orange County Department of Education staff recommendation. However, Executive Director, Dr. Amy Kernan, is available to answer questions. The hearing is now open for public comments. Deputy Superintendent Boyd, are there any public comments for this agenda item?

**BOYD:** Not for item five.

**CHASTAIN:** This concludes the public hearing. The Board has three options for action regarding a charter school material revision. Option 1: approve the material revision; Option 2: approve the material revision with conditions; Option 3: deny the material revision. President Barke, I now close the public hearing and turn the meeting back over to you.

**BARKE:** Thank you, Aracely. Do we have any discussion from board members?

**GOMEZ:** I just have a couple quick questions.

**BARKE:** Would you like to?

**GOMEZ:** Yes.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**KERNAN:** Good evening.

**GOMEZ:** Thank you. Thank you for being here. I'm looking at pages 8 and 9 of your application. I'm looking at your scores. It seemed like they dipped a little bit between 18 and 19. I know that is a little bit old data now, but can you tell me, was there anything significant that occurred with that?

**KERNAN:** Our scores did dip a little bit especially if you are looking at, I believe, our LCAP scores as well. One of the big reasons that we are seeing that those scores went down a little bit is we did do a lot of redesignation of our English learner students. We, I believe, redesignated about 50% of our students, which is a huge number of students. Those students who were taking the test, considered ELs, were our newcomer students and students who are very new to our school. Because of that, it caused those scores to kind of go down a little bit for those different subgroup demographics. Then, you know, we did see a little bit of a dip in our overall CAASPP scores. Our scores are very high, so they do fluctuate a little bit. It is sometimes hard to keep those scores high every year. But, in looking at our iReady scores that we have done over the past few years during COVID in lieu of CAASPP scores, we have seen an increase. We are hopeful and excited to see our scores this year, because we do think that we will see that rise again.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. All right. Good. Thank you. Then, just a little bit about your parent engagement, could you tell me a little bit about your parent engagement strategies?

**KERNAN:** We work really hard. We have a very engaged parent population. We have our PTOs, which are our Honor Society. We do have our different committees. We have our ELAC Committee. We have, again, our PTOs, we have an LCAP Committee that consists of parent members as well. We have our School Site Councils that have parent members and we have other different engagement activities. Chancellor Chats, our chancellors, our principals are called chancellors, so they have monthly Chancellor Chats. Right now, they are virtual; but, parents can come and just basically ask questions, find out more information. Again, we have our PTA meetings every month. In fact, one of them is about to start for our SV campus tonight at 7:30.

We really do value our parents coming on campus. During COVID, it has been a little bit difficult to have parents during the school day, but we are starting to bring parents back to have Campus Beautification Days, our VAPA Nights, our Open House. Trying to bring parents back on campus for after school events so that we don't have quite so many people with students and parents on campus at once. We usually have different parent events, usually on a monthly basis. Then we have actually started this year, having grade level meetups. After school, each grade level, parents and students get together either at the park or some, you know, at different areas around our campus and just kind of get to know each other, and get to know our staff and administration. We really are trying to broaden our parent engagement. We do have surveys that we put out multiple times a year as well to get feedback from parents, so we do have a pretty robust parent engagement plan.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah. Well, you answered my next question in your answer about, "Did you do it by grade?" so great. Then what is your current enrollment right now, and why did you decide to kind of focus on your local neighborhood, which I like, but yeah?

**KERNAN:** We have two schools. Saddleback Valley is the school that is authorized by Orange County Board of Education. Our enrollment there is 640. We are pretty much at capacity. We have a about a 1,000 student wait list. We really wanted to have this same preference that we put in place about two years ago at our other campus. We really wanted to have more of a community school where those students who live in the neighborhood, who could walk to the campus, you know, whose houses back up to our fields, have that opportunity to participate in our campuses. It really helped with our community engagement at our other site, our South Orange County site, so we are hoping to expand that to our Saddleback Valley site and really increase that sense of community around our school sites.

**GOMEZ:** Okay, great. Okay. That is all I have. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Anybody else?

**SPARKS:** I'll just make a comment. I've met several of your parents and board members.

**KERNAN:** They are amazing.

**SPARKS:** They are just thrilled with what you guys are doing, so just kudos and congratulations for the great success that you've put together with that school.

**KERNAN:** Thank you. Thank you so much. We have a board meeting tomorrow talking possibly about expansion if anyone wants to come.

**BARKE:** That is great news. Anytime we can expand what you are doing, our ears are very open. We do appreciate everything you are doing, and hear great things and thrilled to hear what you are doing, so thank you. Thanks for coming tonight and answering questions. Thanks for all you do.

**KERNAN:** Thank you. Anytime you have questions, reach out.

**BARKE:** I'd like to see if we have a motion?

**SPARKS:** I'll put a motion forth to go with Option 1: to approve the material revision.

**BARKE:** Do we have a second?

**SHAW:** I will second.

**BARKE:** Excellent. We have a motion and a second, and I will call for the vote. All those in favor?

**SPARKS, WILLIAMS, BARKE, SHAW, GOMEZ:** Aye.

**BARKE:** Excellent. I think you pass 5-0.

**KERNAN:** Thank you very much.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**SPARKS:** Congrats.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**BARKE:** Okay, now is the time that I'm going to pass the gavel over to my colleague, Ken.

**WILLIAMS:** Very good. Thank you, Madam President. We are moving on to item seven, which is a charter school public hearing for the Orange County Classical Academy. As usual, the good Aracely Chastain will be at the podium to guide us through the process.

**CHASTAIN:** The Board will now hold a hearing to grant or deny the Orange County Classical Academy petition to establish Orange County Classical Academy II as a countywide charter school. Before we begin, I want to acknowledge the Lead Petitioner Semi Park. Ms. Park has been responsive and collaborative in her interactions with our office. She has demonstrated a strong commitment to the success of the charter school. As legally required, the petition has been reviewed according to California Education Code, and you have been provided the Orange

County Department of Education Staff Report that summarizes findings from that review and offers recommendations for consideration by the Board.

Orange County Department of Education staff recommend that the Board approve, with conditions, the Orange County Classical Academy petition to establish Orange County Classical Academy II as a countywide charter school for a term of five years from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2027. Our initial review of the petition raised concerns about potential violation of Education Code section 47605.6 (a)(2), which states that an existing public school shall not be converted to a countywide charter school. The submitted charter petition states that Orange County Classical Academy, which is authorized under Orange Unified School District, would close, and all assets would transition to OCCA II including the facility, human capital, resources, contracts and students.

The teachers that signed the petition as meaningfully interested to be employed at the charter school are all currently employed at OCCA. The petition provided an exemption for students enrolled at OCCA and stated that they would be considered “existing pupils” for OCCA II. The petition budget included revenue that would only apply to continuing schools, not a new charter school. At the clarification meeting, which took place on December 8, charter school legal counsel stated that this was not a conversion but an entirely new charter school. That all students would need to apply for enrollment and all staff would apply for employment.

In light of this information, we requested that the charter school provide an updated budget and a legal opinion addressing the potential conversion of the existing school. That legal opinion was provided to this board in order for you to make a determination on the conversion issue.

The Staff Report and recommendations include conditions that are necessary after evaluating the petition as a new school, not a conversion from an existing school. There are four findings in the Staff Report that guided the staff recommendation. The findings include language under the student admission policies and procedures; lack of a contract with Barney Charter School Initiative upon which the charter school’s instructional program is modeled; lack of permits allowing for use of the identified facilities for educational use; and missing information under measurable pupil outcomes and annual goals.

First, the charter petition allows for students from Orange County Classical Academy to be considered existing students for Orange County Classical Academy II in order to exempt those students from the lottery. However, as the petitioners and their legal counsel have clarified, OCCA II is a new charter school, therefore, would not have existing students that could be exempted from the lottery under Education Code.

Second, the petitioner submitted a contract for Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI) for Orange County Classical Academy, not for Orange County Classical Academy II. The charter petition educational program relies completely on the curriculum and training from BCSI, which is why staff is recommending that a contract be in place prior to school opening. Our understanding is that OCCA II representatives are confident that acquiring that contract for the new charter school will not be an issue.

Third, although the school proposes to open three locations in the initial charter term, the petition only identifies the use of the facility at 4100 E. Walnut Avenue in Orange. This facility has a Temporary Use Permit issued by the City of Orange and currently houses Orange County Classical Academy. The current TUP expires on June 30, 2022. The permit would need to be issued for the full enrollment of the new charter school prior to school opening. Additionally, Education Code requires that a charter petition provide the location of each charter school facility that the petitioner proposes to operate. The charter petition lists only one address, and we are asking that any known potential addresses be added to the charter petition so that the school will be able to open at those locations without having to go through the material revision process.

Finally, we provided the charter school the opportunity to answer questions regarding the information missing under Measurable Pupil Outcomes and Annual Goals, and the charter school submitted a response agreeing to add language to that section of the charter petition to address staff concerns. Typically, this is where my Staff Report presentation would conclude; however, I want to make the Board aware that on Friday, January 28, we received communication from the petitioner that included a revised charter petition. The revised petition included changes to the Measurable Pupil Outcomes and Annual Goals section of the charter and removed the exemption for students currently enrolled at OCCA. Additionally, the revised petition changed the enrollment preference to give first preference to students currently enrolled at OCCA for the 2022-23 academic year only. The petitioner expressed that they hoped to remove all of the conditions that staff recommended.

Education Code 47605.6 states that the staff report must be published 15 days prior to the board taking action. The published staff report, including recommended findings, cannot be changed after that date. Additionally, while the petitioner may have potentially addressed two of the four recommended conditions in the revised charter, that revised charter petition has not been comprehensively reviewed by staff and our current findings stand. Also, please keep in mind that per Education Code 47605.6, enrollment preferences must be approved by the chartering authority at a public hearing.

I had a conversation with Ms. Park after receipt of her response to the Staff Report and appreciate her collaborative approach and understanding of the information that I provided. Prior to the public hearing, representatives for Orange County Classical Academy II will have equal time and opportunity, or 10 minutes, whichever is longer, to present evidence and testimony responsive to the staff recommendations and findings published on January 18. I now call representatives from Orange County Classical Academy II to the podium.

**GOMEZ:** Mr. Vice President, as point of order.

**WILLIAMS:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** Just to clarify, if a board member has recused themselves, I don't believe they are supposed to be on the dias.

**BARKE:** I actually checked in with our attorney, Mrs. Chidester, and she said it was fine for me to be here as long as I did not make any comments.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Mr. Rolen?

**WILLIAMS:** Let me. Mr. Rolen and Ms. Chidester, can you give us your official position on that?

**BOYD:** Dr. Williams just as a point of reminder, Mr. Rolen recused himself from this process.

**WILLIAMS:** Thank you. Thank you. That is right.

**CHIDESTER:** Good evening, members of the Board, Superintendent Mijares. It is indeed true that Mrs. Barke has completely recused herself from all participation in the process. There is no legal requirement that she physically step down from the dias. In some cases, board members prefer to do so. So long as she does not participate in any way, she is not prohibited from sitting in the chair where she presently is.

**GOMEZ:** It has been my experience in my other public life—

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**WILLIAMS:** [Taps gavel] If we can allow Trustee Gomez to complete her statement?

**GOMEZ:** Thank you. It has been my experience, and on the advice of other attorneys, they have asked people when they recuse themselves to leave the room so that there is no inference of, you know, we will just say staring people down, or smiling or anything like that.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**GOMEZ:** I have consulted other—you know, come on. This is ridiculous.

**WILLIAMS:** Let's be respectful. What I'm hearing from you, Trustee Gomez, is that you would feel more comfortable if Mari would be off the dias?

**GOMEZ:** Well, that just keeps us a little bit cleaner so that whatever decision we make, we know we have done it properly.

**WILLIAMS:** Oh, okay. I'm just going to do a board consensus. Your thoughts on the matter?

**SPARKS:** I think really it is Mari's decision to sit there or to not sit there. As long as she follows the law and does not participate in anything.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay.

**SPARKS:** I have no problem.

**WILLIAMS:** Tim?



**SHAW:** That is what I was going to say. I mean, my experience has been if there was a financial conflict--when I would have a Levine Act issue at my other agency, for example, I think we were asked to leave. I generally left, but I don't think that that is the case here with Mari, so whatever she wants to do.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah, and to complete the consensus, I'm fine with her. She's not influencing. She has never influenced me.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**BARKE:** Just a comment, I typically smile, so.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah, and we are not married, so. Yeah. Yeah.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. So, just for formalities, and just for public knowledge, Mr. Greg Rolen recused himself on this case. The Board has retained the gracious services of Maggie Chidester as our board attorney to direct us during this time period. Your feelings are that it is perfectly fine?

**CHIDESTER:** Yes. I would acknowledge Trustee Gomez. It is common in many cases, but it is typically the decision of the member. So long as the member does not participate in any way and has announced the potential for conflict, that satisfies the legal requirement.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Thank you, Ms. Chidester. I see a consensus here that Mari was not going to influence you, myself, Tim, and I assume, not you either, Beckie.

**GOMEZ:** Won't influence me, but there are people in the audience.

**AUDIENCE:** [Noise].

**GOMEZ:** You know, I would really appreciate some respect out there. Be kind to one another.

**WILLIAMS:** I will concur. If we can show some good demeanor and kindness that would be appreciated during this, sometimes emotionally ridden time period. These events are very difficult, and we don't always have the same opinion. We may differ, but let's be kind to one another. Thank you, Ms. Chidester. We will continue on with the meeting. We are going to go to Ms. Janelle, I think. You are going to come and give us your perspective of the Staff Report.

**RULEY:** Sure.

**PARK:** Good evening, Vice President Williams, Board members and staff. I also first wanted to start by recognizing Aracely, her professionalism, her timely response. Even though it has only been two months of collaboration, I've thoroughly enjoyed it. We have learned a lot, and we plan to continue the learning together. We are very excited and grateful at the thought of being

approved by the County. As you have heard during our petition hearing on December 1st, we have a lot of students, and parents and families hoping and dreaming to get into our school. The thought of being able to expand across the county, and not being limited to one city, as you know--it is extremely difficult finding a site, a property that can accommodate a charter school, so being approved under the County really does mean a lot and does allow us to expand properly.

I know that there have been a few points that Aracely addressed. As you heard through Aracely, we have accommodated most of the conditions that the County staff members recommended. One of the biggest concerns was that we did not have the affiliation with BCSI. I'm happy to say that we have, just a week ago, been finally given the official affiliation to BCSI, so we are very happy about that.

**AUDIENCE:** [Hoots and applause].

**PARK:** We are just waiting for the finalization of the signatures to submit it to the County staff. The second thing was around the academic test scores and the feedback that we got on our petition. We have granted almost everything that we have been given feedback so that is a testament and evidence that we are willing to work with the County. We will, of course, take in feedback within our mission and vision, as long as it stays within our mission and vision, we will gladly work with you and do our best. I ask that you please approve our petition without the conditions.

**RULEY:** Good evening, board members. Janelle Ruley with the Law Offices of Young, Minney, Corr. on behalf of the petitioners. It is great to see you. Happy New Year. On behalf of Orange County Classical, we are certainly gratified and very appreciative to see a staff report recommending approval, albeit with conditions, but recommending approval. I know that this team was really thrilled. It is a testament to the work that they've put in.

As Aracely mentioned, there were four, kind of, groups of conditions. You've heard about most of them. I'll just briefly say, I'll end with number one if that is okay. Condition number two, was around the Barney Charter School Initiative approval and having that contract in place. We have agreed to do that. The contract is there. That is going to be satisfied. The third condition was around having copies of permits, and facilities use agreements and all of that. What the charter school affirmatively promised to do was, within 14 days of receiving any of those government documents, to turn them over to the County so that will be a prompt submission.

Then there were a group of conditions to clarify some of the measurable outcomes. You are all familiar with one of the elements of the charter, where we are supposed to set forth what kind of outcomes we are trying to reach. What we did, what OCCA did is they took the charter petition that had been submitted, turned on track changes and then wrote in, truly, our best understanding of what County staff was looking for. That was what Aracely mentioned. We submitted that on Friday. I understand staff has not had an opportunity to fully review that, but we do believe that we have fully addressed those.

Then going back to the first condition, which is around this idea of a conversion of a public school. The law does say that a public school cannot be converted into a countywide benefit.

However, public school in this particular context truly only means a traditional public school, not a charter school, so there is two different statutes. You are aware, sometimes charter schools come to you on appeal. That means they've gone through one of the statutes that goes through school districts. Then, there are countywide benefits, different statutes. They are right next door to each other, 47605, 47605.6. In the school district statute, it does talk about conversion of an existing public school. What that means is a traditional public school, where the teachers come together at that school, and they say, "Hey, we actually want to be our own charter school" so that would be a conversion. There is a handful of them in Los Angeles County. That same term, the same phrase also appears in the countywide benefit statute. One of the, kind of, maxims of statutory interpretation, we learned this in law school probably like second year, is that the Legislature is deemed to mean the same thing if they use the same words near each other, without any explanation of a change.

This is a long way of saying, what the Legislature is preventing in terms of a conversion for a countywide benefit, you can't convert a traditional public school into a countywide benefit. Doesn't say anything about converting a charter school, so the reason that this is all important is because OCCA isn't actually converting, can't possibly convert into a countywide benefit. It is just not doing that. For that reason, you know, we would ask that there is not a finding related to that. In the admission preferences, what we proposed to do as of Friday, was to take out a footnote, and instead add just an admission preference. The footnote said, "Current students would be deemed existing students of the new school." Instead, we took that out so that would mean they were exempt from the lottery. What we said is that they would receive preference in the lottery instead, so the estimation was that this would assuage County staff concerns while still staying within the law and meeting the desires of the charter school.

Thank you for letting me take that walk through a little bit of esoteric law. Again, we were really gratified to see the recommendation for approval with conditions.

**WILLIAMS:** Thank you.

**RULEY:** Thank you.

**SPARKS:** Can we ask questions?

**WILLIAMS:** We are going to ask some questions. I don't know if we are there yet. Is that the completion of your portion of this public hearing?

**RULEY:** Yes.

**WILLIAMS:** Very good. Okay. Moving on with the public hearing, we are going to go to public comments. Then, we will have Board questions.

**SPARKS:** Okay. Do you need to close it?

**CHASTAIN:** No. The hearing is now open for public comments.

**SPARKS:** Okay. I'm going to list off the first two names and call up Madison Miner and son, Benjamin and Bethany Thomas.

**BENJAMIN:** Hi. My name is Ben Miner. I'm in second grade at OCCA. Why I like OCCA is because the science is fun, because there is a lot of different experience. Math is easier, because my teachers explain it a lot.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**WILLIAMS:** Good job.

**MADISON:** This is one of my four kids, and we changed schools from a typical public school to--we were so grateful to find a classical education school. My kids learn differently. I learn differently. We have just discovered that. After attending a typical public school, he would come home every day crying. I couldn't figure out why and the explanation behind it. It finally came out of him. It was that he was sat typically in the corner with a coloring book. He was advanced. He had his ABCs. He had his numbers down. I kind of made up my decision that I was going to homeschool, which I think is wonderful for those that do it. I discovered, thanks to COVID, that I am not a homeschool mom.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**MADISON:** When we found a classical education school that pushed my children, after the first week of him going there, he came home smiling and excited to come back each and every day even on the weekends like he said to me. We discovered that it was just a great move for our family. I am hopeful that we are approved for this change to Orange County Department of Ed., because I think more kids need opportunities like my children were given. I would love to see every child that wants to, all the hundreds of kids on our wait list, get into a classical education school if that is how they learn best.

I think Mrs. Park was being a little bit humble when she talked about our licensing. I just have to brag on that for a second. There were 22 schools in the entire nation approved through BCSI - 22. We are the 23rd. We are the only one in California. Our leadership, our administrators are phenomenal. They are humans, so they make mistakes, but not many. I can't recommend--or hope that you would recommend this change for our school. Thank you.

**SPARKS:** Thank you. Bethany Thomas, and then Andrea Baker.

**BETHANY:** Hi. Good evening. This is my barnacle, so she's going to stay with me.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**BETHANY:** My name is Bethany Thomas. My daughter is a first grader at OCCA. At our December meeting when we came before you to petition, Dr. Williams you asked what our secret sauce was. While Semi offered to sell it to you for \$2 million--

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**BETHANY:** --for me, as a single mom living Orange County, it is worth infinitely more than that. I'm sorry. I told myself I was not going to cry this evening, but I'd like to share with you what I think it is. It is this amazing body of staff members who, not only are giving our children the best education in the entire country as you just heard. My daughter is excelling. She can read. She loves school and comes home in the car every single day thrilled to tell me things that, I can assure you, I never learned. She knows about Jacques Cousteau and is learning about Hispanic culture right here in Orange County. We are having a fiesta, I think, next week.

Besides that, it is this parent community that you see before you that comes meeting after meeting after meeting pleading for our children. These parents are so crazy involved, and love their kids and are just thrilled with this opportunity to be together. As a single mom, we survive or we thrive based on our community. This community is outstanding. There is no better school in Orange County, and our test scores are going to prove that to you. I would love for every child in this county to be given this option, so thank you.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Hoots and applause].

**SPARKS:** Andrea Baker, and then it will be Kerri Edlund.

**ANDREA:** Hello. I have four boys, and we are in the Anaheim Unified School District. I hate public speaking and normally I start crying. I was a homeschooling mom, and I would never send them to a school in my district. When I found this school, I jumped on it. My boys are thriving. They love it. They love their teachers. The staff is amazing. The community of moms that you see here showing up and fighting for our kids that is what, you know, we are all about. I would urge you to approve this for us.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**SPARKS:** Kerri, and then Bailey Thomas is up next.

**KERRI:** Hi, my name is Kerri Edlund. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this evening. I have a son who attends OCCA. Thankfully he was able to attend starting when the school opened. Prior to OCCA, he was in one of the top ranked elementary schools in Orange County, but we decided to make the switch just because of the mission and vision of OCCA and the opportunity to have a classical education. We are so so so thankful that we made the switch. Prior to coming to OCCA, my son, he didn't want to go to school. He would cry in the morning, and it wasn't because it was too difficult for him. It just was not the right fit for him. Since coming to OCCA, he has absolutely thrived.

He has a rare autoimmune condition, and it gives him many health and learning challenges. The staff and the students at OCCA have been such a blessing and have really really been the reason that he's been able to thrive. Because of the way that they teach the curriculum, it is very academically rigorous, but he is really really really doing well. He is absolutely overjoyed to go to school. When I pick him up in the evening, he can't wait to tell me everything about his day.

I really really would love for kids throughout Orange County to be able to have the experience that my son has had, especially those kids with health and learning challenges. I think that that is something that is very very important, so I ask that you please approve the petition without any conditions. Thank you.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**SPARKS:** Bailey Thomas, and then Tina. Tina, well Tina.

**BAILEY:** Hello. My name is Bailey Thomas. I speak as a sixth grade teacher at Orange County Classical Academy. I spent five years of my elementary school years being able to go to a classical school. I didn't realize how special it was until the minute I was told I could no longer go there in sixth grade. I remember leaving bawling my eyes out, just remembering how special it was to me. Ever since that exact moment, I've been longing to return to a classical education ever since. I believe there is where I was instilled with the love for learning and passion to discover the world. After that, I went to public school. I went to other private schools. I did homeschool, but it was really more just teaching myself at that point. I did independent studies. At the time I didn't even know charters existed.

In my high school years at public school, I spent my time researching, on my own, where I could find a classical high school. My parents couldn't afford that. They couldn't drive me either even though I did find one, and I tried to convince them. I ended up doing independent study one year, but my mom convinced me or forced me to go back to public school to get a normal high school experience. I spent those years studying in the library, learning Latin, being the weird one because I loved learning. I always felt out place. I know I had great teachers at my public school, and it was a wonderful experience. I just felt like, there, I lost my love for learning for a time. It just turned into, as a whole, like, just pass the class and just graduate high school.

I get that, but I really wanted to learn the material and understand what I was learning. I felt a major lack when I started going to public school. That is why I'm so passionate about returning to classical education. It felt like they really cared about my morals or intellect at the time even though I know they were caring people. It was a dream come true when in college, I discovered a classical liberal arts school, and that is what I studied. I learned a passion again for learning and wanted to share that with others. I was always torn between public and private schools, because, as a Native American/Asian American, I wanted to like help my communities and work on reservations. I've spoken with many communities in native reservations that have had a classical school just like ours, BCSI. They said their community is now thriving. The children are

thriving, because they are learning how to learn. They are helping their community and bettering that.

It just has been very empowering to know, as a typical minority, that my education isn't limited to just my race, or ethnicity or color. There is just so much more being part of the school now. It is so neat to be in public, but getting almost a private education. I love that we are inclusive of all in working in the community. I drive from San Clemente to Orange every day, and I'm going to do that for the rest of my life to open up more schools. I hope you approve our OCCA II.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Hoots and applause].

**SPARKS:** Tina, and then Tony Macias. I think that is what it is. Tina, yes, you are up next.

**TINA:** Sorry, I left my ball and chain at home tonight.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**TINA:** It is far less entertaining without him. There is really nothing else I can add to what has been said other than, if you had asked me a year ago, no pre COVID, that my social calendar would be filled to attending board meetings and you know, pleading cases--I honestly never thought, I came from Russia, and I never thought that I would find myself pleading for options for children to learn. I never thought that I would try and speak up on behalf of my children, because, to me, America was the greatest country in the world. Here I am. I don't even know. I'm a hopeful dreamer. I'm one of those that are like on that forever long list of people waiting to get into the school.

It is amazing. I want that, not only for my children, but for all children. Statistically speaking, the best way to improve your condition in the world, in America, financially, is to get an education. Charter schools, especially ones that are as rigorous as this one, help children become more educated and have a leg up in the world. Isn't that what we all want, just a chance, for someone to give us a chance to, I don't know, just to get our foot in the door? I think that, you know, the more kids who have an opportunity to attend schools like this, I think all of us as a community will be blessed for that. This is the new generation, and we have to do whatever we can to help them to succeed. I ask you to please consider expanding the charter as it was without all the bells and whistles attached to it, because this is for the kids. This is for all the parents who are fighting to help their kids be better, be better people and know more. That is all I have to say, so thank you for your time.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**SPARKS:** Tony Mattias, and then Merrick Rocky. I hope I said your name correctly.

**TONY:** It is Macias.

**SPARKS:** Okay. Sorry.

**TONY:** That is okay. I'm sorry. Sorry for the delay. I couldn't hear above the clapping.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**TONY:** Esteemed members of the Board, Superintendent Mijares, thank you for having us here tonight. I just wanted to step back and talk for a minute with you tonight again, just in general about classical education. You know, much has been said about classical education, but we don't have the market cornered on classical education. We didn't invent it. We are standing on the shoulders of giants, specifically, Socrates, Plato, and in the hands of Aristotle. Right? Just three areas that come to mind, just off the cuff, you know, the concepts of truth, goodness and beauty. Aristotle talked about these properties of being, not properties of matter - liquid, gas, solid, properties of being, right - goodness, truth and beauty. As you can imagine, you know, this is the foundation, the great pillars of classical education.

In my home, we can look out from where we live, there is a little rise. We can see a sunset. I can take my two year old, and we can look at that sunset, those beautiful colors of rose that is the last color before the darkness. The same color that rises in the east, and that child knows inherently of beauty. Right? We can talk about all these things. We can talk about truth. Truth however, I don't know if you know this. I was surprised when I learned it. Truth, the way we process truth, we still talk to ourselves internally. We process and we give ourselves permission whether it is really true or not true. But not so with something like beauty, and we all know this, right? Inherently, we know this, these transcendent ideals. We stand in front of a mirror every morning, and we are beautiful. But at the same time, we know that there is other beauty out there such as a sunset or a sunrise.

Beauty, beauty passes through the eyes. There is a war raging for your eyes in the world today. Whether it is in the cell phone, in my computer, on the television, on the billboards, there is a war for your eyes. There is a war for our children's eyes. Classical education helps inform these truths of truth, goodness, and beauty. I ask you just to take a step back for a moment and consider these truths that are foundational. It is not so much the same values that we have, but rather the virtues that we live. At OCCA, one of the missions from OCCA is not only incredible academic excellence, but how we live the virtues. Thank you. I ask you approve the revision for OCCA. Thank you very much.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**SPARKS:** Our last public comment is Merrick Rocky or Rocky Merrick.

**MERRICK:** Merrick Rocky.



**SPARKS:** Merrick Rocky. There you are.

**WILLIAMS:** That that was quite touching with his sentiments. I'm very impressed.

**MERRICK:** Hi, my name is Merrick Rocky. I'm a student of OCCA. I don't just love OCCA because of kickball, but because of the passionate teachers. I've recognized that the students here they're always kind. They never let me down. There is this student named Drake. He's really nice to me. Whenever we get mad at each other, the next day, he says, "Hey Merrick, like cantaloupe?"

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**MERRICK:** --at lunch. I just really like this about everyone at OCCA. Everybody's nice. Everybody's kind to me. Even though we are not fully expanded, I knew today would be the day that we would expand because it is such a good school. Thank you for listening to me in how I want OCCA to expand.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**WILLIAMS:** Merrick, thank you. It is because of you that there is hope for our future. Those words were very moving. I like your confidence. I like your style and thank you. That is why we are here.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**AUDIENCE:** [Applause].

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Moving on with the hearing, we are now going to be moving to the portion where the Board will be asking questions.

**BOYD:** Dr. Williams, she needs to close the public hearing.

**WILLIAMS:** Oh, you need to close it? Okay.

**CHASTAIN:** I do. Thank you. That concludes the public hearing. The Board has three options for action. Option 1: approve the charter petition as written; Option 2: approve the charter petition with conditions. This action would result in approval of the charter, and require the execution of an agreement to address the issues outlined in the Staff Report and establish appropriate timelines for the petitioners to meet the conditions as specified; Option 3: deny the charter school petition. President Barke, I now close the public hearing and turn the meeting back over to you.

**BOYD:** It would be Dr. Williams.

**CHASTAIN:** Sorry, President Williams.

**WILLIAMS:** That is okay. That is okay. Now we are going to Board questions. By closing the public hearing, I will formally make the motion to approve, without any conditions, the Orange County Classical Academy county wide charter. I'll need a second for that second.

**SPARKS:** Second.

**WILLIAMS:** Then we will go on to Board questions. Got a second by Lisa Sparks. We will go to questions. Dr. Sparks, would you like to begin with questions?

**SPARKS:** I would. If I can read my own writing from when I was taking notes, because I don't have my glasses today. I'd like to ask Janelle a few questions that I want to further understand. Okay. You were giving a great explanation of this conversion law 47605 and the one with 0.6, traditional versus charter conversion. I think I got all that.

**RULEY:** Thank you.

**SPARKS:** Related to that, I was wondering when those laws were made, approximately?

**RULEY:** A very long time ago.

**SPARKS:** Right.

**RULEY:** I can't tell you if they were in the original 1992 Charters Schools Act. I can tell you they have been on the books for longer than I've been practicing, which has been 15 years.

**SPARKS:** Okay. Right.

**RULEY:** Somewhere between 1992 and 2007.

**SPARKS:** Okay. I had a feeling that they were probably made a long time ago.

**RULEY:** Yes.

**SPARKS:** Before charter schools were sort of getting momentum.

**RULEY:** Yes, that is right.

**SPARKS:** They haven't really been adapted and updated, which is maybe why some of the language is a little bit archaic.

**RULEY:** That is right.

**SPARKS:** That is the word I would use. Maybe that is the wrong word.

**RULEY:** That is right, yeah. No, I think you are right. I think there are some provisions that are a little bit anachronistic or archaic in there that, you know, they were of a different era.

**SPARKS:** Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

**RULEY:** Yeah.

**SPARKS:** Your distinction made a lot of sense to me in terms of the way we are understanding the modern public charter school. Okay.

**RULEY:** Thank you.

**SPARKS:** That was my main question. Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Very good. Tim?

**SHAW:** Thank you. I've spent more time with lawyers in the last year than I think I have the rest of my life put together. I'm increasingly realizing that if you get 100 lawyers, you could probably get 100 different interpretations of the law. I wondered if I could ask Ms. Chidester? I heard when Aracely was speaking about the law and the concerns the staff had, and Janelle has made a great representation in defense of their case, would you agree with her conclusions?

**CHIDESTER:** Thank you, Mr. Shaw, Board, Superintendent Mijares for the opportunity to briefly address you. First of all, not answering your question, which is always an occupational hazard when you speak with lawyers, so apologies. I would concur with Ms. Chastain and the staff with respect to their report. It was quite thorough. It followed the statute. It was very accurate. The petition was well written. Clearly the cooperation and collaboration was very obvious, and all of the issues were in large part addressed. One of the remaining one was, is it a conversion or is it not a conversion? Did the Legislature even contemplate the situation before you tonight? I won't disparage the Legislature anymore. You have already heard me do that in previous meetings. We all have a lot of thoughts about our Legislature, and why they do what they do and require boards like you to sort it all out.

I understand Ms. Ruley's opinion. I read it. I appreciated her rhetoric and defense. I also can say the same of Ms. Chastain's. I can also tell you that there is nothing definitive. There is no court opinion. There is no Attorney General Opinion. I can find on the CDE website, a quote-unquote, definition of a public school that is contrary to what council represented. I am not saying she is wrong. I am saying she made a great argument. In sum, I don't believe we are going to sort that out tonight. It is true that, following the recommendations of staff, the petitioners did make significant changes, virtually every change. There is still an issue of where they are going to land property wise, but that winds up, quite frankly, with the standard template agreement. That is one of the conditions that is to protect both the Board and the petitioners so that is probably not a big issue before you tonight.

I would say that, in fact, although the statute isn't perfectly written, and it has been around for some time, and like council, I can't tell you how many years, although I confess to teaching in

public schools well before the Charter Schools Act was enacted, I don't think even the Legislature knows what it means. CDE on its site has a comment, which is not binding, that would be to the contrary. That doesn't mean council is wrong. That doesn't mean Ms. Chastain is right. Sorry for the long rant.

**SHAW:** If I'm hearing you right, you are sort of alluding to the idea that there is some gray area in the law. I've been hearing a lot of that from my lawyer friends lately as well.

**AUDIENCE:** [Laughter].

**SHAW:** Sorry. My other comment would be how much I appreciated all the speakers this evening. Your passion, your enthusiasm, your energy and excitement for your school is very obvious and very heartfelt. I just appreciated you being here and those great comments. Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Very good. Beckie?

**GOMEZ:** Thank you. I have lots of questions about the petition, but I want to start off with just trying to understand some of the process. Aracely, could you come back? I understand that the school has made some changes in response to the Staff Report.

**CHASTAIN:** Right. Once the staff report is published, that allows the school the time to look at that staff report, and then be able to provide a response to it, to this board. What the schools typically do, is sometimes they try to provide something in writing to us. But after the fact, obviously, there isn't anything we can do about changing a staff report or a recommendation after that has been done. That is really, you know, to protect the school so that we are not, you know, adding things to a staff report that they may not have had time to research and respond to. Yes, they did submit a new charter petition. When I glanced at it, the items on the Measurable Pupil Outcomes, the stuff that is right now in the Staff Report are their responses to our questions. The percentages that were missing, things like that, they gave us those responses. I put verbatim what they gave us into the Staff Report so that they can add that language to the charter petition. I'm going to assume, even though we haven't reviewed it, that that is probably all fine now. You know, they have taken that language and they've transferred it over into their charter petition.

The other item that they changed, the removal of the exemption of the existing students at Orange County Classical Academy and then they added a preference. That is where it gets a little bit trickier, because you don't have that petition before you to approve.

**GOMEZ:** Right. Exactly.

**CHASTAIN:** A preference has to be approved at a public hearing. Currently, the way that it is written, the students are exempted, which we don't see in Ed. Code where that is allowed. I don't know if Ms. Ruley has a different opinion on that. But what they did, which was changing it to a preference, as she stated, is allowable in Ed. Code so that would fix that condition right there. However, like I said, that petition is not what is before you right now for approval.

**GOMEZ:** Right.

**CHASTAIN:** That is where that condition comes into place for them to be able to do that having had the public hearing today.

**GOMEZ:** We basically don't have the revised petition. We did not have that to review.

**CHASTAIN:** Correct. Yeah. Correct.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Some of the questions that I have might be covered in their revision.

**CHASTAIN:** Right.

**GOMEZ:** But since we don't have that—

**CHASTAIN:** Right.

**GOMEZ:** It is a difficult—

**CHASTAIN:** They would have addressed two of the four conditions by revising the charter petition. Then the one about the facilities, as we know, they can't correct that right now. That needs a little bit more time. My understanding is that they are with the city trying to get a Conditional Use Permit or Temporary Use Permit for the full enrollment of their students. The other one, I apologize, I'm completely blanking. Oh, yes, the contract for the curriculum. My understanding is, you know, as they stated, that is in process. They are just awaiting some signatures there. They are moving forward with the conditions that we have given them. The conditions really are in place just to give them time to correct before they open, while still being able to approve the school. Once, you know, that is in place and the agreement is in place, giving them deadlines to meet those conditions. That is when staff can start monitoring the conditions and how they are responding to those.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. It is a little difficult for us to respond to this petition without having all the information. Okay. Thank you--

**CHASTAIN:** Sure.

**GOMEZ:** --for the moment. Could I have the school? I just have a few questions. Can you tell me what your current enrollment is?

**PARK:** Our current enrollment is 420.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. I asked this question the last time we spoke. Page 13 has 626 students, so you are saying it is 420?

**PARK:** That was in reference of 626 students who, after our previous enrollment, those are the number of students that were remaining. We accepted up to 700 students using the platform

SchoolMint for the open enrollment. We had enrolled a few students based on the available spots at the beginning of the school year. On the petition, that number that you referenced, refers to the number that were remaining on SchoolMint after the last enrollment on the wait list.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. But then you say you have a wait list of 1,000 people.

**PARK:** Yes. Because open enrollment is only for two months of duration, after that, we don't allow parents to register to be included on the waiting list. What we did instead was creating an interest list to continue so that they are staying in the communication. Those parents are given the opportunity to join the open enrollment, which began this week.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. That is still just very confusing as to what we are trying to do. Okay. On the curriculum, staff indicated that there was a contract being signed. What curriculum have you been using for the past year?

**PARK:** We have been the licensed user up until now--

**GOMEZ:** Okay.

**PARK:** --which gives us the authorization to still use their curriculum and their program guide. Their process of getting affiliation usually takes about three to five years. Because we have been sticking to their curriculum with fidelity, and they have come out to observe us in action, and we have attended their conferences and so on, that collaboration already took place. The official affiliation has been approved about a week ago.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Normally, you said it takes a few years to do. Do you adopt the curriculum, and then they monitor you basically, and then allow you to use it?

**PARK:** Yes, which they have been already doing.

**GOMEZ:** I am sorry, what?

**PARK:** They have been already doing that as a licensed user.

**GOMEZ:** Right. That is what I'm asking.

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** Is that the normal process?

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Okay. That helps. Okay. Professional development, obviously there is some real passion here for this type of curriculum and this type of teaching. Can you tell me a little bit more about your professional development? There was some information in here. There is also

quite a bit of money for professional development, which is actually the opposite of most of the charter schools. They usually don't have enough in there.

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** But at the same time, this board has been critical of professional development monies of our staff. Maybe you could tell me a little bit about how you use your professional development money?

**PARK:** Of course.

**GOMEZ:** What you are doing with that?

**PARK:** I truly believe that one of the biggest secret sauce to really maintaining a high performing school is to really respect, and honor teachers' time and giving them all the resources that they need, not only teachers, but for all staff members. We have a very unique mission and vision. It is not like a typical public school that you would find out there. Because of that, we wanted to make sure that we have all the tools and resources that we need. We have a good portion of professional development directly from (BCSI) Barney Charter School Initiative. They have come out, spent two weeks with all of our staff members, training us and working with us, meeting with us. We also have an obligation to meet the state standards of Common Core. Even though we are not using and teaching Common Core directly, we have classical standards. But, we have to cover and make sure that our students have access to all of the Common Core standards. We have that professional development as well. We also do a lot of internal professional development with safety, with parent engagement, with having difficult conversations. We want to make sure that, as a brand new school, last school year, that we are fully equipped. I think it is understandable that this is only our second year and professional development, sufficient PDs are very efficient of running a successful school.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. I agree. I agree with that.

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** What is your current teacher to student ratio right now?

**PARK:** For TK, it is 24:1. In the primary grades, it has been 26-28:1. Then, in the upper grades, around 28-29:1.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Your petition indicated the you expected it to be about 22:1.

**PARK:** Yes. We have discussed that with Aracely during our phone call. We do expect in the secondary level that we may have less as it is common for high schools and middle schools to have less of a classroom size. However, because of our long wait list, we could potentially revise that to have a few more students comparable to what we have currently.

**GOMEZ:** Your ratio would be a little higher?

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** Like 24-26.

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** Something like that. Give or take. Okay. Then your parent involvement, any charter school that has been in front of me, they know I always ask about this. Can you tell me a little bit about your parent involvement? A little bit about your measurement as to how you gauge that?

**PARK:** Sure. We do both quantitative and qualitative measurement. We have lots of opportunities as I presented on the December hearing. We have our Academy Advisory Council. We have our Parent Academic Committees. We have safety committees, fundraising committees. We have different opportunities for parents to be involved, and parents get to choose what they are passionate about and how they want to be involved. There is lots of other parent volunteering opportunities. We have an entire room dedicated to our parents called The Parent Center. We have a parent coordinator, who is a full-time employee, who is dedicated to really being the liaison between the school and the parents. We have open communication. Parents can directly reach out to any of the staff members depending on their needs. We have Coffee with the Headmasters, every month. We have Wednesday Weekly's where, every week, we send out communication. We have a calendar just for parents where they access through Parent Square. Our teachers use Class Dojo to communicate messages on a weekly basis, sometimes daily, depending on the topic. Last year we had sent out a survey to all of our families, to gather some quantitative measurement of how they think that we are doing, consisting of 13 questions. One of which was asking them about their feelings of our commitment to our mission and vision and getting raw feedback. We ask for feedback in multiple settings.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. You had indicated in your petition, that you were looking at an 80% parent involvement, how are you doing on that measurement?

**PARK:** I would say, overall in various settings, it really depends on which one you are asking. But overall, we have such heavy and strong involvement of parents. They are volunteering their time all the time. If you come to our site, every day there is parents on campus. We can't keep them away. They love being there. You name it. For any event, parents are always just out there, and supporting us and helping us with their time.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Yeah. Eighty percent is your measurement on all these parent involvement--

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** --items here. The other concern that I had was about your board of directors. It would seem to me that, in looking at the backgrounds of your board, there really isn't any HR experience. There is no finance experience. There is no legal, but then you have hired consultants to do that. How would you characterize your board composition in meeting what you need to do?



**PARK:** I think the board members have been extremely supportive. We are all learners together. They may not have been an educator or HR, but they certainly utilize the tools and resources that we have to ensure that we can make the most prudent decisions together. We do have an awesome vendor, ICON, where we get a lot of support around different things. As you know, Janelle, of course, we get a lot of support through outside resources. Our board members, you know, they have the humility to reach out. If there is something that we need to get a consultant, then we bring in a consultant before making those decisions. I don't believe that they are a know it all and pretending that they know if they don't. I think that is the true quality of leadership. That you work with humility and you do what you can with the most prudent way.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Where would that show in your budget? Is that your contract labor when you go out and hire consultants?

**PARK:** Yes. Mm-hmm.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. So, your contract labor, I'm just looking at is like \$48,000 for this year. Then it jumps to \$94,000 next year. Then keeps going up, and up and up. That is a little concerning whether or not you could stay within your budget and meet your obligations. I think that is all the questions I have.

**PARK:** Can I have Roy come up to respond to that?

**GOMEZ:** Sure.

**KIM:** Just to clarify your questions, they do have in business services about \$96,000. That is ICON services. They also have legal services budgeted for \$32,000. Contract labor, as you mentioned, is \$48,000 for the first year. They also have special education contractors at \$160,000. Those are all resources that the school uses to contract out.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah. That is in your budget. I can see that. Yeah. Thank you. You also referenced parent training. Where is your parent training budget?

**PARK:** Where is the parent training budgeted?

**GOMEZ:** Yeah.

**PARK:** We don't have a separate budget. If we need to, we are definitely going to use it. For example, just today, this morning we had a Coffee with the Headmaster where the BCSI content specialist delivered a training on Singapore masks specifically for our parents. That is all part of the contract that we have with BCSI.

**GOMEZ:** They are footing the bill on that? You are not?

**PARK:** No.

**GOMEZ:** It is under your contract obviously.

**PARK:** It is a contract. BCSI is unique, because it is pro bono. There is no financial affiliation.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. They will do your parent training.

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** When you request it, or are they on some sort of a schedule?

**PARK:** There is a recommended schedule, but we constantly get guidance on when to do it and how often to do it.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Do you have like a parent orientation when you have new?

**PARK:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** Okay, great. That is it for now.

**PARK:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Very, very good. I'll be the last one asking questions. Then, we will go to the vote. Just to remind everybody, we have a motion on the floor that I made and seconded by Dr. Sparks. That motion was to approve the charter as written without any conditions. My questions will go to Janelle. You know, I love you, and I always ask you first. I put you on the spot. I appreciate you.

**RULEY:** Sure.

**WILLIAMS:** The revised petition that was mentioned today, those were all made subsequent to the Staff Report, which was made public. Please tell me, and make this for the record, is that unusual or illegal?

**RULEY:** It is not illegal. It is definitely not illegal. I think what is unusual somewhat is that the charter school proactively responded to concerns of staff. What we were anticipating is if there were an MOU, that MOU would direct us to do certain things. Instead of waiting to enter into an MOU, we went ahead and did those things.

**WILLIAMS:** By being proactive, you sort of resolved a few of the issues that the staff had.

**RULEY:** That is what we were trying to do. That is what we were trying to do.

**WILLIAMS:** Gotcha. It is not illegal. It is actually, probably, I look at it as a very good thing.

**RULEY:** We intended it as a gesture of goodwill and good faith.

**WILLIAMS:** Yes, yes, yes. Of course, you know, the other issue that the staff brought up was this agreement and contract with Barney Charter. That is no longer an issue.

**RULEY:** Correct.

**WILLIAMS:** That has been signed. That is going forward. The Temporary Use Permit, which is also outlined in the Staff Report as something they were concerned about. That is something we see each and every single time.

**RULEY:** Multiple times probably.

**WILLIAMS:** Obtaining property and school for any charter school is the most challenging aspect. Once you get past that, everything else is easy to do. The measurable pupil outcomes that were mentioned here, they are important. They are important technical issues, but those are things and issues that I think your school cares very much about. Unlike my colleague, I don't think this is very confusing. This board has not been critical of staff development. We really support staff development. That is very, very important.

**WILLIAMS:** I'm very excited to see the parental involvement here that is so incredible, so thank you.

**RULEY:** Sure.

**WILLIAMS:** I just want to make a few closing comments here, too. Our good counsel, Maggie Chidester, thank you so much for clarifying law. Thank you so much for being a part of this. I take everything that you say at heart. It is not easy. It is gray. There are no court opinions and no AG opinions. Sometimes the law is gray, and sometimes it is not difficult. We know that as a board going forward, so that is all.

I took a lot of notes during this time. Yeah, that is all my remarks. Before we go on the vote, is there any other questions by my colleagues here?

**GOMEZ:** I would just like to make one comment.

**WILLIAMS:** Sure.

**GOMEZ:** It appears to be some progress has been made, but I am still a bit concerned about the remaining items. I would like to see us do it with conditions, and allow the school to move forward on those and approve it with conditions. I think that would be the more prudent thing to do and allow them to make those changes.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. With all due respect though, the motion on the floor is made without conditions. That is the one we are going to vote on first. If that fails, we will go with your motion. Okay. Barring that there is no other further questions, we have the motion on the floor to approve without conditions. We have a second by Dr. Sparks. Do we need a roll call?

**BOYD:** No.

**WILLIAMS:** No. Okay. All those in favor, say aye, raising your hands.

**SPARKS, SHAW:** Aye.

**WILLIAMS:** I see three. Opposed?

**GOMEZ:** Opposed.

**WILLIAMS:** Opposed, Trustee Gomez. The motion passes 3-1. Congratulations.

**AUDIENCE:** [Hoots and applause].

**WILLIAMS:** [Strikes gavel]. The Board will take a five minute break.

**BARKE:** Okay. We are back, and we are on number nine. If Mr. John Nelson would like to come up?

**SHAW:** Nielsen.

**BARKE:** Nielsen, sorry. I should have had my glasses on.

**NIELSEN:** I'm going to take that off, because it is just bothering me for the presentation. I hope you don't mind. Anyway. President Barke, members, trustees of the Board. Thank you very much for having us here this evening - my firm NP Consultants, and our poll on Critical Race Theory and Ethnic Studies. As my mother always said, never come to an event without presents and gifts, so I have some gifts for you all.

**BARKE:** Wow.

**SPARKS:** Cool.

**WILLIAMS:** I hope we don't have to declare them.

**BARKE:** Yeah. Do they have to go on our 700 Form?

**NIELSEN:** No, they don't.

**BARKE:** Oh, good. Okay.

**NIELSEN:** They are actually a report on the poll. A completely detailed report on the poll. It is 122 pages, so a little bit of light reading for you.

**BARKE:** Wow. I think we are sharing the two.

**WILLIAMS:** No, he is going to get some more.

**BARKE:** Oh, there is more for everybody. Okay.

**NIELSEN:** I just have to get them out of the other section of my briefcase here.

**SPARKS:** Okay.

**NIELSEN:** One more?

**SPARKS:** I think so. Yeah.

**NIELSEN:** One more.

**SPARKS:** Thank you. Perfect.

**NIELSEN:** Okay.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**NIELSEN:** The only thing you don't currently have is the comments from the poll, which is question 10. We will get into in a minute, which we will email over to you. There was over 900 comments.

**WILLIAMS:** Wow.

**NIELSEN:** We tried to get it into the report. It just wouldn't format right, so it was easier just to email it to you. You can take a look at it at your leisure. Hopefully--

**WILLIAMS:** If I can just interject here?

**NIELSEN:** Sure.

**WILLIAMS:** Can we have this report on some sort of PDF file?

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. We will send it to you via PDF as well.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay.

**NIELSEN:** I just thought for reference sake, it would be nice to have some reference material here for you. More than, probably, you ever want to have in your life, but it is okay. Hopefully, we have the PowerPoint loaded up. I talked to them earlier about it.

**SISAVATH:** Yeah. It is on there.

**BOYD:** You have a clicker there.

**NIELSEN:** Is this it?

**BOYD:** Yeah, but they are going to help. Here he comes.

**NIELSEN:** I love people that help, because as my staff says, I'm very technologically not up to speed. Okay. What is that for, next page?

**OCDE STAFF:** Same thing.

**NIELSEN:** Same thing? Okay. Cool. Makes it very easy. Anyway, as you are all aware, we were designated to do a poll on Critical Race Theory and Ethnic Studies for you. We will go over a little bit on some of the ideas we had, and kind of how we got there and the results involved. I apologize in advance. A lot of this is going to be text simply because COVID Omicron kind of wiped out half of my staff during this. Some of this is me, so sorry about that. We usually have a lot more colorful graphics and everything else, but we were forced to utilize my limited skills in certain situations here. Anyway, let's take a look.

The poll was created to get an overall view of the publics' opinion on Critical Race Theory and Ethnic Studies, specifically, how the public defined CRT and Ethnic Studies; how they felt about it being taught in the public school system as well as being a requirement for high school graduation. Our goals, as you can see here, are pretty definitive. We wanted to create a poll that measured those particular issues with great accuracy and making something that was simple to use for the respondents involved. This is a 50,000 foot view of the subject. We didn't go into a lot of nuance with this as you'll see as we get into the poll. It gives us a really great snapshot of some basic feelings and ideas regarding definition, and how they felt about CRT in public schools; how they felt about Ethnic Studies in public schools and as graduation requirements. The other part of the goals we have here, we really wanted to conduct a poll per individual school district, which is exactly what we did. Okay. This is really not a single county poll. This is a conglomeration of 28 really smaller polls involved.

Third, we wanted to get the greatest diversity of opinion on this particular subject that we could and create an audience that would give us that particular opportunity. We wanted to create a poll that was very simple and easy to use for respondents so they wouldn't get fatigued and not want to complete it, or it got too cumbersome for them to do so. We had several things in mind. These are the local school districts that we polled in each individual school district. Now, I should caveat that by saying that the high school district were an amalgamation of the elementary school districts, because they are overlay. The high school districts had several elementary or school districts underneath them. We combined those results to create the high school district polls. Okay.

How did we do what we did? First of all, we had to decide what kind of platform to use on this. What was going to be easy? What is going to be simple? What is going to be effective most importantly? We went through the different scenarios on what we could do. There are quite a few, but ultimately we decided on going online. Online would give us an opportunity to control the environment a little more. The audience and perspective in a simple way to complete the poll. We decided to do that online, and we decided to do it through Facebook which is obviously one of the premier platforms online. The audience that we chose here was our next challenge. What do we want to do? Well, first of all, we wanted to conduct the poll, as I said before, per individual school district. What we did is, those respondents for that district had to reside within the boundaries of that particular district.

Secondly, we wanted to make sure that we had a wide opportunity of those respondents, so we created a large age variance from 18 to 55 plus. We also looked at what audience kind of data we wanted to input in the system. Did we want to just go wide, or did we want to have some control? Based on past polls that we have done, the Orange County Registrar of Voters database was always good to use. We found that particular database was more responsive than just going wide generally so that is what we made a decision to use.

Okay. I pushed the right button. Okay. Then we took a look at, how are we going to attract respondents to answer the poll? What are we going to do to make sure we have enough respondents to make this worthwhile? We looked at ways to encourage respondents to answer this poll. We did a few different things. First of all, we utilized marketing messages in the Facebook Newsfeed in order to attract respondents. We used a method called AB Testing. AB Testing is an old marketing concept, which basically you use different techniques in order to see where you get the most response. In this particular case, what we did is we AB Tested: help your local school district. Your school district is X, Y, Z school district. You know, please help us. Okay. And you'll see how the panels look. If you've seen the presentation, you've already seen how it looks. We tested that against, okay, if we just, go help your local school district and create it via the city. Help your local school district. An example we used is Huntington Beach. Then you have Huntington Beach. People, we found, were more comfortable with their city even though they were helping their school district than if they had the school district name. What we found is actually some of the respondents didn't know who their school district was. You know, we needed to make that a little more easier for the respondents to really get involved with it.

The other thing is on the fourth, the questionnaire, the survey, it needed to be developed through our marketing team. It had to be a survey that was easy to use to eliminate pole fatigue. You know, we don't want people to quit halfway through, because it is just like, "Oh man, this is just too tough," right? Kind of like a scholarship application or something, you know. We don't want that. We wanted something that was easy to use, but gave us the information that we were looking for. What we came up with was a set of multiple choice questions and a set of "yes" or "no" questions.

We looked at doing that. What we did is we utilized multiple choice questions for the definitions, what the respondent's definition of Critical Race Theory would be and what the respondent's definition to Ethnic Studies would be. We started that by creating multiple choice A-D. The first two answers in multiple choice were polar opposite answers. Meaning, one took one side of the view of Critical Race Theory. The second would take the other view. Then of course, we had "other" in there and we had "none of the above" also as a choice for the folks that got a little queasy with those choices I guess. We did that for a particular reason, and our marketing folks kind of went through it. We have a clear delineation on how the respondents defined these particular subjects. You know, which way are they going to go on this, or are they in the middle of this or how do they think about it?

We also wanted to see if those would correlate with how they felt about it being taught in public schools or as a graduation requirement. When we did this, we ran all of our questions in the questionnaire through our Education Advisory Council. Our Education Advisory Council consists of four educators who, most of them, have decades and decades of experience. We have

an elementary school teacher that has taught for 33 years. We have a high school teacher that has taught for 26 years and is a board member on a college district. Then, we have two other board members. One of which, served over two decades. One, which is a little newer. We had a variety of educational experiences looking at this questionnaire. When they looked at the questionnaire, as you can see here in the slide, they made some suggestions. Most all the suggestions we took. One of them we didn't take, which was, one of the suggestions was to separate the CRT poll and have a second Ethnic Studies poll. The concern was that there might be linkage that Ethnic Studies might be linked to CRT and vice versa. We took a look at that, but frankly, the logistics and, to be blunt, the expense was just too much, so we put them together. We had just under 1,000 respondents complete this poll. We came up with the questionnaire as you see here. Basically, initially, we got some demographic information: age, and we have age categories, gender. You have children in public schools. Again, we wanted to open this up to the voter database and get opinions from everybody. As you can see with question four, CRT on the multiple choice question. You can see in A and B, those are polar opposite positions on those issues. Then again, five and six are the “yes” or “no” questions on, should it be taught in public schools? Should it be a graduation requirement? Then, seven again, was multiple choice answers to the Ethnic Studies definition question. Then again, we went back to public schools and graduation for Ethnic Studies as well. Then 10 was the comments, which you will get later for light reading.

So, we had our questionnaire. We had our platform. We had our audience. This is what the online survey looked like. Okay. As you can see, you've got “Learn more to help your local school district Huntington Beach residents.” This is a Huntington Beach example. “Your district needs your help. Please help your local school district.” That was the ask in the Newsfeed, and this went into the Newsfeed. This also went into Facebook ads. As you can see in the survey, you click “next” through the survey to get through the questions. Here are your age and age categories, your gender, gender categories, female, male, other, and declined to state. “Do you have children in public school, yes or no?” “How would you describe Critical Race Theory (CRT),” multiple choice answers that they would select and go “next” to go on to the other questions. “Do you believe CRT should be taught in public schools?” “Do you believe that Critical Race Theory should be a graduation requirement for high school?” Then, it went on again to questionnaire items, multiple choice question for Ethnic Studies. “How would you describe it?” Again, if Ethnic Studies should be taught in public schools and as a graduation requirement.

Then you'll see on the right panel “Please add in any additional questions.” Unfortunately, we left this to as much writing as they wanted to do as you will find out. Boy, did we get an ear full of that, which you'll get. Then, “Thanks for your feedback.” Then, there is a bar here to view the website, which went to your website if they wanted to get information. Results, we will start with age. As you can see here, it is mostly an older audience of respondents that we got to, although we have kind of an interesting bucket in 35-44 and 55 above. Not as much in 45 to 54, which was a little strange. It is still a little bit of an older group that responded. You can kind of see the age comparisons here on the chart. Gender, this is a very, very heavily dominated female pole. It was not constructed that way. It was not audienced that way. It wasn't marketed that way. It wasn't in Newsfeed. We did it for even numbers of male/female respondents, and this is what



happened. We have 73.77% female, and there could be a lot into that, frankly. We didn't have a huge amount of "decline to state." We had, 0.2% "other."

"Do you have children in public schools?" A little more than half was "no," but we still had a significant percent at a little over 47% that we are in public school. "How would you describe Critical Race Theory?" We are looking at the definitions here. In this case, it is "B" 44.32%, has the most respondents. Now, this would be considered really the more conservative orthodoxy, I guess. You can see the definitions of CRT and Ethnic Studies. Now, we will get to the Ethnic Studies in a minute, but this chart kind of clarifies it very well. You see answer "B," which is a more conservative answer, which we showed you, which is a higher percentage. Then, you go onto a definition of Ethnic Studies, and you have the exact opposite occurring. We will get to that in a second. This is Critical Race Theory. "Should it be taught in public schools?" You can see very heavily is "no." "Should it be a graduation requirement?" Even heavier, "no." Now, this is what I was talking about. Ethnic Studies in answer "A," which is again, the way we kind of crafted it, "A" was the more, I guess, liberal orthodoxy position on Ethnic Studies. That was heavily in here as you see over 50%.

You could see across the board here, this is CRT taught in public school, graduation, Ethnic Studies taught and Ethnic Studies graduation. You kind of see the flow here. The top portion if you look at and compare CRT versus Ethnic Studies, you see the differential. But, CRT graduation as a requirement, Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement was fairly consistent in the "no" position. Again, we mentioned that. Then, graduation requirement even more "no." Okay. Comments, again about 900 comments, which frankly stunned us. It is the most comments we have had on a poll this size. The folks really didn't hold back from what they wanted to express as you'll see.

**BARKE:** The 995 respondents or whatever it was.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah.

**BARKE:** You had almost a comment for every single respondent.

**NIELSEN:** Yep.

**BARKE:** Wow.

**NIELSEN:** Yep.

**WILLIAMS:** That is unusual?

**NIELSEN:** It is extremely unusual. Usually when they get through with it, they are done with it. They want to get out.

**BARKE:** Yeah.

**NIELSEN:** But in this case, it is a variety. It is not just one trend opinion. It is all sorts of opinions. You know, some of them were rather interesting. You should probably, when you get a chance, read them. They have some suggestions in there. The only thing we redacted was some profanity that was used, and there wasn't a lot. We wanted to keep them out in case it was in a public forum, you know. Okay. Obviously trends we saw it is a very female heavy responded group; a little older situation. Now, the other thing we had was that we didn't have even numbers of district responses throughout the poll. We tried to work with that by creating more ads in some of the districts that weren't responding as well. We got some back in, but still there is a bit of a discrepancy. As you can see here from Brea Olinda School District at 75 to the lowest at Capo Unified at 23. You'll see that throughout. Most of them averaged right in between that. Then again, less than half the respondents had children in schools.

However, most of the answers from district to district were very consistent as you'll see in your report. It didn't waiver. We had anticipated maybe in some geographic areas it would be different; but, it really wasn't except for maybe some slight percentage changes from district to district, but the answers remained the same. We were a little surprised at that. We also looked at, and I'm only going to do one comparison, you've got a bunch of comparison analytics in your pack. We don't have time to go through it. We would be here all night.

The one thing that we wanted to look at was how the multiple choice answers correlated to the yes or no answers. We anticipated that the, what we consider liberal orthodoxy/conservative orthodoxy would flow into the yes or no answers. Meaning the more liberal orthodoxy answers would correspond with "yes, we want that to be taught." "We want it in as a graduation requirement." Also, if it is "no" then it would be more of a conservative orthodoxy. For the most part, it did that; but, it didn't do it in high percentages. We kind of thought it would be more of a matching situation. The only one where it really came close and really correlated was on "yes" for Ethnic Studies being taught and also "A," which the answer was more of the liberal orthodoxy answer. Those were really close at just over 5% differential.

You could see. It is interesting that this kind of separation in Ethnic Studies where you had over 50% wanted it taught in schools, but then you had more of the respondents that said, "No. We don't want it as a graduation requirement." We figured that would be a little softer, but it wasn't. Really, as you can see in this poll, the respondents really didn't want CRT to be taught in public schools; they didn't want CRT as a graduation requirement. Felt good and okay about Ethnic Studies being taught in public schools, but didn't want it as a graduation requirement. That is kind of the bottom line.

Recommendations, what would we recommend to follow up on? We would recommend that a more in depth poll be run that would explore some of these feelings on some of the results a little further. A little more on why they felt that way. A little more on, you know, getting down a little deeper. We would recommend that. We are kind of, like I said, we are a 50,000 foot view on this. That, you know, a poll be taken in a year from now to see if there is any changes in how the public perceives it. Then of course, I'm a businessman so that our firm be commissioned to do the in depth poll and to do the poll a year from now. Then also, we'd be happy to present to the different school districts the results of this. But, we wouldn't do it for free. We would love to be commissioned to do that. Want to thank you very much for your time of course. Thank you very

much for your indulgence and letting us do this for you. Thank our team members and our Education Advisory Council. What can I answer for you?

**BARKE:** I just want to start by thanking you, because there is a wealth of information. I'm very impressed by it, so thank you. Now, I'll open it up to board members. Then, I'll have a few questions and comments.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. If I can?

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm.

**WILLIAMS:** I like what you presented. I think there is some questions regarding--you defined liberal orthodoxy on Ethnic Studies. I probably would be defined as a liberal, because I believe in the teaching of Ethnic Studies, and the issues that we have had in race and all the bad things that have happened to people. That is part of history. Well done.

**NIELSEN:** If I could comment first before you go on just to kind of give you an idea of why we did that? What we did was we researched scholarly articles on both of the issues. This is how it was self-defined. That is why I used those definitions.

**WILLIAMS:** Are you saying then if you don't believe in teaching Ethnic Studies, you are bad or good, or you are not a liberal?

**NIELSEN:** I think for the poll, I don't think it really matters. I think it is a respondent's definition of what they think.

**WILLIAMS:** Oh, okay. The other question I had had for Dr. Sparks, because this is kind of her level of expertise.

**NIELSEN:** Okay.

**WILLIAMS:** What do you think about the validity of the data that was just presented?

**SPARKS:** I think it is very sound. In fact, I could tell that you had gone to the research literature for those definitions. You know, simple correlations or correlation, not causation, but I think that for the overall results with the 1,000 participants, those patterns I think are quite valid. I think some of the smaller districts where you have very few responses, I'd like to see bigger numbers in those areas; but, the patterns are all the same, so it doesn't really matter.

**NIELSEN:** Well, it is kind of interesting.

**SPARKS:** Yeah.

**NIELSEN:** I didn't really go into this. Actually, a couple of the smaller districts had more respondents. Capo is not a small district, that had very little.

**SPARKS:** I meant smaller numbers in certain district is what is what I meant to say.

**NIELSEN:** Yes.

**SPARKS:** You know, anytime you can have more respondents.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah.

**SPARKS:** But the patterns are pretty clear countywide, which was pretty interesting. I agree with you. I thought maybe there would be more variability with certain districts. But again, the numbers were kind of smaller, so I couldn't tease that out as much. I'd say, yeah, overall exactly what he said. It would be nice to go deeper dive in a year or so. But I think it would be really nice if, and I don't know if we could do this, if we could post the PDF on our website for people to be able to look at the results.

**WILLIAMS:** I think that is a good suggestion, and I would be in favor of that. We don't need a formal motion, but I assume there is some consensus here.

**BARKE:** Yeah. I think it would be great, and for them to make comments too. Some people when they get a poll, they don't do it. Somebody actually called me and said, "Oh my gosh, are they just doing this to Tustin. What is going on?" I guess, I don't know if they saw it on Facebook or how it worked, but I think to have it on a website might be less intimidating. Do it at your own pace, you know, things like that.

**SPARKS:** I meant these results in a PDF.

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm. Oh absolutely.

**SPARKS:** On our website.

**BARKE:** Yes. For sure.

**SPARKS:** Just for people to say, "Hey, this is 30,000 view results," so people can get a sense.

**NIELSEN:** The other thing we looked at is the intrusion factor. There are other methods you can use, but they are more intrusive.

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm.

**WILLIAMS:** Just to be clear what we are asking for. This should be available for the public as a PDF so we can post.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. Sure.

**WILLIAMS:** I think what you are referring to is something more of a synopsis of this. That would be more of an academic level.

**SPARKS:** No. No. I think we could just post this PDF and let people go.

**WILLIAMS:** This entire thing?

**SPARKS:** Yeah. Let people dig. Yeah. People like me would want to see it. I would want to see everything.

**BARKE:** Some people can't sleep at night, Ken, you know.

**SPARKS:** Right. Then, maybe you could have—

**NIELSEN:** Some light reading, yeah.

**SPARKS:** --maybe you could have executive summary at the beginning, but you kind of have that when you have--this last part is kind of like an executive summary.

**WILLIAMS:** What do you think Beckie on that?

**GOMEZ:** I would just add. To go to sleep, you drop it on your head and you'll fall asleep.

**SPARKS:** I need to sleep so that would be good.

**BARKE:** Yeah. It is paperback.

**NIELSEN:** That is why (inaudible).

**GOMEZ:** Yeah. I think it would be a lot for somebody, I think, to read. If it could be condensed perhaps? Some people might say, "Oh, this looks really good." They'd start into it, and go, "Oh my gosh, there is another 100 pages to this."

**BARKE:** The only thing I like though is even though it looks overwhelming, I think if we make people realize that it is by their district so maybe they don't want to see every district. Maybe they want to look at theirs.

**GOMEZ:** If you, I don't know. What is the term in Adobe Acrobat where you mark it?

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm.

**SPARKS:** Right. Click.

**BARKE:** Right. Right.

**GOMEZ:** Yes. You page it down so you can say.

**SHAW:** Yeah. We can—

**GOMEZ:** You know, I want to look at Capo.

**SHAW:** Yeah.

**GOMEZ:** I want to look at—

**SPARKS:** Yeah.

**BARKE:** Right. Right. It is not that overwhelming if you break it down.

**GOMEZ:** That is what I mean.

**BARKE:** When I first got it, I was like, are you kidding? Holy cow.

**GOMEZ:** I didn't look through the whole thing, but you could maybe do like the executive summary, or the first 12 pages or whatever it is, and then bookmark it to the different districts.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. I will whatever you think will (inaudible).

**SPARKS:** And the charts are very helpful as always, you know, the visuals.

**BARKE:** Yes. Yes.

**GOMEZ:** The visuals.

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm, yes, I think the charts are. I mean, even just even this kind of stuff I think is great. People like that.

**GOMEZ:** What are you looking at?

**NIELSEN:** Well, it just kind of shows what it looked like.

**BARKE:** Right. Yeah. I think it is helpful.

**GOMEZ:** I don't know that we need a page to show that if we just list the questions. All I'm saying is try to get it down so people will actually look at it.

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm.

**GOMEZ:** If they go, "Oh my gosh, this is one screenshot. That is a page. How many screenshots am I going to look at?" That type of thing.

**WILLIAMS:** I have a question for staff. For Darou and Nina, you know how this material gets on our website. We have this that is going to be posting, which is the PowerPoint presentation and we have the PDF. Is that correct?

**NIELSEN:** I haven't got the PDF to you. I will get it to you.

**SISAVATH:** Yeah.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah. That has to be given

**BOYD:** Whatever you all request to be posted on—

**WILLIAMS:** Right.

**BOYD:** Typically, you don't have PowerPoints on your website. But if you want a PowerPoint, then it would be put up there.

**SISAVATH:** Whatever you want.

**WILLIAMS:** Maybe we can have it? This is for the Website Committee, which you are on.

**SPARKS:** Oh yeah.

**WILLIAMS:** If you want to, you can put whatever you want. I think this is important material.

**SPARKS:** Yeah. Yeah.

**WILLIAMS:** If you want to get together with John, and then talk with staff on how you want to put it on?

**SPARKS:** Sure.

**BOYD:** Well, it should just be consensus of the Board. The Committee is recommending to the Board. Then, the Board is telling us what you want to do.

**BARKE:** I mean, if you just add it like a slide deck so people can click on it and see it if they want, you know, so here is the executive summary PowerPoint so they kind of know that's an option.

**SPARKS:** I think two things, I think, yeah, post this, I think, post the PDF but I think if it's possible to have links that people could click on or would that be, our tech people would have to do that?

**WILLIAMS:** That's a lot of work.

**SPARKS:** Well that's why I was just initially saying, let's just post the PDF, because then you don't have to deal with all that.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah, but if you do a PDF from here and you bookmark it on kind of the major headers, it will be much easier--

**SPARKS:** Right.

**GOMEZ:** --for people to take a look at.

**SPARKS:** Is that easy to do?

**GOMEZ:** You have Adobe Acrobat?

**SPARKS:** Yeah.

**GOMEZ:** Okay.

**BOYD:** However you all send it to us, we just post it.

**SPARKS:** Okay.

**NIELSEN:** Okay.

**BOYD:** You all would work.

**SPARKS:** Does that make sense to you?

**NIELSEN:** You want us to do it, or do you guys want to do it?

**SPARKS:** Well, I don't know how to do it.

**BOYD:** They would do it and give it to you.

**SPARKS:** Okay.

**NIELSEN:** Got it. Okay. I will talk to my techy people.

**SPARKS:** Okay. Good.

**GOMEZ:** I just have one other comment.

**NIELSEN:** Sure.

**GOMEZ:** The demographics, I think another picture that might have been shown on this if we asked race or ethnicity. I think that might have shown perhaps another--

**NIELSEN:** We actually thought about that and kind of discussed that very seriously. But, it was kind of determined that we wanted to have it very open and kind of get a full opinion of everybody. We didn't exclude any races. We just included everybody. That is what I was talking--it is one of the things that we would look at if we were going to do a more in depth poll, it would be ethnicity. That is one of the things.



**GOMEZ:** I think that might show a little bit different picture.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah.

**GOMEZ:** Might. Might.

**NIELSEN:** The other thing--I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

**GOMEZ:** The other thing, too is not everybody is on Facebook.

**NIELSEN:** That is the other thing.

**GOMEZ:** I know that is surprising.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. Yeah.

**GOMEZ:** Then people, you know, that don't have access to the Internet.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah.

**GOMEZ:** They are not on this.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. The other thing we discussed was doing a hybrid. We would use another kind of platform technique to get folks that would not normally be on Facebook. In those kinds of situations, we would also have different language. Folks that we work with in order to do that. To be a little more inclusive.

**GOMEZ:** It was only in English, correct?

**NIELSEN:** Yes. Yes. That is the in depth. But to do that, it is much more expensive. Because we are doing this gratis, we weren't able to get that far into it.

**SHAW:** You are still overpaid.

**NIELSEN:** What is that? Still overpaid.

**BARKE:** I think what you are saying—

**NIELSEN:** Thank you board member Shaw, I appreciate that.

**BARKE:** I think what you are—

**GOMEZ:** We will double your fee for this next.

**BARKE:** I think what you are saying is, next year, if we want more in-depth and we are paying for it, you are more than happy to do it.

**NIELSEN:** Or you know, in the next month or so. Whatever you want to do. That is up to you. Whatever we can do for you, we we'd be happy to do for you.

**BARKE:** Just for fun, what would the cost of something like this be?

**NIELSEN:** It really depends on how detailed you really wanted to get.

**BARKE:** Well, what about if you just did what you did?

**NIELSEN:** To just do what we do, we would probably be looking at just cost spending about another \$1,000 a day.

**SHAW:** Oh wow.

**NIELSEN:** Okay. We would probably looking at another two weeks so that will give you an idea.

**BARKE:** Okay. To go more in depth, is it double that, or how much more would it be to get at the gender and a couple languages?

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. It would be a little extra.

**BARKE:** I mean, I'm sorry, ethnicity.

**NIELSEN:** We can get all that. We can give you some estimates on that if you'd like to?

**BARKE:** Okay.

**GOMEZ:** We would be adding a couple of questions.

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. You would have to add definitely some more questions to it. Some more demographic questions to it.

**GOMEZ:** You wouldn't be adding more categories. You would be adding more questions.

**BARKE:** Right.

**NIELSEN:** Yes.

**BARKE:** I wouldn't want to add too much more. I just think people look, and they are overwhelmed.

**SPARKS:** Yes.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah. You don't want to add a whole lot.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah. That is always the balance you try and strike.

**BARKE:** Right.

**NIELSEN:** Yeah.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**NIELSEN:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**NIELSEN:** I appreciate it.

**WILLIAMS:** Next presentation with Dr. Eaton.

**BARKE:** Yes. Okay. We are moving quickly. Thank you again for your time and this wonderful report. What are we laughing about?

**GOMEZ:** You said, moving quickly. I go, "we are?"

**BARKE:** Yes. Yes. Mental Health Screening High Risk Youth by Dr. Martin Eaton.

**GOMEZ:** I'm just checking.

**WILLIAMS:** If I can provide some clarity to the Board and to the guests that are here? I asked Dr. Martin Eaton, who is a well-respected clinical psychologist in the community, to present his health screening that he has been doing for the last year or two in the Orange County. I think it is remarkable his stories and the anecdotal--

**EATON:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** --thoughts and stories that he gives us. I think it needs to be in the record. I think it needs to be told. What he has been doing has been remarkable in helping our high risk youth with mental health disorders. I asked him to present this with the thought that, should our good Superintendent think that this is something that is valid and should go forward, that will be item number 11 which will be a resolution that we are going to vote on after this is presented. There is a lot of concerns and considerations, there is legal, the good Superintendent and his staff have to take into consideration. I just wanted to give that as sort of a springboard for you to begin your presentation, and please tell us about what you are doing and the remarkable things you are doing for our youth.

**EATON:** Thank you. Appreciate it. Madam President, Trustees, Dr. Mijares, Deputy Superintendent Boyd, members of the public. Thank you for your tireless service to our community especially in these extraordinary times. Thank you for the privilege this evening to give you kind of a snapshot of the mental health of our secondary school students and demonstrate that universal screening such as Heads Up Checkup can be successful in identifying students in need and accelerate timely support and treatment. Dr. Mijares, you said last month as I was listening, that it is kind of gut wrenching whenever you hear a student has completed suicide. I mean, it is just the worst phone call a parent would ever have. Really my prayer is a tool, something like this, could reduce the number of parents getting that phone call.

What we know from statistics, specifically, is about one in two nationwide are in affected mental health now. This is by the UCLA Center for Health and Policy. Specifically, in California, it is about one in three. Just with the website Bark for example, what we have seen now on media website that it represents now a 25% increase in self harm and suicidal alerts for kids ages to 12-18. This is just in the last year or so. In regards to nationally what that means and the situation is just amazing, we have about 16 million students now 9-12th grade are experiencing depressive symptoms; 17% have some suicidal thoughts; about 8% now, the research shows, or about 1 in 12 are actually making now suicidal attempts. If you think about suicide, you hear so much about it. Even just this last weekend, unfortunately, Miss USA 2019, Cheslie Kryst takes her life. You think about the confusion it must be for teens when they hear somebody who literally has it all together, is achieving great success and literally has crowns. People like that are killing themselves. The 2018 Miss USA said, “When we think about all the successful people, it doesn't mean that they are not hurting. We need to check on our friends and ask the tough questions.”

Really, this is what the screener is all about. It is all about asking the tough questions. We know in Orange County, there is about 160,000 high school students, about 107,000, 6-8th graders. What this means statistically if you think about it, it means specifically, statistically, almost 12,000 students, 12,000 students here in Orange County are thinking seriously about hurting their lives at any time. The question comes in as, how do we help identify those?

Well, we know from research that talking about suicide, doesn't increase it. Mental health impacts learning. Depression is no respecter of persons. Mental health challenges and suicide aren't going away. My journey about four years ago on the Orange County Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, asked me and Dr. Marc Lerner, we all know, about the state of pediatric mental health assessment. In that process, I prepared, listened to physicians, listened to administrators, to parents, and I felt like something needs to be done to do a better job in understanding what is going on in the screening. What really universal screening says here is it is really about giving kids a voice. It is about reducing stigma. It is about starting a conversation, and it is about having the opportunity for kids to communicate. A teacher, a secondary school teacher was working for one district. We were screening their child in another school district. In that process, we identified that their child was suicidal and actually had a rope in their garage already hung in their garage, thinking about killing themselves that very day.

We identified that kid. This is what the parent told us. She said, “The wellness screening of all students revealed that my son was depressed and suicidal. Despite my wife and I loving support and encouraging our son, we thought his sadness was just a simple symptom of normal

adolescents. Based upon my son's response, our son's condition was brought to our attention. My son has since began a counseling program. I'm happy to report that my confident and happy son is reemerging. Thank you and your team for saving my child's life. I cannot articulate the importance of the work that you are doing." Every single time we screen, every single time we screen, we identify kids who are thinking of committing suicide that very day. What I'm going to do is really talk about the process, talk about the science behind it, and just talk about, this is one of many tools that we are using specifically to kind of understand, and be proactive versus to be reactive.

Here is how the process works. The school can choose any grades. We have six different versions. Everything is based upon age. It is opportunity for teachers/staff to be able to be informed. Then, schools can choose for parents to opt in or opt out. Teachers are able to provide the screening instructions. The screening takes about eight minutes to complete, about a minute or so to talk about the information beforehand. Then, and I'll explain this in more detail. After the student completes it, basically they get feedback immediately. We are able to triage what is going on with that student so that those students who are imminently dangerous to themselves or others, or in some type of abusive relationship, we follow up with immediately. I'm going to give you some of the information in regards to the results of that.

The Heads Up Checkup screening is basically, it is connected to the internet. Any internet device can be able to use it. In that process, it covers 90% of the most common mental health. The technology that we use is computer adapted, which means, as you answer a question, it then gives you a corresponding question. Then, how you answer that question, then gives you a corresponding. It kind of mimics talking to a professional. When you screen 600-700 people, you are literally getting 600-700 different versions of the screening based upon how one child answers versus how another child answers. Then, depending upon what the school is, then we have the immediate triage right after that. We are just starting now to work with Orange County Department of Education's Mental Health and Wellness Care Coordination team under the leadership of Mrs. Iwatani. We are starting that process to hope (inaudible). As schools are coming to us, we are looking for opportunities to partner to make sure that, you know, this is something that we are doing together. The screener again is all based upon algorithms. This is not based upon any of us, like thinking, well what does depression look like? What does that look like? No. This is all based upon the ICD-10, which is the international classification. It is the classification that is used by all insurance companies. Every position uses it. This is the information that it has. It also includes the FBI algorithm for a school shooter. Every time we screen, we usually identify one or two students who are either thinking about doing some type of dangerous act in the school. Then, we have appropriate protocols depending upon the situation so that also comes up.

The thing that we are encouraged about is that students are responding. In fact, what we are finding out is, students are so comfortable behind screens. They actually give you better information behind a screen than they will in person as a clinical psychologist. I talk to kids all the time. What I'm able to get from them when they have a chance to do something like this first versus if I was talking to them directly, you get a lot more information. This is really important for us about parents engagement and making sure that parents know that they can opt in or opt out. We provide information beforehand for parents. The thing that we also encourage is,

“parents you don't need to wait for your child to screen, you can actually screen your child yourself. You can even do it today.” We have a whole set of questions, the exact same questions so that if a parent wants to take it for their child, they can do that and have that same information, or they can wait and have the child do it. Again, everything is up to the parent whether they want to have the child screened or not.

That is why we have been able to do this now for the last three or four years, and we are getting about 60% response. The thing that we are encouraged about is when we go to a school and then we go the next year to do it. We see a little bit of increase about that parent support, because they are feeling more comfortable. They are understanding that this is not information that goes into the cumulative file. It is information where they screen. Everything is anonymous. The only time we would communicate to them is if they are, again, dangerous to themselves or others, in a type of abusive relationship. That is the only time when we would feel like there is a need to actually break confidentiality for that situation.

When someone finishes a screen, there is four different reports that get generated. This is the reason why we are successful. The first report is a priority alert. What we have a chance to do is if there is a priority of alert, there is a student feedback. There is a clinical report. Then, there is aggregated data. Let me just kind of go over what this means. When someone finishes the screener, immediately there is a 1-7 priority ranking. Specifically, five, six, and seven meaning: they are dangerous to themselves or others. Depends upon what level of severity and time, will tell us what that variation is. That is when it triggers for us to follow through with that individual. That is when it triggers for us to make a call to that parent. That is when there is an opportunity for us to confirm and talk to that person; just affirm, to make sure that the information is correct so that is that first thing.

Then, what we have is we have a dashboard that gives a chance. You'll see something like this where there is a dashboard. There is information. You are able to see what that person is. That helps us to you to know. All the other students, the 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, we do not respond back to them. That is part of the reason why kids are so open, because it is all confidential. It is only not confidential if they are in crisis. If they are in crisis, we tell them. That will be the only time. In that situation, that is when we would be able to follow up immediately. In regards to the student with our reliability, we have had now many different researchers work with us. It is really important for us that we are also doing our due diligence. We have worked, again, with the American Academy of Pediatrics and also some of the people there at CHOC and, of course, with Dr. Lerner. What we have been able to find so far is that our reliability or predictive reliability is about 0.81. Our test retest validity is about 0.77. It is an opportunity for us to see that the statistics that we are getting is very consistent with a lot of the same statistics in the national norms, so we feel good in many different ways. We have three different white papers that we have available. We have three different universities who are now working with us going forward in regards to making sure that we are always looking at, “Are we getting the best information, and what can we do to improve the assessment.”

In regards to the students, this is what the students will get. They'll get something like this. When they finish it, they'll get something that will talk to them about, here's the scores that they have. It will be color coded so it is very easy. Then, it doesn't provide any type of diagnosis, again, this is

a screener. This is not trying to diagnose somebody. This is not saying you have this, or you don't have this. This is saying, this is the things that the students have endorsed. Therefore, we give them that information. The goal really is to start a conversation. We hope that would be a conversation with their parents. It happens with many. We also know it can also start a conversation at the school. I'll talk about that in a few moments. What we find out is that when students complete it about 95% of them want to know what the results are, so this gives them a chance to immediately find out. As you can see here, what it does is it starts to, again, start that dialogue. It gives them the opportunity to see and understand better what is going on.

What we have just finished in the last week or so, is now depending upon what the results are, there is now video links that can also start that kind of process of educating them.

If they have levels of high anxiety, then there is a video link that will start to tell them - this is what anxiety is. This is what it means. Then there is some testimonials or inspirational videos that encourages people that if you have this, you know, you can work through this. Here's some opportunities to think through. It is just opportunities, again, of kind of guiding somebody. Now, what we know from research, which is amazing, is that when someone experiences a symptom of mental health, the average wait time between identifying that mental health and getting treatment for that mental health, the research shows the average time is 11 years.

**WILLIAMS:** Wow.

**EATON:** Eleven years. What is happening, and remember, 50% of all mental health issue start before the age of 14. What we see now today is people are experiencing mental health. They are not getting anyone's help. Because of these mental health issues, they continue to have challenges and problems. Unfortunately, whether it is the legal system or the financial system, they start to see, that is why in our legal systems today, about 70% of all people who are there incarcerated have a mental health issue that is not being addressed. This age and opportunity to try to be proactive versus reactive is an opportunity. When we start this process, it gives us an opportunity to start that dialogue. Our hopes is that parents would be able to do the screening. That the parents would be able to talk to their kids about the screening, and start that process. Start that dialogue so that we can be more proactive and reactive. We will talk about what is the implication of that. That is what the student gets.

If there is a professional involved, then they get a professional report. Now, that professional report is a report that includes (ACEs) Adverse Childhood Experiences. It includes all the important screenings. Because the person is a professional, it then says, "Okay, this is what the student has responded. This is what they've endorsed. How does that line up specifically to the ICD-10? As a professional, if someone just talks to me and they don't do a screener, it might take 1, 2, 3 times to kind of get all the information that is going to be important for me to kind of get the bigger picture. In this screening if they finish it, and they complete it, and I get the information back, now I've got more information than I would have in often three times. I've got the constellation. Because this is a computer adapted screening, it is going to really focus on that area that is important for that person so that I'm able to get all the information.

That is why it is powerful. It gives that professional the opportunity to say, “Okay, this is what is going on. This is their background.” Then that professional is able to make a better determination. If this person has got a five, six or seven, they are in the crisis level. What does this mean? What is the next step? What is the implication? At a school for example, just a couple weeks ago, we had seven kids who were in the seven category. That means kids who specifically were thinking of committing suicide that day. In the process of talking to them, one student specifically was very convinced. We saw the signs that this student was committed to doing that. Calling the parent first. Making the sure the parent had the consent first. It was determined that this person really needed to be hospitalized, so we hospitalized the person.

**WILLIAMS:** Wow.

**EATON:** Just think for a moment how much better it was for us to do that and to make that difficult call to that parent? We can get that child the help versus the other phone call that we talked about beforehand. It works. We have been doing this, again, for four years now.

Here is the other part. I want to take a few minutes with you. We provide the report, the triage. The students get a report again, non-diagnostic. The professional, if there is a professional team involved, they get something. Guess what the school gets? They get something like this. This is a snapshot. No longer do you say, “I wonder what the mental health issues are going on with our students.” This is it. This is live. This is getting it the very same day if they do a screening for the entire school. You can see here. This is a real school: 600 kids basically took it; 132 or about 27% had no concerns; another 173 or about 36% had some partial concerns; 140 or 29%, consistent with statistics, was able to meet one or more criteria for 100% endorsing a specific mental health disorder. Then, here we go with these other students, 25 students had thought of, within the last two weeks, seriously or have attempted to commit suicide. That was 25 students in that group. Seven of them were thinking of it that very same day of committing suicide. That is the reason why that those 25 and seven students immediately, the same day, talked to a team of people individually. Triage'd out, you know, who needed immediate help, who didn't. Parents were then called in. Explaining the situation so that parents were in a position to make the decision. What do you want us to do? You are in charge. You make the decision. We want to give you this information. Most parents are so appreciative, because they don't know. They don't know what is going on. They don't know how their child is hurting. On the outside, they could be looking very successful.

What we also found out is in regards to what is the most common symptoms that were endorsed? You can see school phobia, PTSD, depression. What were the risk items in regards to suicide? You can kind of see. We were also very encouraged that our transitional youth, the youth that is struggling with a lot of identity issues. Six percent communicated about unaware or (inaudible) of their gender identity. A lot going on. They saw this as a safe place. Then (ACEs) Adverse Childhood Experiences, this was the information that we got. We were encouraged to see that this was the information that was able to kind of give us a big picture. You take all the information in the last six/seven months we have done. This just kind of gives you a chance to see the couple thousand students that we did. Sixty percent were able to voluntarily participate; 30% no concerns; 35% mild concerns; 26%, significant concerns; again, was able to endorse one or more areas; about 7% were in crisis. We are a part of a mental health collaborative called



Child Mental Health Access. We have those members that are there: Children's Cause, Children's Bureau, Child Guidance, MECCA, Western Youth. We were there. We were able to get a grant of \$3 million from CalOptima. It allows us that all of the initial follow up services and anyone who is in the CalOptima membership, we were able to provide the screenings for free. The good news is we still have thousands of screenings left until the end of May 2022.

We would love to do pilots with school districts. We would love to look for opportunities to partner with the Board to see what can we do to reach out. The reality is every single time we reach out, we are able to find out there is a difference. What have we learned so far? This is something that I think is important. Schools who have completed the universal screening have not reported an increase in IEP requests. What we are finding out is that when students have this information, we are not seeing them, now, they are asking, especially in regards to the Child Find Law, they are not saying, "What does this mean? Do you now need to follow up with my child?" What we are finding out is that, this is consistent though with Child Find Law, schools are reaching out and looking for opportunities. We have not in our experience found that schools or parents are seeing this as an opportunity to do something in a way of trying to demand. That is the reason why that a lot of these students are still accessing their education. They are still successful. They are still kind of holding it together. Unfortunately, those students who are still academically successful are also the ones most likely who can follow through sometimes unfortunately, execute a suicide because of that history and that sense of who they are. That is the reason why a lot of the students that we find are on no one's radar. That is why it is so important that we are asking those tough questions.

Again, this is just an example of some of the results that we have with the different schools that we have worked with and how we have been able to fall through with them. Everything is HIPAA compliant. Nothing is downloaded. Again, it is all access to the Internet, so you can do it on your phone. You can do it on your computer. You can do it on your tablet. It is all password protected. There has never been a breach, so everything has been done with that kind of a way. In regards to the cost it is about \$695 or so per screening. Because we have this grant, that means that most of the screening is actually paid by CalOptima. Because of that, here is a school that we just did of 700 students. It cost about \$1,600 to do, or \$2.32. What I like to say is, depending upon a cost of a regular cup of coffee or designer cup of coffee, you can screen a student and save their life. That is the information.

What we have learned, or what is kind of our summary is there is more students than ever, than ever who are contemplating suicide. The research is saying almost 1 in 12 about 8%.

**BARKE:** Wow.

**EATON:** We have free screenings available. If any school district wants to do it, we will do everything we can to try to assist them. Especially before May, because we have a lot of screens that are available. Again, for about the cost of a cup of coffee, you can screen somebody and literally save their lives, so thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.

**BARKE:** Thank you so much--

**EATON:** Of course. It is a privilege.

**BARKE:** --for that enlightening, scary information. I refer to the Board.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah. Let me start since I'm the one who put this on the Agenda. The idea and concept about this was this is something that, you may or may not know, when I was in primary care, 30% of my practice was psychiatry. I saw a lot of this there, and my eyes really opened especially when it affected me personally in my family without going into great details. That is when my eyes opened. I was always focused, just like we are in primary care as a family doctor, we are aware of depression and mental health issues in our patients. I was nowhere aware of what you were sharing with me of how serious this is and how widespread it is. You and I have been talking about this for some time. I'm very impressed with how this has grown and matured.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** You have some great data here. The idea and concept is this Board and with our good Superintendent would promote even to a greater and higher level your program, your screening program. That is going to be in the resolution that I'm going to make a little bit later. That is something that our good Superintendent and I, we quickly talked about today. He needs time to do his background.

**EATON:** Of course.

**WILLIAMS:** His administrative duties and legal duties before this becomes official. But I know, knowing my board, this is something that is very near and dear to our hearts for our youth and kids.

**SPARKS:** Yeah. I would just throw out a kind of question. My assumption is as you have more and more data that you are gathering, that you are refining your tools along the way -

**EATON:** Correct.

**SPARKS:** To try to get that reliability up in the 80% -

**EATON:** Correct.

**SPARKS:** Or above area so item analysis and dropping certain items that aren't.

**EATON:** Yeah. Our researcher is with Wesley College, which is the sister school of Harvard. That is who our key researcher is, and she's great.

**SPARKS:** Yeah.

**EATON:** Because this is a criteria reference, it is all based upon the ICD-10.

**SPARKS:** Mm-hmm.

**EATON:** We are not saying, you know we could get a much higher reliability if we just drop items. But then we would not be able to say—

**SPARKS:** Oh, I see.

**EATON:** --“This is now based upon a criterion referenced in the ICD-10.” That becomes our difficulty.

**SPARKS:** I see.

**EATON:** Because we want to be a purist, and we want to practice good science and we want to make sure that when someone says they are depressed, we understand that this is what the criteria is for depression. We kind of stay with that. The thing that we are encouraged about is we are starting to build these other tools like integrated videos. We are just also finishing up this weekend with the ability for a parent who wants to monitor or be more involved with what is going on. There is other tools that we can bring. What we are really trying to do is equip parents to have as much information as they can so that they are now more actively involved with being able to understand what is going on in a kid's life. Kids are being overwhelmed with so many things on so many levels from social media, to all the things that you just talked about even just a moment ago. It is overwhelming, and they don't know where to turn.

**SPARKS:** Where do they turn? If a parent says, “Hey, I want to do this.” What if they may have some fears about the data? What if they found something? If their kid was the one who had a propensity to be the potential shooter?

**EATON:** Sure.

**SPARKS:** Maybe they don't want to participate.

**EATON:** I totally understand.

**SPARKS:** What happens with something like that?

**EATON:** We give the information to the student. What we find out most of the time is because we are proactive versus reactive, we are able to handle situations so much better, so much more sensitive. Even the kids who want to hurt other people and are actively--they have the drawings that show that. We go back, and we literally for all these major school shootings with all the characteristics that come out, we just kind of like put those into our machine to see what we have. We are finding that these kids, we would be able to find them. I remember talking even to Dr. Navarro in Newport-Mesa. He said to me, “We can build lots of fences for our schools in trying to look for school safety, but it is happening within.”

**SPARKS:** Yeah.

**EATON:** How do you do that, because now you are looking at the human heart. That is the reason why it is really important for us that when we do this, we go to parents and we start to--

there are some parents who are more defensive, but we try to maintain that relationship so that they are in charge. They make the decision of what they want to do with the information, but we help them. When you work with these students, you are not just working with the students, you are really kind of working with the family. There is often dynamics in that family that also can perpetuate things, so we are pretty sensitive to that. That is the reason why we understand that this is kind of a mission. The mission is we want to do whatever we can to protect as many children as we can. Give them the tools so that they can do things on their own, or they can get help.

The thing that is important for us is the parents make the decision who is that provider. We will provide free resources through CalOptima. But they can take that professional report to any professional that they want to of their value system and have that information. There is so many times when I worked with professionals, who have been working with individuals who will say to me, "I've been working with this individual for a year, and I never knew that. They never disclosed to me that they were suicidal. They never disclosed to me that there were gender issues. They never disclosed to me that they are social phobia." But now, we have the information. With parents' consent and permission, we pass that information on. Now, we are helping that treatment to go better, because there is a better disclosure of what is going on.

Again, we work with the parents. Then, we try to maintain that relationship including now, we are providing at schools a different (DBT) dialectical behavior therapy groups, support groups afterwards. It is important for us that it is not just kind of a hit and run.

**SPARKS:** Yeah.

**EATON:** We don't want to screen and say, "Okay, now you go figure this out." We screen. Then we say, here are resources, parents or schools that you can use as a way to follow up. When a kid opens up like that, that is sacred. That is something now you have to do something about. That is why it is really important for us including having now other educational videos and other things available. If a kid's not ready to talk to anybody else, they at least have some information that can help them with the educational process. Did I answer your question?

**SPARKS:** Yes. Thank you very much.

**SHAW:** I just wanted to say thank you Doctor and Dr. Williams for bringing this forward.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** I think anything we can do to raise awareness out there? My dad was a marriage and family therapist.

**EATON:** Oh, wow.

**SHAW:** That was the house I grew up in.

**EATON:** That can be an occupational hazard sometimes.

**SPARKS:** Yeah.

**SHAW:** I've known a long time, but it is becoming more widely known that we just have such a mental health crisis out there with young people.

**EATON:** We really do.

**SHAW:** I appreciate this information.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** It is frightening to hear those numbers.

**EATON:** Yes.

**SHAW:** It is important that we are talking about it.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**GOMEZ:** I spoke at (inaudible) luncheon about a month ago. This was for both Santa Ana and Tustin Unified. It was to honor these young women, and all the school counselors were there. In talking with the school counselors, they mentioned that probably a couple years ago once a semester they might have a kid in significant crisis. They were saying it happens once a week. These are a whole huge group of counselors. It was probably 20-25 counselors just in two school districts. That is probably representative of what is happening in Orange County if not a larger group. These automated tools, in my previous life, I was in charge of the health center.

**EATON:** Oh, okay.

**GOMEZ:** We did explore some of these tools for community college students.

**EATON:** Sure.

**GOMEZ:** I think they are really valuable in identifying, you know, different things that students can do to help themselves. this would be a little different, obviously looking at a younger population. But I think that whatever we can do to try to ease the preteen teen/teen angst of our students, I think would be helpful. This looks really, really interesting.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**GOMEZ:** Tying to Lisa's comments as well, the research and how you might tweak this. Improve it, and the embedding of videos. A student sees something--

**EATON:** Correct.

**GOMEZ:** --that might have some tool to kind of help them, or ease the burden again.

**EATON:** Correct.

**GOMEZ:** I worked with, I think it was Incognito.

**EATON:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

**GOMEZ:** That is sort of a scenario based thing. You'd ask questions and have these little avatars and things come up. It is a really cool product. That was for teachers to work with students. Again, anything we can do to help screen and help parents. I think that is what is scary as a parent when you don't know something and you get a phone call. That is super scary.

**EATON:** That is why we wish parents would be proactive and just do the screener themselves for their kids so that they would have that information and begin that process to begin to be better educated. One of the things we have also done from some schools is they are asking us, voluntarily of course, that teachers can kind of complete it for themselves. We find out that when we get schools to do that, that we will usually get some to teachers afterwards who will straggle along and say, "You know what we are talking about suicide. I'm actually suicidal myself."

**WILLIAMS:** Hmm.

**EATON:** We have been in the district where we have seen, unfortunately, teachers. I happened to be with a family friend who was one of the people who came into the classroom when something like that happened. Anything we can do to our counselors, to our teachers, to our parents to start saying there are tools like this available. No one is going to have to know about it. You can just look at it for yourself, but if you want to then share. Again, we have the privilege to be able to do that. We have teachers, counselors and others who are hurting. As much as we can, we come along beside and support them. We try to do that.

**GOMEZ:** You also mentioned the ICD-10 codes as well. How are you utilizing those? Are you just using that for aggregate data to try to determine--?

**EATON:** No. The ICD-10 codes is what the questions are made of.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Okay.

**EATON:** When we are looking at, let's say someone starts to say, "I'm tired." There is a lot of different ICD-10 codes—

**GOMEZ:** Right.

**EATON:** --that could relate to that. There is like maybe 14.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah.

**EATON:** If you think about it from the standpoint of a box, you are opening up different boxes and different potentials. It is the specific criteria from the ICD-10. That is what makes up the questions.

**GOMEZ:** Okay.

**EATON:** These are not our own questions.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. That makes a lot more sense. Okay.

**EATON:** How they answer those questions, it is all based on algorithms and it is all computer adapted. Based upon how they say, yes or no, or they endorse this, then there is other corresponding questions. What this allows you to do in about eight minutes, you basically are able to cover all the ICD-10 codes, all of the ACEs, all of the other types of substance abuse and other things, you can kind of do this from a computer generated--we are getting, again, about 80-90% correlation. If you compare that to an interview that you would do with the clinical interview, you are getting about 80-90% correlation. Did I answer your question?

**GOMEZ:** Yes, absolutely. That that is helpful. Thank you.

**EATON:** That is the challenge. Because it is criteria referenced, we can't just say, "Oh, we are going to take this out." By doing that, now this is kind of like we have made the decisions. We want to try to be as purist as we can. Please, Dr. Mijares.

**MIJARES:** Just wanted to comment. True to form, that was a great presentation.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**MIJARES:** Rarely have I been around him when he hasn't made a lot of sense and presented in a very logical, comprehensive manner, so thank you, Martin.

**EATON:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

**MIJARES:** I wanted to say that, as you all know, we have seven mental health coordinators. They are clinically trained. They are working with all 29 of our districts. They are geographically placed across the county, and you had a chance to meet with them recently.

**EATON:** Correct.

**MIJARES:** Going forward, what we'd like to do is to continue the conversation.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**MIJARES:** We are networking with CHOC. We are networking with a lot of agencies that do intervention. They do screenings. Probably not as comprehensive as what you are talking about right here.

**EATON:** And not proactive.

**MIJARES:** That is a testament to you.

**EATON:** So that is where—

**MIJARES:** And—

**EATON:** Please, I'm sorry.

**MIJARES:** No, no. Tell me.

**EATON:** That is where we find out. Sometimes you like separate certain groups. Like, we are just going to screen these kids, or we are going to screen these kids. What we find out is it doesn't get those kids who are hurting and who don't have the confidence to talk to somebody. Like your example, you said, they'll talk. But how many kids aren't talking to the counselor? That is the reason why that destigmatizing of, we are going to do this as a school, and be proactive and have something that is scientifically validated for us. That is where the power comes in it. When we sit with the counselors or the principal “but do you know who this person is?” they will say. So popular, and this person does this. They had no idea. That is part of the reason why we can wait for people to tell us. But if we can ask that question, that tough question, please.

**MIJARES:** The (CHYA) the Healthy Youth Act assessment has given us good data. We love our county. We like to think that we are leaders, and we are in so many ways. We are also leaders in students who are suffering in this great county, despite the resources. What is interesting is that, people in the faith-based community are not immune from this as you know.

**EATON:** Even last week at the Calvary Chapel.

**MIJARES:** Yeah, exactly. I recently, well, it is been several months now. I had a conversation—it is well known. Rick and Kay Warren lost their child to suicide. He has made an investment now at CHOC to create more hospital beds for suicidal students. He's definitely energized by doing anything that he can do to help us. But if you just think of adolescences for one thing, I mean, it is almost inbred to go through a period of rebellion.

**EATON:** Mm-hmm.

**MIJARES:** Pre-adolescence to adolescents and onto adulthood, like you said, some of these issues, these patterns of living and coping happen young. If you don't know how to solve problems in a healthy way, they stay with you. Then you go into adulthood and all of the things that can happen to you in adulthood, you know, from, well you name it. Lots of problems, so it shouldn't shock us that this is happening. What should shock us is the fact that we would have inertia in terms of really being aggressive and helping kids. With the internet today, teaching kids how to commit suicide is, you know, it is damnable frankly, the things that our kids have access to. It is going to require a team.



**EATON:** Mm-hmm.

**MIJARES:** I think that having further conversation with you and our team, that is the right way to go.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**MIJARES:** We will have to find those places how we can make it work seamlessly.

**EATON:** Mm-hmm.

**MIJARES:** I think that the superintendents are very very happy about that and are engaged. We are working on a program right now, Be Well OC.

**EATON:** Mm-hmm.

**MIJARES:** You are aware of that program.

**EATON:** Sure.

**MIJARES:** It is—

**EATON:** Dr. Fogley I think is one of them.

**MIJARES:** Yes. It is with the University of California Irvine. We are also looking at a model that teaches teachers, helps teachers to spot the things you are talking about. Often times kids will confide in a teacher, right?

**EATON:** Mm-hmm.

**MIJARES:** The teachers aren't this just there to do didactic, you know, teach core concepts, but they are there to really help kids grow emotionally and socially. Helping teachers to be better responders in that area is another part of the paradigm here.

**EATON:** Important part of the team.

**MIJARES:** Yeah, exactly. I will also attest to Dr. Eaton's character.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**MIJARES:** The way he handles himself among people. He is a person driven by integrity.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**MIJARES:** It makes sense for us in terms of our partnership.

**EATON:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** I just want to say, thank you.

**EATON:** You are welcome.

**BARKE:** Anything that we can do to be proactive to mitigate what is going on. I think so many people aren't aware, and I think it is important. I'm very excited about this partnership.

**EATON:** Great. Thank you very much. Appreciate, again, the opportunity. Thank you.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** I'd like to make the motion for Resolution 11 with the caveat that under the "therefores" on number two that we do not give restrictions to time for our good Superintendent Dr. Mijares. This MOU will just be presented to the Board for final approval. Then we will end it with the period, and remove the last five words "by the March board meeting." That gives Dr. Mijares some time to do what is necessary from an administrative and legal perspective. I make that motion.

**BARKE:** I'll second it. You took off "by the March board meeting." Is there anything else that I'm scratching off here, off the resolution?

**WILLIAMS:** That is the only.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**WILLIAMS:** By limiting it to the March board meeting, that is not enough time for Dr. Mijares.

**BARKE:** Right. Right.

**WILLIAMS:** He may need more time.

**BARKE:** Sure.

**WILLIAMS:** I'm just making this so that it is pragmatic for him.

**BARKE:** Okay. Okay.

**GOMEZ:** Is this something that is doable? I mean, is it something we are already doing? We are just kind of emphasizing this? Is that--?

**WILLIAMS:** That is a good question. Part of this dialogue that we have been having for some time about what we can and cannot do with contracts, Maggie Chidester answered that a month or two ago when she was here talking about these contracts. She said it is perfectly legal that the Board can be involved in that. There was some specific education codes that she mentioned, so

this is just something that is more, obviously, we don't have staff that will carry this out. But I think it is significant for this board to take action, and to recommend and to advocate for the mental health of our children. That is all this is.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah. Well, and I think we are already doing that. That is why I said it seems like it is more of an emphasis that we support—

**BARKE:** I think to be more proactive—

**GOMEZ:** Yeah. Yeah.

**BARKE:** I think is the key here. That is what I'm seeing is that we'd be more proactive about it.

**GOMEZ:** In support?

**WILLIAMS:** Right, and to have an MOU that is board approved, right.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**MIJARES:** I wanted to also acknowledge that Dr. Williams and I talked about this earlier today. While the language of the resolution, there are some pieces in there that I don't agree with, frankly. I see it largely as an exhortation to get something done. That is how I'm accepting it and working it out so that we can find common ground and move forward.

**BARKE:** We have a motion and a second, are we ready to vote?

**GOMEZ:** I just want to be clear. Is there some objection to the resolution? That is why I'm saying, it seems like we are just kind of reinforcing what is already being done.

**MIJARES:** Yes. That is how I visualize it. I do not want to get into the nitty gritty of picking things apart. I just want to respect, again, the bifurcation of our responsibilities. That is all. I see this as the Bard commissioning and exhorting. That is how I'm viewing it. With or without that, you know, we would continue. As a matter of fact, Dr. Eaton has spoken with our coordinators already. We just haven't come to the point of concretizing that into some agreement, which is something that we will be working on real soon now. Suffice to say, I support the resolution in its spirit, and I will do everything I can to make it all work.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. Okay. That clarifies that for me.

**BARKE:** Okay. All right. I'll call the vote. All those in favor?

**SPARKS, WILLIAMS, BARKE, SHAW, GOMEZ:** Aye.

**BARKE:** Okay, 5-0.

**WILLIAMS:** Madam President, I'd like to make the motion for item number 12. If we can lay that on the table for the March meeting, we just don't have the date available.

**BARKE:** Okay. Do we need a vote on that?

**BOYD:** You just want to hold it over to the next meeting?

**BARKE:** Mm-hmm.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah. Lay it on the table.

**BOYD:** You don't have to do it.

**BARKE:** Okay. All right. Then we have number 13 to adopt Resolution 01-22 to recognize March 2022 as Arts Education Month. Do we have a motion for that?

**WILLIAMS:** I'll make a motion on this.

**SHAW:** I will second.

**BARKE:** Okay. All those in favor?

**SPARKS, WILLIAMS, BARKE, SHAW, GOMEZ:** Aye.

**BARKE:** All right, passes 5-0. All right, number 14—

**WILLIAMS:** I'll make a motion on this resolution. This was something that was kind of lost over the decades. I originally introduced this way back in the '90s. Then we had this issue with the Thanksgiving, and then Christmas and all the Easter Resolution that we no longer present. This kind of got lost in that. I'd like to make this an annual resolution, and I'm open to improving the language. It was just something that is very important to me in recognizing Black History Month, so I'll make a motion for this.

**BARKE:** Okay. All right.

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** All those in favor?

**SPARKS, WILLIAMS, BARKE, SHAW, GOMEZ:** Aye.

**BARKE:** Okay, passes 5-0.

**SISAVATH:** Who was the second?

**GOMEZ:** Who was the second on that?

**BARKE, WILLIAMS, SHAW:** Lisa.

**SPARKS:** Me.

**BOYD:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** Okay. Next we have approve invoice number 3250004 in the amount of \$710.78 and 3250005 in the amount of \$31,015.24 for Haight, Brown and Bonesteel.

**WILLIAMS:** I'll make—

**SPARKS:** Second. Did you make the motion?

**WILLIAMS:** No, you can make motion.

**SPARKS:** I'll make the motion.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**WILLIAMS:** I'll second it.

**BARKE:** All right. All those in favor?

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

**BARKE:** All those opposed?

**GOMEZ:** Oppose.

**BARKE:** Okay. We have 4-1 on that. Then we have approve invoice 9797 in the amount of \$13,182.50 for the law offices of Maggie Chidester and Associates.

**SPARKS:** I make the motion.

**WILLIAMS:** I'll second.

**BARKE:** Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor?

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

**BARKE:** All those opposed?

**GOMEZ:** Oppose.

**BARKE:** Okay. Now we are to staff recommendations. Christine Olmstead, would you like to come up please?

**OLMSTEAD:** Good evening. I will make this pretty quick, because it is more of just an information item. As you are aware when we normally do our LCAP, we have an annual update that goes with it. You get that report when we do our LCAP presentation for our next LCAP approval. This year with all the federal dollars coming in and extra money coming in, they asked us to do a midyear annual update so that is what this is. In your packet, you have that information as to how we are doing with our programs based on the dollars we have had. We have one for ACCESS and Special Schools, and then one for CCPA. One of the information items, I'm just going to highlight what is in your packet. It is a lot of information, and we will give you actually the thorough annual update when we do the LCAP presentation coming up here in May.

With ACCESS and Special Schools our graduation rates are up, which is great, great news. We have a robust CTE Program starting so that is really good. We were just there at Harbor Learning Center today. Our students with disabilities participate in a gardening program that is amazing with chickens and all sorts of stuff. As you know, we need to maybe put some animals somewhere for Inside the Outdoors so that might be a good space for some extra animals too and do some student programming with that. That is really exciting. A lot of the work we are doing with the extra funding is to help our English learners, so they are getting a lot of tutorial support and extra support for that. Then, our Career Success Academy is helping as well, so they are getting a lot of training on how to be successful in careers, and a lot of tutoring and support in that area as well. That is where a lot of these dollars are being spent is just to really help our students move into college and career transition through these programs. With CCPA, can I just do both items?

**BARKE:** Yes, please.

**OLMSTEAD:** Is that okay? With CCPA, again, graduation rates are up. We implemented a new online program this year that has A-G graduation credits tied to it. Right now, we are seeing an 81% success rate with passages on those courses that they are taking, so it is really exciting. We have 72 students who are set to graduate. That program continues to grow and provide the supports that those families--or those adults need as we do that program. I'll open it up to any questions if you have any questions.

**GOMEZ:** I just have a couple quick comments.

**OLMSTEAD:** Sure.

**GOMEZ:** As you've heard from my comments earlier to tonight about the parent engagement – 80 parent engagement activities that is outstanding. Then, also all the work that you are doing on the school-based mental health.

**OLMSTEAD:** Mm-hmm.

**GOMEZ:** The mental health services for the students with disabilities. I think that is great. I'm glad we are targeting that. Again, you saw how important that was to everyone, so thank you for all that work.

**OLMSTEAD:** Sure.

**BARKE:** I just thank you for all the work. I think it is really important. Thank you.

**OLMSTEAD:** If you can get a chance to go out to HLC and see those students with the garden--well, not right now. We are putting in some new shade structures, so there is a little construction going on there right now. But, once we have that back up and running, it would be great to—the kids.

**BARKE:** Yeah. Please invite us. Maybe we can do a field trip.

**OLMSTEAD:** Okay. The kids just love it.

**SHAW:** Who gets the eggs?

**OLMSTEAD:** Who gets the eggs? Analee?

**ANALEE:** Staff.

**OLMSTEAD:** Staff, students.

**SHAW:** Whoever wants them.

**OLMSTEAD:** Whoever wants them.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah. Take those home on the bus.

**BARKE:** Yeah.

**OLMSTEAD:** The little ladies are really cute. We talked to them today, so they are doing well.

**BARKE:** Ken? Lisa?

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**OLMSTEAD:** Nope. Okay.

**BARKE:** Thank you. Appreciate it.

**OLMSTEAD:** We will give you a formal update with PowerPoints and everything in May.

**BARKE:** Okay. Super.

**WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Christine.

**OLMSTEAD:** You are welcome.

**BARKE:** Okay. Communications information, are we laying that on the table? Are we going to do that quickly?

**GOMEZ:** I can do mine quickly, but I got to find my notes.

**SPARKS:** I'm going to lay on the table the Website Committee report.

**BARKE:** Okay. Okay.

**WILLIAMS:** Likewise, I'm going to lay on the table the issue of SB 286, and the lobbyists and what is going on there. As well as the County Committee decision on redistricting since it is ongoing and active, I'll put that off.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**BOYD:** Are we carrying these over to March, or are you just laying it until you tell us? I just want to make sure.

**BARKE:** You want to put it on March? We can always move them.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Maybe an update will be done then.

**BARKE:** Yeah.

**BOYD:** We will include them on the draft agenda for March and if you—

**WILLIAMS:** Okay, thank you.

**BARKE:** Okay. Superintendent, announcements?

**MIJARES:** Yes. Thank you, Madam President. Just a couple of really quick things. One, Joanne Culverhouse, the superintendent of La Habra City School District has announced her retirement. She's going to retire real soon now. They've chosen Dr. Mario A. Carlos from the district, so he is coming up through the ranks there. Then, Dr. Carol Hansen, the superintendent of the Ocean View School District is going to retire as well, so I wanted you to be aware of that.

Then I wanted to share something. I'm sure you'll hear it really soon now. The last few days, very recent, we have met with the Healthcare Agency, Dr. Clayton Chau as well as member from Dr. Bates. She is the director of Social Services for the county to discuss refugees from Afghanistan coming to Orange County. As you know, we pulled out of Afghanistan in late August of 2021. There were about 3.5 million refugees who fled across the globe, actually, they just left; 123,000 of those refugees were evacuated by the United States and brought to the United States. They have Visas to be here legally, so we are going to have--we have them right now. They are now coming. It is 398 school aged children are here. Our job in working with the Healthcare Agency, is to help to normalize those students and help to get them into school. That is what we are doing.



**BARKE:** So, 398 in Orange County?

**MIJARES:** Yes, in Orange County. Children coming, you know, from another part of the world. They've experienced such conflict for generations. They are now coming to the wonderful United States. We are doing everything we can to help them, to acclimate them. There is a health component. There is an education component, so we are helping with the education component. From the work that we do, we will get them assimilated into local districts. Big challenges, there is cultural challenges. There is linguistic challenges, a host of things. But, you know, kids, I made the comment the other day. After the first recess, they get in it. They start playing. It is the adults that have the problems, frankly. I'm not trying to make it sound like it is all a piece of cake, because it isn't. It is going to require a lot of superlative teaching to make it all work. I just wanted you to be aware of that.

**BARKE:** Thank you. Appreciate it.

**MIJARES:** Okay.

**BARKE:** Nina.

**BOYD:** Yes. While Renee is making her way to the podium to give you an update, I'll just mention that the next board meeting is Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Submission deadline is February 16<sup>th</sup>. Your packets will be delivered on the 25<sup>th</sup>. I wanted to make you aware of office closures: Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, for Lincoln's Birthday and Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, for President's Day. I guess the day after the Super Bowl; then, the subsequent Monday, this office will be closed.

**GOMEZ:** That worked out well.

**BARKE:** That sounds like a pretty good deal. Then, it is Valentine's Day to boot.

**BOYD:** I think the first time historically.

**GOMEZ:** Yeah.

**BOYD:** Renee.

**GOMEZ:** Call it "the call in sick day" instead of a holiday.

**BARKE:** Exactly.

**HENDRICK:** In your packet, you have the Esplanade Report that shows very favorable. I will say it looks a little more favorable than it is, because we haven't made the debt service payment that happens in the spring. It looks like we have a large increase. Overall, the project continues to do very well. We are at 90% capacity right now. It seems like on our industrial seats the minute they are open, we got new tenants in. We are still having little problems with some of the small office spaces, especially the ones that don't have windows. People want that. Overall the project is doing well. We still have one tenant in arrears because of the pandemic. We have given them a

deferment and some time to kind of pay back what they owe. They are working with us on that. If you have any questions on that, I just want to give a quick budget update.

The Governor did release his budget proposal for next year. It does show record increases for schools, which it was a little surprising. They are showing now a 5.3% cost of living increase, which is amazing. Just a reminder for this board, and as I do continually with Dr. Mijares and the staff, we don't actually see the benefit of that. Because of the way our formula works, more money just shifts to the courts. We don't actually get to keep that COLA, but it is great for most of our school districts. Dr. Olmstead had talked about the plan. Just to give you a heads up, you will see a plan the A-G Completion Improvement Grant, which is part of the ESSER funds. It will be coming to you in the next probably month, I think. It is due by April 1st.

Then there is also the ESSER quarterly reports that you'll see as part of the LCAP package. There is quite a bit of that. Then we just did receive an additional \$55 million for Alternative Payment Childcare Program, so those are in your Fund 12 that separate fund. That was a large expansion we hadn't planned on. There was \$2.9 million for increasing the K-12 Strong Workforce Development, so the CTE Programs. That is new since the last budget.

**BOYD:** Thank you, Renee. If I could just mention? If you all look at your little sheets that Darou puts in? It gives you your four months at a glance. It shows you the upcoming items. I call your attention to May, because that is the Memorial Day Essay Contest. This is the time of year that I would ask you if we are moving that forward, because we will start working with the program so that they can start working with the students on doing those Memorial Day essays. I know this is something, Dr. Williams, you and other board members had started a number of years ago. I wanted to make sure I called attention to that, because we need to get the teachers getting students to start writing essays. This would be the time we would move that forward if you all are inclined to continue?

**WILLIAMS:** Move forward.

**BARKE:** Yes.

**BOYD:** Okay. Darou will send out a reminder with regards to getting checks over the next couple of months for the--

**BARKE:** Yeah. I think we should leave it up to board members individually what they want to contribute. The other thing I think we talked about is that we would have some involvement this year. Did we not talk about that? Rather than just fund it, we would actually have some involvement.

**BOYD:** Right. You requested--that is why I am asking if you are going to move it forward. We will start getting the teachers on that. Then, I will solicit information from you all with regards to--because you all had mentioned reading them in advance of us awarding them. How we do that can be determined over the next month or two.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**WILLIAMS:** I'm always blessed by what we see come through in these essays. It is truly remarkable. It gives me hope as we pass the baton to the next generation. They understand the American values that defined this country that made us great, so I appreciate it. I like it. Thank you Board for promoting it. Motion?

**BARKE:** Do I have a motion to adjourn?

**WILLIAMS:** I'll make the motion.

**GOMEZ:** Did you want me to give my report or no?

**BARKE:** Oh, sorry. Please, please.

**GOMEZ:** I can do it in about a minute and a half.

**BARKE:** Please.

**GOMEZ:** Okay. January 26 there was a budget webinar, and Renee kind of hit some of the highlights. I don't know if anybody else was on there or not, but I do have the presentation if anybody wants it. OCSBA met the same afternoon. The joint dinner that was scheduled for tonight has obviously been canceled and hopefully rescheduled. There will be another seminar on May 18<sup>th</sup>. I forgot to write down the topic, so I will come back with that. At the meeting we discussed some of the upcoming awards, which I'll mention in just a moment. There was an update on the long term subs. There was a discussion on how boards are holding meetings for those with and without the resolution on AB 361.

The Pacer for Orange County also sent links to the AB 130 Referencing Guide on Navigating School Closure Processes and a webcast on the staffing shortage. I think he sent it to everybody. If he didn't and you are interested, let me know and I will forward that to you. The awards, today they announced a call for nominations for the Marion Ferguson and Maureen DiMarco Awards. Again, if you did not receive that and if you have a nomination that you would like to put forward, I can certainly send that information to you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**GOMEZ:** That is all I have.

**BARKE:** All right. I again, ask for a motion to—

**WILLIAMS:** I make the motion.

**BARKE:** All right. Does that meet a second to end the meeting?

**WILLIAMS:** If you gavel, that is the second.

**BARKE:** [Strikes the gavel] All right.