

Transcript of the Aug. 17, 2022, Orange County Board of Meeting

SPARKS: Okay. For the benefit of the record, this regular meeting of the Orange County Board of Education is called to order. Darou, roll call.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Here

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: [Not present].

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Here.

SPARKS: Okay. We need to adopt today's meeting agenda.

BARKE: I will move to adopt today's agenda.

SHAW: Second.

SPARKS: All those in favor?

BARKE, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Oh yeah, it is just the three of us. Okay. Then, we need to approve the minutes for June 27th, special meeting.

BARKE: I will make a motion to approve the minutes for June 27th, special meeting.

SHAW: Second.

SPARKS: All in favor?

BARKE, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Okay. Regular meeting approval of July 6th.

SHAW: I will move to approve.

BARKE: I will second that motion.

SPARKS: All in favor?

BARKE, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Special meeting, July 26th, 2022, to approval.

SHAW: I move to approve.

BARKE: I will second that.

SPARKS: All in favor?

BARKE, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Okay. Nina, do we have any comment cards related to the closed session?

BOYD: We do not.

SPARKS: Okay. Now we are going to take a break to go into closed session to conduct an appeal hearing, and then we will follow with closed session items. At this point, I believe I turn the floor over to you, Spencer.

[The Orange County Board of Education conducts an interdistrict appeal and closed session, then returns to open session.]

SPARKS: All right, I will call the meeting back to order. Welcome, everyone. All right, first, Ken Williams joined our meeting—is it 5:08? Okay.

BARKE: He joined in closed session.

SPARKS: He joined in closed session. Do we need to announce that?

BOYD: He joined closed session?

BARKE: Yes, 4:30 maybe. When did you join closed session?

BOYD: Is counsel?

WILLIAMS: 4:35, around there.

BARKE: Okay.

SPARKS: 4:35, of closed session.

BOYD: Thank you.

SPARKS: Then, current.

BOYD: Okay.

SPARKS: First of all, I would like to call Pastor Hansen to the podium for invocation.

HANSEN: Well, what an honor to be here. I think I have been here once before, so I must have done something right. They asked me back. We are so grateful to each of you for your public service and your willingness to serve in this capacity. This is not an easy time to lead. Hopefully it is a little bit easier than a few years ago, but I would like to pray a prayer blessing over each of you now. Father, thank you for the opportunity to lead. There is no greater calling than to lead people and especially lead kids. Lord, it is an awesome responsibility and privilege to raise up the next generation. And we just pray for wisdom for the discussions that will be had tonight. Lord, this is a county with people from all different walks of life and all different backgrounds.

We want to live in harmony with one another and do what is best for our kids. And so I pray that you would grant us wisdom to think through how these decisions will ultimately impact their safety, and their wellbeing, and their development. So we are thinking about the future because we love our kids. So we pray that you would give us wisdom tonight to have those discussions and just give us the ability to have conversations with each other, and to acknowledge the God-image in each of us so that we don't treat each other rudely or lowly. But Lord, we acknowledge that there is an important component of collaboration that is necessary to solve some of these complex dynamics. So I pray that you would just give us wisdom and the ability to treat each other with respect, and ultimately love. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

HANSEN: God bless you tonight.

SPARKS: Bless you and thank you, Pastor Jordan Hansen, lead pastor of the Mesa Church in Irvine, Mesa Church. Now I would like to call Trish who volunteered for our Pledge of Allegiance. Thank you, Trish.

TRISH: Hello, everyone. If you would please stand and face the flag?

BOYD: Go to the microphone.

TRISH: Oh yes, oh my goodness. So sorry.

BARKE: No worries.

TRISH: I can use my indoor voice.

SPARKS: No worries.

TRISH: Okay. Everyone, please face the flag and place your right hand over your heart. Ready? Begin. 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.

BOYD: Could you state your name while you are at the podium please?

TRISH: Yes. My name is Trish Luckeroth.

SPARKS: Thank you, Trish. Truly appreciated. That was wonderful. Your outside voice was amazing. Okay, Nina are there any introductions?

BOYD: There are no introductions at this meeting.

SPARKS: Are there any comment cards that have been received?

SHAW: There is a general comment.

SPARKS: Mm-hmm.

SHAW: Linda.

LINDA: Yes.

SHAW: Did you turn in a card?

LINDA: Yes I did.

SHAW: You are on.

LINDA: I am number three.

SHAW: You are number one.

SPARKS: You moved up.

LINDA: I just got promoted.

SPARKS: You are moving on up.

LINDA: This is indeed an honor. Good evening, President Sparks, Board, Superintendent Mijares. I'm here tonight to talk about AB 1184, which went into effect July the 1st of this year. This is a law that requires parents insurance plans to pay for quote, "sensitive services" end quote, including gender affirming care without parent knowledge or consent. I last spoke to you of this issue a couple of years ago when I was talking about CTA policy, which was the direct

impetus of this particular law. This policy passed in January 2020. What the policy called for was the provision of these exact services quote, “without the barrier of parent permission.” That became official policy of our California Teachers Association. There are no clear age limits established particularly for many of those in the gender transitioning services. But CTA was particularly concerned that we have laws like AB 1184. Because otherwise, and again I'm quoting, “We are forcing children to go through the wrong puberty that can negatively impact their mental health.” This is a direct quote from CTA. Understand that these kids have to be captured before they enter puberty because that is when most of them change their minds if they are questioning gender identity.

Scandinavian countries abandoned this process quite a while ago, because they found out that it simply didn't work. In fact, they have very negative effects, incredibly high suicide rates in transitioning adults. It just came recently to our attention that the Tavistock Clinic in England faces probably about 1,000 lawsuits from angry parents of transitioned children. We have seen a growing wave of detransitioners here in this country, mostly young women are coming forth and testifying in front of the California Legislature, to no avail.

Here is the problem. We have got to do something. Dr. Mijares, I speak directly to you. I urge you, that you insist that school districts in California alert parents of the implementation of this law. I also urge you to investigate the efforts of CHOC and Planned Parenthood to fund and staff wellness sites on every school campus. That is happening right now. Members of the Board, I urge you to support this effort to educate parents and inform parents and taxpayers of this particular assault on parental rights and the endangering of children's lives. Teachers out there if you are listening, get out of this union. And union members, there is really nothing I have to say to you except shame on you. Shame on you for what you are doing to our children. Thank you for your time and attention.

SPARKS: Thank you.

BOYD: The remaining public comments are specific to agenda items.

SPARKS: Okay. Okay, thank you. We will move to item number two on the consent calendar, approve the granting of diplomas to the students listed from Alternative Community and Correctional Educational Schools and Services, Alternative Education Division. Do I have a motion?

WILLIAMS: Yeah. If I can make a motion under the consent calendar, actually, if it is okay with you?

SPARKS: Yes, absolutely.

WILLIAMS: For items number two, three and four.

SPARKS: Yeah. Let's combine.

BARKE: I will second that.

SPARKS: Any comments? Discussion? Okay, I will call for a vote.

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: All right, we approve items two, three, and four in the consent calendar, and that moves us right to charter schools. Nina, are there any charter submissions?

BOYD: There are none.

SPARKS: Okay. Then, next I would call Teresa Johnson to the podium to facilitate the charter school public hearing, Teresa.

WILLIAMS: I love the yellow jacket. That is sharp.

JOHNSON: Thank you. Good evening, President Sparks, Trustees and Superintendent Mijares. Today the Board will hold a public hearing to consider input regarding the Oxford Preparatory Academy Middle School charter petition, submitted on June 29th, 2022, following denial by the Saddleback Valley Unified School District. Prior to public comments, representatives from Oxford Preparatory Academy Middle School and Saddleback Valley Unified School District are allotted 15 minutes to address the Board. I now call representatives from Oxford Preparatory Academy Middle School to the podium.

KERNAN: Thank you, President Sparks, and Dr. Mijares, members of the Board, and members of the staff. My name is Amy Kernan. I'm the executive director of Oxford Preparatory Academy, and I have two special colleagues here. This is Dr. Stephanie Henry. She is our chief academic officer. This is John Briquetelet, and he is overseeing our middle schools, then, hopefully will become our middle school principal. They are going to help me present to you tonight a little bit about our petition for a new middle school.

We currently have two charter schools here in South Orange County. We have our South Orange County campus located in Mission Viejo and our Saddleback Valley campus that is located in Lake Forest. Our South Orange County campus is authorized through Capistrano Unified. Then you guys authorize our Saddleback Valley campus, so thank you very much for that. As you can see, our OPA schools have had an amazing record of success over the time that they have been open. Most recently, both of our schools were awarded the California Pivotal Practice Award for exceptional distance learning during COVID. We have also received several Distinguished School Awards. [Presentation is displayed].

Also, if you look, really our community through niche and on that website, we hit a lot of different, high ranking categories: being number one and two best charter elementary and middle schools in Orange County. As well as our Saddleback Valley Campus was rated number six most diverse public middle school in Orange County. Even though we are in South Orange County, we do have a very diverse student population, which you can kind of see here. Right now we have about 1,500 students and we have about 1,000 kids—this was actually last year's data.

We just had our first day of school today, so we are very excited to welcome our families back. Last year we had about 478 middle school students. This year we have close to 600 middle school students, so we have a very big bubble going through our middle school grades. That is kind of one of the impetus to why we are looking to expand and be able to pull those kids off of those elementary school campuses and give them some more expanded opportunities in a comprehensive middle school. What we are really hoping to do is to take those students that are currently on our two, TK-8 campuses and move them to one middle school. We would take both of the middle schools and combine them together, really keep a lot of our OPA traditions, and have a great seamless matriculation into that middle school. But allow them to have some more opportunities, just by having both of those groups of kids together on the middle school campus.

We have had a lot of community interest. We do get a lot of applicants for our schools. I'm super lucky, kind of looking around I know there has been a lot of declining enrollment, but we had over 2,000 applications for our schools last year. Before we opened, we had about 1,900 students on our wait list. There is a great deal of interest in our schools, and we just want to be able to provide more space for those, especially younger grade students to be able to get in. Like I said, some of our goals for expansion have to do with both improving our elementary schools, as well as being able to create that great middle school environment for our middle school students.

We want to be able to add more programs that are more focused to our elementary school students on our elementary school campuses so we have more time for them to take world languages. We do offer world language, or have world language for all of our students TK-8; but as you know, middle schoolers kind of suck up all the time. We want to have a little bit more time for those elementary kids to be able to have more world language, more music, more art, all of those types of experiences. We also, as across the state, we want to be able to increase our ability to enroll more transitional kindergarten students and have, you know, universal TK for all of our four-year-olds. We want our elementary schools to really focus on elementary students and their needs. Conversely, we want our middle school to be able to focus on middle school students. They have totally different needs than elementary students do. If any of you have middle school students, you know they are very different. They are different from anyone on the planet, so we want to have them have their own place to be.

We want to be able to have more rigorous middle school curriculum, more accelerated classes, having more students together on the campus instead of having them split up will allow us to be able to have more of those opportunities for the kids. And then also to have a lot stronger ability for our middle schools to work with our feeder high schools.

So what makes us different? And then I'm going to turn it over to the two of them. We really focus on the multiple intelligences, hitting students where they are, helping them learn in a way that they like to learn. We really want to focus on the whole student, and we want to make sure that we are building global-minded students and making sure that they are really worldly. Dr. Henry is going to speak and she—or actually, no, I'm sorry. Mr. Briquelet is going to speak next.

BRIQUELET: Good evening. I'm John Briquelet, and I am overseeing the middle school programs with OPA. I will also add that I'm currently the California state principal of the year. I came specifically to OPA because I was excited by the opportunities it is going to provide. I

won't read all of this to you. I don't want to bore all of you, but OPA will run on a seven period day, offering all core subject areas that all the publics do, great electives. We are going to offer both accelerated and traditional math pathways. We will have honors and traditional courses for English language arts. We are focused heavily on civic engagement in social studies, science, central focus on steam and inquiry. There is great excitement amongst the middle schoolers for STEAM so that is encouraging to me. Physical education of course—and one thing I want to make clear, we teach the California State Standards, and it is firmly anchored in the standards with a heavy emphasis on the multiple intelligences aspect, to make sure every child succeeds.

Electives, we are offering STEAM-VAPA. We are looking at CTE Pathways, pre CTE Pathways, and of course we have ASB and PAL options. The academic portion of it, of course, is not enough. Students need co-curricular and extracurricular activities if they are really going to grow, so we have a variety of after school clubs we will be offering. Everything from coding, possibly looking at Cyber Patriot again, I believe, eSports, robotics, marching band, drama, and so forth. We are working to build a robust sports program. I'm a former coach, so I believe very strongly in the lessons that athletics teach that carry on through life. Leadership and mentoring opportunities, ASB of course, you know, student government, Big Buddies, Peer Assisted Leadership, field trip experiences outside the campus. They are absolutely essential. In fact, right now I'm working with the middle school populations to plan field trips up to Catalina Island for their CELP Program. We are looking at AstroCamp, I believe it is. We are also looking at the Irvine Ranch Science Camps, so kids need these experiences and we are going to provide them.

We are also offering weekly second step emotional learning instruction. As you know, so much of what students are able to achieve is based on how they deal with the world, how they feel and how they belong. As I said, we are focusing on a pathway to civic engagement. It is one of our six C's in the champion profile. And of course, we are providing one-to-one technology for our students and hands-on STEAM labs. Dr. Henry.

HENRY: Thank you. Thank you. Besides the core curricular program that our sites offer now and we will plan to offer in our new middle school, we also have intervention and support for our students who need that, and additional support so that includes integrated and designated ELD instruction. We have a full inclusion model for our students with disabilities. We actually refer to it as Scholar Academy, so all of our students are fully included in the curriculum, with support. We have instructional aids. We have other education specialists that can offer support as needed so that all of our students can be successful. We are working with Orange County Department of Education to fully implement our multi-tiered system of supports. In fact, we recently received the grant to continue on with that work.

We have student success teams, a full-time counselor, a full-time school psychologist at each of our schools currently and we will continue to have that in the middle school. We offer a summer school program, which we call Full Steam Ahead, that helps with academics as well as offering a STEAM lab and some hands-on activities that our students, I think make it more fun for them. We have math and ELA intervention teachers at each site. We are implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports, restorative practices, starting with some community building circles. We have school counselors that offer individual and group school counseling. Then you can also see, we have a comprehensive assessment system. We do give the iReady

benchmarks. We participate in all state testing. We just were looking at our CAASPP scores recently. We have trimesters. So each trimester, we also give a writing benchmark to our students and our teachers, which we call professors. They are able to calibrate their grading and then use that to plan their instruction.

Let's see. So this here, you have heard it referenced, I think from both Dr. Kernan and Mr. Briquet, is our champion profile. So we worked really hard last year bringing together a lot of stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, to really define what we wanted our students to leave OPA with. What were those core skills, assets, and the learning that we wanted them to have? So that culminated over a year, getting a lot of different feedback, revisions, into a champion profile. You may have heard that, like a graduate profile for high school, our students don't graduate. They leave us in eighth grade to move on to high school.

But our core competencies that we are focused on are the 6 Cs, so we have critical thinking, we have communication, collaboration, character, creativity, and then we added civic engagement. Because as was mentioned, we know that there is a seal of civic engagement that can go on high school diplomas. I was actually working with the team here at OCDE to implement the middle school equivalent, which is a Pathway Award, so we are already working towards that. Also, we have a comprehensive professional development program as well as full staffing of credentialed teachers. Every Friday we have an early release where we bring in high quality, professional development for our teachers. We are working on implementing a new writing program, thinking maps, research-based instructional practices, those are our PLCs every Friday.

But you can also see that we are fully staffed with two education specialists, a psychologist, a speech language pathologist, as well as the (SLPA) a speech language pathologist assistant, multiple instructional assistants, counselors on each site on site and which we will continue into our middle school program. I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Kernan to take us out.

KERNAN: I'm just going to sum it up, so we really want to benefit the students in the communities where our schools are. We are hoping to have this school. It is in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District. A lot of our students are part of Saddleback Valley Unified, so it just sort of made sense for us to place the middle school there. But we really want to provide a high-quality educational alternative for students down in South Orange County. We want to be able to build stronger connections with our surrounding high schools, both Saddleback Valley, as well as some of our students go to different private schools down there in the area. Having all of our middle school kids on one campus will allow us to really build stronger connections with those high schools and lead to a smoother transition for our kids.

We also just want to make sure that our kids are really exceptionally well prepared for high school, and we want to really have a way, again, to work with our district. We work really closely with Capistrano Unified and we want to have that same relationship. We are really working to build that relationship with Saddleback as well, so I think working with our high schools will help that. I want to thank you, and I look forward to expanding and continuing our partnership with the Orange County Department of Ed and Orange County Board of Education. Thank you so much.

SPARKS: Thank you. Ms. Johnson, you are up.

JOHNSON: Saddleback Valley Unified School District has declined the opportunity to address the Board. Therefore, the hearing is now open for 30 minutes to public comments. Deputy Superintendent Boyd are there any public comments for this agenda item?

BOYD: There are. Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes. I will read a name, followed by whoever is on deck. We will lead off with Andrei and on deck will be Paul. Come on forward and maybe the on deck person wants to kind of go to that front row. We will go like that. Andrei.

ANDREI: [Inaudible].

SPARKS: You need to speak into the mic.

BOYD: When you are finished, you can bring those over to me and I will distribute them.

ANDREI: Okay. Thank you.

BOYD: You can pull the mic up closer so that you won't have to bend as far too. There you go.

ANDREI: Hi. My kid goes to OPA. I'm here to blow a whistle on the contract between Oxford Preparatory Academy and Restorative Equity Partnership (REP). It is a teacher's training provider. A quick look into REP is enough to classify them as political activists, rather than educators. They do not talk about the training in educational methods, but instead they talk about the dismantling system of oppression, racism, interrogating people's biases, et cetera. The only video they have on YouTube shows elements of CRT where students talk about privileges because they are white, straight, male, live in the U.S., et cetera. OPA will be paying \$26,000 for five days of virtual training for six teachers.

I asked other providers and I received quotes of only \$3,000. The typical scope is only two days of training, not five. This is eight times less than OPA will be paying. The contract has disturbing wording that REP will be doing data collection. The contract does not have any definitions of what data will be collected, who will be having access, and no restrictions on reselling the data.

According to independent researchers, teachers are trained to act as psychiatrists on kids, and they administer invasive online surveys asking about mental and emotional condition, what gender they identify themselves with. Software used for these surveys is under Attorney Generals investigation in Missouri for privacy violation. Implementation of this contract most likely will violate a number of state and federal data privacy laws, CCPA, CPRA, HIPAA and others. Teachers and school administration could also be liable for violation of California Code 2052, practicing medicine without a license.

I call for an investigation of this contract between OPA and REP to make sure there are no pay to play schemes involved. I'm begging OCDE to provide clear guidance to schools on how to avoid

hiring political activists whose only goal is to indoctrinate our kids. I'm also begging OCDE to mandate school districts to perform an independent forensic audit of all data collecting software used for social emotional surveys to ensure it complies with data privacy laws. If districts cannot afford audits, they should not be pushing this software into classrooms. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you, Andrei. We will have Paul now, followed by Elizabeth.

PAUL: Thank you. Distinguished members of the Board, Superintendent Mijares, OCDE staff, parents, and other stakeholders, my name is Paul Kagoo. I'm the president of the board of Oxford Preparatory Academy. My nine-year-old son Noel is in the fourth grade at OPA South Orange County campus. First of all, I want to right away thank you and your staff for your support and oversight of our schools. I have personally interacted with several of your staff members, and I have been really impressed with their diligence. I'm now here to request your support for OPA's petition to expand our two existing campuses to now include a third campus exclusively for middle school students.

As you might have read in our petition, our intention is to consolidate the middle schoolers from both existing campuses to one consolidated middle school campus. I believe this will be beneficial to all stakeholders for three major reasons. Number one, first and foremost it would enhance the middle school experience of OPA students. By having a bigger campus, we will be able to provide programs tailored towards middle school academics and extracurricular success. Number two, it will also provide us with an opportunity to enhance our elementary school programs for current and future students. This will include being able to provide more early childhood transitional kindergarten opportunities for Orange County families. Number three, most importantly, this will greatly improve the high school readiness of middle school students, many of them who will go to local high schools.

On behalf of my fellow board and the OPA staff, I want to assure you that we have not taken this step without a rigorous process. We started with a comprehensive review of all of our existing programs and actually identified initiatives required to strengthen our core programs. We then did a detailed analysis of the proposal including gathering stakeholder input, assessing operational and financial risks, and potential impact on our nearby school districts. After multiple weeks of analysis and discussion, we feel confident this is the right step for all stakeholders. We look forward to engaging with you and answering any questions you might have, including the prior public comment. Thank you for your time.

SHAW: Thank you, Paul. So, Elizabeth, and will be followed by Kerry.

ELIZABETH: Hi, my name is Betsy Freiler, and I am a parent at Oxford Preparatory Academy South Orange County. I have a daughter starting eighth grade and a son in fifth grade. We have been in OPA SOC for eight of the 11 years they have been open. It has become like a second home to my family and me. OPA does a wonderful job of staying true to their charter mission in creating lifelong learners and seeing all children as unique and gifted. Whether it is through using the theory of multiple intelligences, after school enrichment clubs, which became a whole

family event for us as my husband helped run eSports or any of the other academic programs, the school helps foster an intrinsic desire for learning. As a parent, I have had the opportunity to experience this with my daughter.

During the pandemic, she and her group of friends not only wrote a book, but illustrated all of the characters in their free time, and it is over 400 pages. Reading and writing did not used to be a preferred activity for her. With support from OPA staff, her love of reading and writing has exploded. This experience is just one of the many wonderful things I can say about OPA. Beyond test scores that speak for themselves, OPA creates strong students and families, which is why we are at OPA. I volunteer at OPA through the PTA and the School Site Council and I have come to know the staff very well. Everyone at the school is so supportive of the families, even on a personal level. It truly feels like a big happy family. A family that roots on my children as they are being taught to be critical thinkers, how to collaborate through project-based learning, creativity through our parent-led Art Master's Program, and character building through social/emotional learning, and community outreach just to name a few.

My fifth grader especially loves our STEAM lab and learning how to code with the Ozobot. It is for him I'm speaking tonight. A dedicated middle school campus would not only benefit him, but other OPA families, the community, and ultimately the high schools are champions that feed into it. Please consider helping us continue to grow and blossom so that other families may have the opportunity to have the OPA experience just as I did. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you. Kerry.

KERRY: Good evening, board members and staff. My name is Kerry Velez, and I am the principal at Oxford Preparatory Academy South Orange County campus. You have previously heard from Dr. Henry a little bit about a special education program, but I wanted to come and let you guys know why it is one of the things I am most proud of at our school. I have had the pleasure of speaking before you tonight as one of the administrators who actually oversees our Special Education Department. As you previously heard, we are a full inclusion school where students who have a variety of different special needs are fully integrated into our general education classrooms with their same grade peers. As a public charter school, we admit all of our students to our program, regardless of their academic needs.

We proudly have over 10% of our student population participate in our special education program. When I started as a teacher at OPA over 10 years ago, I had my own doubts on a full inclusion program. I wondered how as one teacher I was going to be able to meet the needs of both my general education students and now students with a variety of different needs. I quickly discovered that all of my students brought both their strengths and challenges to my classroom. What I thought was going to be a challenge, was actually a benefit.

Now as a school administrator, I have seen this play out across classrooms and grade levels. Parents who have reported that their students who were not progressing in their homeschool are now thriving. As our school just celebrated its first day of school today, I had one former parent

share with me that they have seen their son thrive, mature and become so independent academically, which seemed so out of sight before they entered our school. The special education teams' patience, understanding, and collaboration with staff and parents to meet his needs are the main reason why he has achieved this milestone. I had the honor of teaching this student back in second grade, a very long time ago. And now, he had just entered eighth grade feeling confident and successful.

Our special education students are able to receive all of their specialized academic instruction within the general education classroom or in a small group setting. We are fortunate to have our own full-time SLP, SLPA, our SLPA school psych, school counselor who work on campus. We also provide students with occupational therapy services, physical therapy services as needed on their IEP. Students are coming and going from their classrooms throughout the day, so there is no stigma of leaving for such a short period of time. We are so fortunate to have a staff of highly qualified instructional aids working within the general education classrooms along with our educational specialists.

I am proud of the achievements that all of our students have made over the years, especially our special education population. So tonight, I'm asking you for your support to approve our proposed charter petition for our middle school to continue to provide the same level of support that our parents have grown accustomed to receiving. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

JOHNSON: This concludes the public hearing. The Orange County Board of Education Staff Report will be published on September 20th, and the Board will take action at their October 5th meeting. Representatives from Oxford Preparatory Academy Middle School are available to answer questions. President Sparks, I close the public hearing and turn the meeting back over to you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you all for all your wonderful information. I chuckled when you talked about middle schoolers taking up all the oxygen in the room. As I had been a summer counselor on the east coast and then in the Midwest, I know what you are talking about. I thought that was funny. Great work. I mean, you all are improving every year.

At this point, I will turn it to the Board. Do we have any questions from our board members? I will start with Trustee Shaw.

SHAW: Thank you. I have a couple questions, sure. I have been reading through the denial, and thought I would just ask you know, kind of point blank, some of the things they raised. For example, there is a suggestion here that your school will not properly address or is not properly prepared to teach English learners. What is your response to that?

KERNAN: We definitely have a really robust English language development program. We have an English language development (TOSA) teacher on special assignment. She oversees all of our English language learners, and we have an ELD aid on each one of our sites. We try to—as well for our English learners, make sure that they are fully integrated into our core classes, but are

provided integrated and designated ELD support throughout the day. All of our general education teachers go through a lot of professional development in terms of integrated ELD support for students. But then we also have those aids that can pull students out in small groups, or also push into our classes, and our English learners do exceptionally well. Over the last few years, we have had highest reclassification rate in Orange County. About two years ago, I believe it was at 54%.

Our students really get through the program very quickly because of all of the support that they receive. They do well on their state testing. We do again have very high reclassification rates. I'm really proud of our staff for both, you know, the way that they work with our Scholar Academy students, as well as our English language learners.

SHAW: Thank you. They seem to take exception to some words that are apparently found in the budget section. I think I know what you meant, but I will go ahead and ask you. The school's profitability, why did you say that?

KERNAN: It was actually part of our Fiscal Services Manual. It wasn't even actually in the charter. It was in an appendix in the Fiscal Services Manual. It was part of a definition to describe what a profit loss statement shows. In business, a profit loss statement does show your profitability, so it really is just, you know, our excess operating income that we have each year to ensure that we can continue to keep our programs running and don't go into the red. We are a non-profit, just like all California charter schools need to be as a public school, so we are not a for-profit organization.

SHAW: The last one I will ask you about, there is a section here on employee qualifications. What do you say about that?

KERNAN: As a public school, all of our teachers are credentialed. Right now, and we actually met that requirement long before it was an actual state requirement, we have had fully credentialed teachers now since I have been at the school site. I'm going on my fifth year. Then, you know, I think there was a job description in there that was for our deans and we had not hired new deans in a while. Actually, it didn't say in the job description that deans needed an administrative credential; however on our salary schedule, it clearly points out that all of our administrative staff, all of our certificated administrative staff do need to have an administrative credential. We have since updated our dean or assistant principal job description to add that in, but it was already there in our salary schedule.

SHAW: Thank you.

SPARKS: Okay. Trustee Barke, any questions?

BARKE: No, you know, it was a great presentation. I'm impressed with what I have seen over the years since I have been on the Board, very impressive campus in South County. I would just ask about the public comment about the training and your response to that, please?

KERNAN: So as part of our social/emotional learning and MTSS program, we have been working with Orange County Department of Ed., as Dr. Henry said, looking at our MTSS program. Part of what we wanted to incorporate was the restorative circles in our classrooms. We looked into some training for our teachers to create our own, you know, kind of trainer of trainers. We are working with the Restorative Equity Partners to come in and train six of our staff members in restorative circles, so the whole scope of it is really more the restorative circles not going into any of the restorative justice or anything with CRT. It really is just getting them trained in restorative circles so that we can implement that into our social/emotional learning and MTSS Program.

As far as them collecting data on our students, they are not working directly with any students. They are working simply with our group of staff members that are going to be becoming our trainer of trainers for that.

BARKE: Okay. So is any data being collected about the students?

KERNAN: So the data won't be collected on students, they are just working with staff members.

BARKE: Okay, thank you. Appreciate it.

SPARKS: You know, piggybacking off that question since we are on the topic, what are these restorative circles? Is that data, or PowerPoint, or whatever training development, available to parents to see what the train the trainer's curriculum looks like?

KERNAN: So we can provide the different information about the training. We haven't even started implementing the training yet. The contract was actually just approved at our last board meeting, so we haven't implemented it. But, it really is more of an instructional practice that teachers can use in the classroom to get all students involved in conversations by making sure that everyone has a voice in the classroom and is included. But we can make that definitely available to you as well as our parents once we kind of continue to work with them to implement that trainer of trainers model.

SPARKS: Yeah. I think parents would definitely be interested in that as would we as a board.

KERNAN: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

SPARKS: Thank you. Dr. Williams, any questions?

WILLIAMS: I'm really concerned about your contract with Restorative Equity Partnership. I mean, that may be a no vote for me. I'm just looking—it is the first time I have heard of it. But you know when you start reading their website, I'm very, very concerned. Which tells me, your board, whoever made this contract made a huge mistake. This stuff about white supremacy and fighting systemic racism, it is not here in America now. That may have been in the 1960s, but it is not now. But organizations like this REP are promoting this false notion. I'm terribly concerned that you are promoting it in your school, and you are coming to a board that took a very public stance against all of this false academic material and these critical theories that come

from universities that really is not the truth. I would like to see this contract, okay? Tell me more about it, so this contract was made when?

KERNAN: It was approved at our last board meeting, which was—

WILLIAMS: When was that?

KERNAN: June 19th.

WILLIAMS: Okay, so less than a couple months ago.

KERNAN: Yeah. Less than a month ago.

WILLIAMS: Are there any provisions in there that you can exit out or cancel this?

KERNAN: I believe so.

WILLIAMS: Yeah. Okay. The reason why this is a real serious matter in this nation, this culture, this ideology that racism is pervasive is the wrong political notion to be portraying at school level kids who don't care about any of the politics. They just want to play, and have good time, and go onto recess and all of that. To now, to politically indoctrinate, the CRT-like curriculum as a part of the state ethnic mandate here, I'm very concerned about that. I would love to talk with you about this.

KERNAN: Mm-hmm. Yeah, definitely.

WILLIAMS: That is going to be a real hard sell for me and I would tend to venture with my board here.

KERNAN: And definitely, I would be happy to answer any questions. And again, we are just using them for a very small piece with just doing the trainer of trainers with our teachers. They won't be working directly with any of our students.

WILLIAMS: But you see a little bit of darkness gets into an area in your school, which then creeps and spreads like a virus. If you start spreading this virus that is really antithetical to this culture and to this nation to who we really are as a diverse nation, you are taking apart, you are aiding and abetting this evil. Do you want to aid and abet this academic principle that has no basis upon reality? I don't think so. Those are my comments.

SPARKS: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Williams. I think you made yourself clear, and I do think it is important to vet the vendors that you are hiring because we are paying attention. We are paying a lot of attention to grants and contracts, more than any other board in the history of this board. We are paying attention. Our eyes are wide open on grants and contracts. We have background in grants and contracts, so we will be looking in detail at those kinds of contracts and it could get in the way of approval. Please, reach out to us so we can have that conversation before our next meeting.

KERNAN: Definitely.

SPARKS: Thank you. Any other comments or questions from the Board? Okay. Thank you very much.

KERNAN: Thank you, and thank you for your time.

SPARKS: Okay. I noticed that we do need to have a report out from closed session, but I think we will do that at the end of the meeting. I believe our good attorney is out right now. Okay. So remind me, we will do that at the end of the meeting, that moves us to calling Renee to the podium for the public hearing for item number seven.

HENDRICK: Thank you, President Sparks, members of the Board. At this point, we would like to open the public hearing regarding textbooks and instruction material. And this is regarding the sufficiency of those items for our ACCESS and Special Schools Programs. Did we have any public comment cards for that?

BOYD: There are none.

HENDRICK: Hearing no comments from the public, I would like to close the public hearing at this time.

SPARKS: Thank you. Okay, now we are onto item number eight, adopting Resolution 18-22, stating that each pupil of the county office has available textbooks and instructional materials in each subject that are consistent with the content and cycles of the curriculum framework adopted by the State Board and in accordance with the procedures as established. The adopted resolution will be posted on the Orange County Department of Education website and will be distributed as requested. Do we need to take that for a vote?

WILLIAMS: I would like to make a motion for item number eight, for this resolution.

SHAW: Second.

SPARKS: Call for the vote.

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: All in favor? Aye. Passes 4-0. At this point, we will recess the regular meeting to a meeting of the Orange County Department of Education Facilities Corporation, so we will recess that. Then we will call to order, statement of the presiding officer. For the benefit of the record, the regular meeting of the Facilities Corporation is called to order. Darou, that will require a roll call.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Present.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Here.

SPARKS: Okay. The regular meeting of August 17, 2022, adoption of this Agenda, do I have a motion?

WILLIAMS: I will make the motion.

BARKE: I will second.

SPARKS: All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Passes 4-0. The Minutes, receive the Minutes of the regular meeting of August 4, 2021, which was approved September 1, 2021, meeting. There is no action required on that one. Nina, do we have any comment cards received?

BOYD: You do not.

SPARKS: Okay. Then that moves on to special recommendations and appointing the officers of the Education Facilities Corporation.

BOYD: So you just need the treasurer identified, your Facilities Corporation officers - the president and the vice president, chair for the Facilities Corporation. Take a motion for an appointment of one of your other trustees.

SPARKS: Would anyone like to nominate one of our other trustees?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I would like to nominate Mari Barke for treasurer.

SPARKS: Any seconds on that?

SHAW: I will second that.

SPARKS: Okay.

BARKE: Do I get a say or no?

SPARKS: No, you don't.

BARKE: All right.

SPARKS: Call for the vote. All in favor?

WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Okay, Mari Barke, welcome to treasurer. Excellent, and then item number two on special recommendations, receive the Esplanade Project Operational Report for the fiscal year 2021-22. No action is required on that one. And then item three, we do have action required to receive and approve the Esplanade Project Operational Budget for fiscal year 2022-23. Do I have a motion on that one?

BARKE: Alright, so moved.

SPARKS: Okay. Second?

SHAW: Second.

SPARKS: All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Passes 4-0. So this closes the session of the Facilities Corporation, and I will adjourn that meeting and go back to the regular board meeting. I get to do the gavel again.

WILLIAMS: That power you have now, Dr. Sparks.

SPARKS: Yes, oh yes. Okay. So this brings us to item number nine of our regular meeting, which is approve disbursement of funds for Orange County Board of Education's professional organizations membership dues for CSBA, Ed. Legal Alliance, and CCBE for the 2022-23 fiscal year. That is the California State Boards Association and the California County Boards E. What does the E stand for—something, education. There you go. Okay.

WILLIAMS: Madam President, I would like to make a motion to not approve this section here and to not be part of these organizations.

BARKE: I will second that gladly.

SPARKS: Any comment? Call for the vote. All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Passes 4-0. That moves to item number 10, approve disbursement of funds for Orange County Board of Education, professional organization membership dues for OCSBA for the 2022-23 fiscal year. That is the Orange County State Boards Association.

BARKE: I will make the motion.

WILLIAMS: No, no, no. Orange County School Boards Association.

SPARKS: School Boards Association.

WILLIAMS: So that is our local organization.

SPARKS: Any comments?

BARKE: What is the dues involved with that?

SHAW: 250, right?

BOYD: It is item?

SHAW: It is item 10.

BOYD: Ten.

SHAW: \$250.

SPARKS: \$250.

WILLIAMS: What was it last year?

BOYD: \$250.

WILLIAMS: Was it \$250? Okay.

SPARKS: Yeah.

BARKE: I'm okay with that. I would make a motion to approve that.

SPARKS: I would second that. All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Passes 4-0.

BOYD: Who was the second on that?

SPARKS: Yeah, I was the second.

BOYD: Thank you.

SPARKS: Because he was coughing.

SHAW: Sorry.

SPARKS: That is okay. All right, moving on to item number 11, approve disbursement of funds for Orange County Board of Education professional organization membership dues for (PTA) Parent Teacher Association, 2022-23 fiscal year.

BARKE: What is the dues on that?

BOYD: Item 11, \$50.

SHAW: \$50.

BARKE: I will go ahead and make a motion to approve that.

SHAW: Second.

SPARKS: All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: 4-0, passes. Moving to item number 12, approve the registration and travel for board members to attend education related events or meetings sponsored by the California School Boards Association, the CSBA, and the California County Boards of Education, the CCBE, effective July 1, 2022, for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Any discussion?

WILLIAMS: I have a question. I will make the motion just to bring it to the table for discussion, but I do have some questions--

SPARKS: Okay.

WILLIAMS: Regarding this.

SPARKS: What is your motion?

WILLIAMS: I will need a second.

BARKE: I will give you a second.

SPARKS: Okay.

WILLIAMS: Okay. So now that is on the table, we can talk about this. Nina, if you can help me out here? There is no specific amount adjusted for this, is that correct? This is just approval for future travel?

BOYD: This is if you wanted to attend any meetings that involved travel for any of these during the course of this fiscal year, then there is a blanket approval that—

WILLIAMS: I see.

BOYD: But there is not a dollar amount associated because we don't know what the registration would be or where the conference might be and so forth.

SPARKS: And it is generally one or two conferences in a given fiscal year, correct?

BOYD: Correct.

SPARKS: Yeah.

BOYD: CCBE, there is a delegate. But because the Board will not have a participant with that, then it lessens the opportunities for your participation. So that would limit you to just the one time a year, as opposed to being involved in their quarterly meetings and so forth of other county board officers. The state conference that they typically put on at the end of November-December is a one-time annual conference. That is typically in San Diego, so travel is not far.

SPARKS: Okay. Great. Any other questions?

WILLIAMS: So this is just an open-ended approval for future board travel should a board member want to go to one of these conferences?

BOYD: That would be correct.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

SPARKS: Do I have a second then?

WILLIAMS: No, we had a—

BARKE: I did a second.

SPARKS: Oh, you did a second? Okay. Any more discussion then on that? Okay. Call for the vote. All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: 4-0. That brings us to item 13, approve registration and travel for board members to attend education related events or meetings sponsored by the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) effective July 1, 2022, for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

BARKE: I will make a motion to approve that.

SHAW: Second.

SPARKS: Any discussion?

WILLIAMS: Again, Nina, this is very similar to the last item. It is just approval for future?

BOYD: Correct. It is blanket.

WILLIAMS: There is no dollar amount.

BOYD: Right.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

SPARKS: Okay. All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Okay, passes 4-0. Item 14, approve registration and travel for board members to attend education related events or meetings sponsored by the Orange County School Boards Association, the OCSBA, effective July 1, 2022, for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

SHAW: I move approval.

BARKE: I will second.

SPARKS: All in favor? Discussion?

WILLIAMS: Can we have discussion?

SPARKS: Of course.

WILLIAMS: Okay. This is for travel to attend an Orange County School Board Association?

BOYD: Right. If you wanted to put in for mileage for going to a dinner meeting, that was put on for Orange County—this is, again, blanket travel.

SPARKS: For the fiscal year.

BOYD: If they had something at the annual conference, CSBA, then you might want to travel to that to participate in something. Every so many years, the Orange County School Boards Association has something at the annual conference that CSBA does. Either a recognition or just an opportunity for networking so that might be something you travel to. This is, again, blanket travel, similar to the other.

BARKE: Can I ask a question and maybe I should know the answer? We are approving for board members to attend. What about when staff attends? Who approves that, or how does that work?

BOYD: Superintendent.

BARKE: Got it.

BOYD: We fall under him as employees.

BARKE: Okay. Thank you.

SPARKS: Any other questions?

WILLIAMS: The only problem I have is if we are going to be putting in mileage for just attending a meeting, let's say at Irvine around the airport area, I think we should not put in any travel.

SPARKS: Right.

WILLIAMS: I don't do that now. I don't do that for coming here. I just don't see the need to approve travel.

SPARKS: I don't do that either.

SHAW: It would probably be a few dollars anyway.

SPARKS: But with the gas prices going up, we might want to start turning it in.

BARKE: I mean, you can't do it to come to these meetings. It is only for travel other than these meetings, visiting charter schools, things like that.

BOYD: And that would not be the only thing because those are typically dinner meetings. If it is \$45 for the dinner meeting, then that covers the dinner.

BARKE: Parking.

BOYD: This blanket travel would give the authority for that. Now, typically that comes out of your budget. It is not something that we are reimbursing you for, but you are approving the expenditure.

SPARKS: I mean, it would be relatively minimal if at all, so I don't see any harm in approving it.

BARKE: I agree.

SPARKS: Up to you.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

BARKE: I agree.

SPARKS: All right, are we ready to vote then? Call for the vote. All in favor?

BARKE, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Opposed?

WILLIAMS: Opposed.

SPARKS: Okay, 3-1. He just had to. Okay, that is fine. Item 15, approve registration and travel for board members to attend education related events or meetings sponsored by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, effective July 1, 2022, for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

BARKE: I will make a motion to approve.

SHAW: Second.

SPARKS: Any discussion? No? Call for a vote. All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: Aye. Okay. Passes 4-0. We have three more. Item 16, nominate and approve board member assignments for the 2022-23 fiscal year. I wonder if we want to—do we have to do that tonight or could we table that, given we have a potential new board member?

BOYD: You do have the ability to table it. It was tabled from last month. But since you have not filled the vacancy, you can certainly carry it over again. We carried it over, and that is why it is on this agenda.

SPARKS: Right. Any motion to lay it on the table?

BARKE: I will make a motion. Isn't there a requirement though, that somebody has to be on the board for so long for some of those positions? What we might need is a refresher on whatever we are making appointments for.

BOYD: Well, it cuts it short. Since you are not joining membership, then CCBE, you would not be filling that.

BARKE: Right.

BOYD: The CSBA delegate, it would not be filling that so that just leaves—

BARKE: PTA. Is that what—?

BOYD: The Orange County School Boards Association, PTA, and that is it.

SPARKS: So, OCSBA and PTA, is that right?

BOYD: Yeah. So it is just OCSBA and PTA. The OCSBA requirement is that you would be on the board for at least a year. So then the new trustee filling that vacancy would not be eligible for OCSBA, but they could certainly be the PTA liaison.

BARKE: Yeah, I'm fine with laying it on the table.

SPARKS: Yeah. There is no—

WILLIAMS: For the September meeting? Okay.

SPARKS: Because it is only in a few weeks anyway. Yeah, let's do that. Okay. Do I have a second?

WILLIAMS: Second.

BOYD: You don't have to take a vote. We just carry it over.

SPARKS: Oh, carry it over. There you go. Okay, great.

BARKE: Okay. I just want to make sure. It looks like we have, it says how many meetings, just so everybody knows and they can look at what they might be interested in for the next meeting.

SPARKS: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Madam President, I have a comment.

SPARKS: Yes, sir.

WILLIAMS: Part of what we didn't do last month in July was elect a clerk.

SPARKS: Right. I used to be the clerk.

WILLIAMS: I would like to put that on at the same time that we carry this over.

SPARKS: Okay. Good idea.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

SPARKS: Do we need any motion or we just add it on for next time?

BARKE: Do I have to worry about that? Can you be a clerk and a treasurer at the same time?

SPARKS: I'm not sure. We will have to investigate that.

WILLIAMS: That is a good thought. I should nominate you.

SPARKS: Okay. That sounds good. Okay. Moving on to item 17, approve travel and name new representative for CCBE Board of Directors and Delegate Assembly.

BOYD: You don't have to do that since you did—

BARKE: Right. Right.

SPARKS: That is null and void. Okay. And then 18, our last one of this set of board recommendations, approve board conference attendance, cash advances for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

BARKE: I will go ahead and make a motion for that.

SPARKS: Do I have a second?

WILLIAMS: Second, for the sake of discussion.

SPARKS: Okay.

WILLIAMS: For purposes of clarity, Nina could you go over how that works?

BOYD: Sure.

WILLIAMS: For us.

BOYD: Okay. This item is to provide cash advances for board members who are traveling on Board business, and it follows the Department policy. It is an alignment with same thing that we follow as staff. Board travel has to be preapproved and the request for the whatever dollar amount is made by the board member who is traveling. The advance is limited to no more than 75% of expenses, the traveler estimates he or she will pay out-of-pocket while traveling. Now, typically we do airline and we can do that directly. We can do hotel in some cases. But because of changes and so forth, that may be something that board members put on their own credit card. They would include that in their estimate for reimbursement, or advance, excuse me, ahead of time, that type of thing. However, we work with each board member so that we ensure that they

are not going over the 75% request. If there is something that we can do directly from the Department, then we do that so that there is less out-of-pocket or reimbursement that needs to take place.

SPARKS: And board members work directly with you and Darou on those things?

BOYD: That is correct.

SPARKS: Okay.

BOYD: Did that answer your question?

WILLIAMS: Yes, it did. Thank you.

SPARKS: Trustee Shaw, do you have any discussion? No?

SHAW: No.

SPARKS: Okay. Are we ready for a vote? We will call for the vote. All in favor?

BARKE, WILLIAMS, SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

SPARKS: That passes 4-0. Okay. Thank you all for that. Going item by item, that was very helpful. Now, we are going to move on to the interview of the candidates for Trustee Area 1. I would like to give sort of an overview so everyone knows kind of what to expect.

BOYD: President Sparks.

SPARKS: Yes.

BOYD: Because all the applicants weren't here, we are just now having them draw so that we know what order they are going to go in for you.

SPARKS: Okay. All right, our first step is we are having the candidates draw so we know what order, so it is a fair—

BOYD: So, one, two, or three.

SPARKS: Right, one, two, or three. We have three candidates. Thank you all for applying and for coming tonight. We are excited to hear from you, so here is how it is going to play out. I'm going to invite each of you to the podium and ask you to provide a general interest statement and your background, you know, why you are interested in the position, what unique qualifications you bring. I know each of you have prepared something to say, you have up to three minutes, so two or three minutes to do that. Then, and you will all stay in the room for that. Then the next section, each board member will ask up to two questions each, for a total of five minutes of each candidate. It will run relatively quickly. We want to ask the candidates, at that point when we are

doing sort of the Q&A of each candidate, would you want to step out of the room so that each candidate has their own time, or would you all like to stay in the room while the others are being interviewed? If anyone objects, you are all welcome to remain in the Boardroom; otherwise, it is sort of either way that you all would want to handle that.

WILLIAMS: Question, President Sparks.

SPARKS: Yes.

WILLIAMS: You said five minutes or two questions, which one is it?

SPARKS: Well, it is two questions. See, you can do one question that is like super long, that takes four minutes, and have one minute left, or you could do two short questions.

WILLIAMS: Can I do three short questions?

SPARKS: Well, we are saying up to two.

WILLIAMS: But you said five minutes.

SPARKS: I know, but we are saying up to two per candidate for each of us. Because there are four of us.

BARKE: So whichever is longer. Two—

SPARKS: Yeah.

BARKE: Two questions, but up to five minutes.

WILLIAMS: What if we have like five short questions?

SPARKS: No, we are not going to change everything right now.

WILLIAMS: Not going to change that.

SPARKS: No, we are not going to do that.

BOYD: President Sparks, I bring to your attention.

SPARKS: Yes.

BOYD: There are some public comments related to this item.

SPARKS: Okay.

BOYD: So, Vice President Shaw?

SPARKS: Do we do those first?

BOYD: Yes.

SPARKS: Okay, so we will take the public comments first.

SHAW: All right. First up will be Gloria, and on deck, Magda. We will go ahead and take the public comments now.

BOYD: Gloria is in the back. I'm not sure she could hear.

SHAW: Senator, you are up.

GLORIA: Good evening, honorable Board Members, Superintendent, Staff, and of course interested members of the community. I'm former Senator Gloria Romero. I'm honored to be here today to urge your appointment of Cecilia Iglesias to the board vacancy. I have known Ceci for about 10 years now, I think, and I have personally witnessed her advocacy for parents to be given a seat at the table, and to be afforded the respect that they deserve in all aspects of their child's education. I have witnessed her assist parents from Palm Lane, to turn around, their then, failing school. Ceci is the first one that I think comes to people's minds when you think about parent empowerment, the parents' union; and of course, she really has put parents, I think on the just sort of the agenda in Orange County and beyond.

Every National School Choice Week celebration, there is Ceci with the yellow scarf, so you have probably gotten one from her in the past. She is always looking to connect parents to school choice options. Ceci has an impeccable record of having served the public. She has served at multiple levels in the city, the Santa Ana City Council, the Santa Ana School Board. Currently, she is a founding board member of Explore Academy that you have authorized in Orange County. One of the very first things that she asked our board to do and which she led, was she initiated a parent's rights policy that our board unanimously adopted. I hate to lose her. I mean, should you appoint her. I hate to lose her from our board, but I know that she is the person. She is the voice. She is the public servant. I believe that she is just ready made to serve on this board, and I'm honored to lose her from my little board to go to a bigger board and really represent the parents of Orange County overall.

I find her to be a person of high ethical standards. She has got great integrity. She has got a backbone that resists special interests. She is not bullied by anybody, and she is always looking to make sure that there is a high quality educational opportunity, regardless of which option that parent chooses: traditional school districts, homeschool, charter school, et cetera. I think too, especially given this district, especially with the large numbers of Latinos in this district that Ceci understands how fervently, especially Latino parents feel and understand that education is the key to the American dream. And Ceci is a person who is ready to stand up and deliver on that dream for the parents of Orange County. She is smart. She is independent. She treats all fairly. She is tenacious. She is a hard worker, and she will treat all fairly. I urge an aye vote for her. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you, Senator.

SHAW: Thank you. We will now have Magda followed by Mike.

MAGDA: Good evening. My name is Magda Gomez and I'm the director for Broadway Productions. I have been promoting theater in Spanish for over 20 years for children and youth, primarily in Orange County. During the pandemic, we focused on supporting Hispanic families by creating programs all in Spanish. I have been working with families for over 15 years providing parenting classes, also as a family support counselor doing in-home visits for at-risk families. I have known Ceci for over 10 years. I just noticed Senator Romero said the same thing, so you made really good friends 10 years ago, Ceci. Both of us are supporting you.

In 2016, she founded the Parent Union. About a year later, she asked me to join. I was her assistant director for over three years. Together, we helped thousands of families to learn more about the importance of becoming more involved in their children's education. Tonight, I'm coming to ask you to please do not miss this great opportunity to allow a new and different voice to be heard. Ceci has demonstrated she truly puts parents and students first. When it comes to Hispanic families like mine, it is important for us to have someone who will represent us. Ceci has also worked hard in providing Orange County families different community events including her very famous School First in Santa Ana for seven consecutive years.

She has been able to bring together local charter schools and district schools to benefit all of our Orange County families who attend these events. All of this has been possible because of Ceci's commitment to the Orange County families. Ceci knows parents play a crucial role in our children's education, and she has worked hard to make sure we all learn more about the education system so we become better advocates for our children's future. As a community leader, I ask you to please consider Ceci Iglesias as the next trustee for District 1 for the Orange County Board of Education. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you. And, Mike.

MIKE: Good evening, President Sparks, and Board Members, and Staff. My name is Mike Tardiff. I'm a lifelong resident of Orange County and longtime business owner here. I encourage you to select Cecilia Iglesias to fill the vacant board seat. Cecilia certainly has the qualifications to serve on the Orange County Board of Education. You know her educational experience and her experience qualifications. Beyond those, she has a deep passion for education for the students and the parents. I strongly recommend that you as the board select Cecilia Iglesias as your fifth member of the Orange County Board of Education.

And if it is okay, I would like to read a little statement by, Betty Tom Chu. I think many of you know who she is. Betty says, "I support Cecilia Iglesias for the vacant board seat. Her lengthy experience and policies protecting rights of parents, students, and teachers alike, as well as other issues such as safety, is evidence of fairness for all elements of the school community." Thank you very much.

SPARKS: Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you. Madam President, if I might? Before we begin I wanted to just make a statement. Out of a spirit of abundant transparency, one of the applicants, Cecilia Iglesias and I worked together for a period of time. I think it is probably accurate to say, I was her boss. I don't think that precludes me from voting here this evening. And of course, I have an open mind about all applicants, but I did want to state that publicly for the record.

SPARKS: Thank you.

BARKE: Well, I guess if we are doing transparency, then I better also say that I have worked with Ceci and still do today sometimes through California Policy Center events. I don't work directly with her because I do consulting for California Policy Center, but we do overlap on some events.

SPARKS: Thank you. Directions for the fellow board members, we are first going to call up each candidate to speak for up to three minutes each. Then each board member will have five minutes to ask one or two questions. You can use the questions that are provided as a base, but of course you have your own ideas of questions that you want to ask as well. Okay. So we will get started, who is number one? Who is on first?

VALDES: Good evening, everyone. Good evening to the trustees of the Board of Ed. I want to thank you for considering my name for the appointment for Trustee 1 and to fill that vacancy. I would like to be appointed to the Board of Education because I believe our children in Orange County deserve a great, not just good education. The best way to serve the underserved kids of our community is to provide them the highest quality opportunities and education that we can. And to the extent that this board influences that mandate, I would like to help and participate with you.

My background, my personal education is entirely in the public schools. I graduated from a public high school in New Jersey. I graduated from Rutgers University, which is the state university of New Jersey. I graduated from Rutgers Law School. I absolutely believe that the public schools deserve and are an important part of our education model. Despite that, I do believe that our public schools should be fighting for students, essentially, the same way a private business looks for its clients or customers. There should be no monopoly in the business sector. There should be no monopoly in our educational sector. My legal background provides me a very detail oriented approach to problem solving. I can assist this board in analyzing the various lawsuits before it that I saw at the beginning of the Agenda from a lawyer's perspective.

My public service background is I was a candidate for Tustin City Council in the 2020 Election. And while I did not win a seat in that election, I am really proud to say that 9,000 people supported me in that election. I have been a charity board president; but most importantly, I am my son's baseball team coach. For anyone who thinks that getting down on all fours to teach a four or five-year-old how to swing a baseball bat, who has never done that before, if anyone thinks that is easy, I can tell you right now, it is not.

District 1 is a majority Latino district. I am clearly a Latino male. I also speak fluent Spanish. I am the perfect representative for District 1. I also want to share with the board that I do have an autistic son who is older, from my first marriage. I have spent upwards of 15 years navigating the special education system in Orange County. I can tell this board that if I am appointed, I will be an incredibly strong advocate for the rights and needs of our special education kids in Orange County. With that, I thank you again for considering me. I'm here to answer any questions that you may have.

SPARKS: Thank you. Okay. We will call up the next candidate for their three minute—each three minutes and then we will do our Q&A after that.

BARBA: Thank you so very much for affording me the opportunity to come in and interview in person. I began my work at the city of Hawaiian Gardens. I grew up in a very small inner city, very gang infested area. The only way that I was able to basically escape an abusive home where there was major abuse was to go and work. And by God's grace, he afforded me the opportunity to work at the Recreation Department with the secretary who taught me how to run board meetings or commissioner meetings, and make commissioner packets, and type commissioner minutes. It was just an amazing blessing to be able to have that opportunity. But again, because of the abuse that I sustained in my life, I made a horrible decision and got pregnant at a very young age, which led me to try to save my daughter from this type of abuse that I endured. I believed that giving her her father was the best way to do that even though her dad was a gang member.

Her dad hurt her and I lost custody of my daughter, which led me to join the military. I'm an Army veteran by God's grace. I was medically discharged shortly before 9/11, again by God's grace. I ended up coming out and working for an attorney. Prior to that, I was an executive assistant at an Alzheimer's Facility. I started as a receptionist and worked my way up to an executive assistant at the age of 21. I wholeheartedly put everything I am into learning, whichever environment I'm about to go in. I fully believe that our children's education—my son here is a Native American child. I was a PTA mom and a School Parent Advisory Board member for the Tustin Unified School District.

I saw first-hand what was going on in the school. I had a principal monopolize and yell at me in front of the other board members. It led me to bring my son to homeschool, and I don't believe in lowering standards for children. My son is in eighth grade, and he is taking his first high school class this year with Excel Academy. I believe in budget reform. I believe that single mothers and low income families have been left behind. We are doing everything we can to come together and to help with another, but we need more help. We feel lost. We feel left behind.

My neighbor, she doesn't have childcare this year. Tustin Unified School District sent her an email, or whoever it is they contract with, sent her an email saying 200 children are on a waiting list. I don't understand why there is a waiting list where parents are trying to find out where their kids are going to go after school, so thank you. I'm sorry. I get passionate. Sorry.

SPARKS: Thank you. Okay. Our third candidate is on deck, Ceci Iglesias.

IGLESIAS: Good evening, board members, President Sparks, Vice President Shaw, Dr. Mijares, members of the public. My name is Cecilia Iglesias. The reason I am running for this position is because I believe parents need a voice and a choice for their child's public education. As Senator Romero stated, I know I have been elected to the Santa Ana Unified School District. That is how I started my passion in education. One of the reasons was because I, you know, I had a vested interest. I had my son in the public education system in Santa Ana. It wasn't giving the parents the resources that they needed.

One of the reasons why I got involved is because, you know, Santa Ana has these educational options, which is called fundamental schools. Fundamental schools are run like charter schools. They give parents options, hold parents accountable, hold teachers accountable, you know, for their child's academic success. And the reason a lot of parents weren't able to access those is because there was a limit. They were always like on a lottery basis even though it was conducted and overseen by the school district. It didn't give all the parents the options. It was a long waiting list. And I said, you know what, this has to change. My son's school is not going to be determined by the zip code of where we live. When I applied for the fundamental schools, I didn't get in the first year. I got in the second year. But why do we have to wait as parents?

One thing that I admire about this board is that you all believe in parents having the right to choose the best education option for their child. Your philosophy is that parents know best. That is what I believe in: parents know best. Children need access to quality public education. Especially in this district, District 1, you know, Santa Ana, parts of Anaheim, Garden Grove, where the Latino community, unfortunately our kids are not excelling at the rate level that we would want them to. I decided to run for school board. I was like elected in 2012, served for four years. One thing is I don't back down to special interests. And one of the things that really came after me was the Teacher's Union, because they didn't like the fact that I was a voice for parents. They wanted me to be a voice for the adults, which the adults I believe are there for a reason. They are there to teach our kids, but they are not there to take over parents' rights.

One of the things that I believe in is giving access to quality, public education to every family, to every student. I am bilingual, both Spanish and also, actually trilingual. I did teach American Sign Language. Sometimes I move my hands a lot. I try not to because I'm thinking I'm interpreting. But it is an opportunity here to give a voice to Latino parents, you know, in District 1. And like I said, I was elected from 2012 to 2016 my first term. In 2016, I ran again, I was reelected and I also serve on the Santa Ana City Council. I could hit the ground running if I'm given that opportunity, so thank you very much.

SPARKS: Thank you. Okay. At this point, we will go through our questions. I will start with Mari Barke.

BARKE: Okay. So am I doing—?

SPARKS: You can do one and then we will go down the row. Then we will do the second question.

BARKE: Do you want to go in opposite order, same order? How do you want to do that?

SPARKS: We can go the opposite order just to shake it up a little bit.

BARKE: Okay. I am going to start with—let's see. I get two questions. Ken made that very clear. The first question will be: If you are appointed, do you plan to run for reelection?

IGLESIAS: Yes.

BARKE: Okay. That was a really quick one, so the next one has to be long. Tell me about your short term and long term goals?

IGLESIAS: Well, my short term goals would be to finish out this term. Also, start working on implementing my long-term goal, which is to get more education information to the Latino community. One thing that I saw that was missing from the prior trustee was she wasn't really present in our community. One thing I would like to do is have more collaboration with the school districts in that area so we can start giving, kind of like when you guys have those public forums. Also, have an opportunity to have them in Spanish too for our parents. I believe they miss out a lot. One of the misconceptions is that parents, especially Latino parents, don't care. But that is not true. It is not because they don't care. It is because sometimes, you know, unfortunately in our community we are lower socioeconomic status. Then they have to work two to three jobs to make ends meet.

It is not that they don't want to go to school meetings, it is not that they don't want to come here and speak to you all, it is because they just don't know how. I want to be that bridge that is going to connect the parent community, especially the Latino community, to this board. I believe it is something that is missing, not only in Santa Ana, but in Garden Grove. I think we have to start also having more of a presence at the school board meetings. I commit to attending school board meetings, you know, speaking on behalf of parents and also just introducing myself to them so they know that they have an advocate here too so we can work together for the sake of our families.

My long term goal, like you were saying, you asked me if I would run for reelection. I would. Because I believe education is a great equalizer here in the U.S. I'm an immigrant from El Salvador. Without education, I wouldn't have been able to achieve a lot of things that I have been offered. I stand like with Dr. Williams, I think Critical Race Theory is something that is wrong that they are teaching in our schools and it is indoctrination of our kids. It is something that I will be committed to defending. You know, we live in the greatest country ever, and it is just about giving us opportunities. Giving a hand up, we are not about handouts. It is about a giving a hand up. My commitment is just to educate the parent community of all the choices that they have, that they have rights, and continue being a voice so their voice can be elevated. When Sacramento makes legislation, they know that the parents are watching and I will be the advocate for them.

BARKE: Thank you.

IGLESIAS: You are welcome.

SPARKS: Dr. Williams

WILLIAMS: In Minneapolis, the Teacher's Union and the school district, made an agreement that in the event of teacher layoff, race plays an important question. In fact, they made the provision that if you are light skinned or white, that you would be the first teacher to be laid off, regardless of your seniority. Please give me your thoughts about that.

IGLESIAS: I think that is very unfortunate because I believe it should be based on performance. It doesn't matter the color of your skin. When I was growing up, I had a lot of Anglo teachers. What this country is doing, especially, there is an agenda to really separate us, because they want us to focus on the little things, what they are trying to indoctrinate and take, you know, take over our kids. That is something that I don't support. As you know when I was on the school board, one of the things that I did question a lot was the raises. But it wasn't based on ethnicity, it wasn't based on the color of your skin, it was based more on performance. If you are performing and you are taking my child to Harvard, I believe some teachers don't even getting paid enough if that is your conviction. But I just don't believe that we should be taking race into consideration into anything, especially when it comes to merit. It should be merit pay increases. Shame on Minneapolis and also the Teacher's Union. They are the enemy number one to public education. Definitely, I don't agree with what they are doing.

WILLIAMS: Do I get another question?

SPARKS: Yeah, you get another one.

WILLIAMS: Oh, I get another one. Okay. The Orange County Register's editorial staff criticized this board for being involved in cultural wars. They endorsed the incumbents, but they criticize us. What are the cultural wars that we engaged in? What are they? Well, I think that we talked about and defended the innocence of children from the California Healthy Youth Act and how the Sacramento political elites and progressive left attacks the rights of parents. Did the Orange County Board of Education start the cultural wars or did we just defend parental rights?

IGLESIAS: In my opinion, you guys defended parental rights. I think the cultural wars was started by the Teachers Union, the California School Boards Association, by all the National Education Association, all of them. What they want to do is keep us busy with non-educational stuff so they can really come and take the educational opportunity from our kids. I believe you all defended parents, and parents really appreciate what you did because you did what your constituents was asking you guys to do. It wasn't something you guys just picked out of a hat. I believe there was a lot of outcry on what was going on, and you guys listened, and you guys took action.

SPARKS: I think your time is up.

WILLIAMS: It is?

SPARKS: Yes.

WILLIAMS: I have a lot more questions.

SPARKS: I know you do. If we have time, we will follow up.

WILLIAMS: I will follow you leader.

SPARKS: Trustee Shaw.

SHAW: Thank you. So the Orange County Department of Education operates schools and programs for the disabled, at-risk and homeschooled students, reviews district budgets, issues paychecks for all local school employees, provides legal services to local districts, tracks public school enrollment, and serves as an academic resource center. The County Board approves the annual budget for the Department of Education, takes action on charter schools and inter district appeals and expulsion hearings. In what areas do you believe you would make your greatest contribution to this board based upon your interest and your experience?

IGLESIAS: I believe I can participate in all that you mentioned. Having served on the Santa Ana Unified School District for six years, those are the responsibilities of school board members. It is something that I took to heart to learn it and to really practice it. But one of my strengths is budgeting, and I believe that it is something that I have always been good at. I could definitely be a contribution to this board on that. Charter schools, you know, approving them and looking at their curriculum, and how they are set up, it is something that I also have knowledge of. When I was on the school board with Santa Ana Unified School District, they gave me too much credit. They said I approved all the charter schools, but you know, I didn't. But I did support all of them. But the school that really stood out that I wasn't even able as a board member to even speak on, was with Vista Charter School. The board was so anti-charter school. They didn't even give an opportunity to even ask questions just like you guys did with Oxford. I came here, and I supported Vista Charter School and shared my experience.

You know, it is very, anti-school choice, anti-parents, but it is something that I would be able to bring with that experience on how to assess, you know, what a good quality charter school would be. I think I will contribute to this board.

SHAW: I have written a question here. Let's say you were sitting right here and you are one of the four of us looking at these three applicants, why Ceci? Why you? If you were me, why would I think to vote for you? What is the number one selling point that you have?

IGLESIAS: I have a passion to serve my community and I believe in parental rights. We need to empower parents and ensure that every child has access to quality public education so they can have the same opportunities that I did. You know, with those opportunities, I was able to go to Santa Ana College, get my AA degree, get a bachelor's in human services from Cal State Fullerton, and also a master's in public administration from Grand Canyon University. Why Ceci? Because I understand the needs of our community, and I believe that I would be a great advocate for parents in those cities, in those districts, and within District 1.

SHAW: Thank you.

SPARKS: Okay. How many minutes does he have left in his time?

SISAVATH: One.

SPARKS: One, just keeping it in mind. Okay. I will ask my quick couple of questions. In terms of your understanding of the OC Board of Education, which Trustee Shaw just explained the major roles that we play, what do you think is the most difficult issue that OCBE is dealing with that we face as a body?

IGLESIAS: I believe it is that you are standing up for parents' rights. I have seen that you have been criticized for doing that. It may not stand popular with the general activist because they are the ones that make the most noise. But I believe you are fighting a good cause. Standing up for parents rights, it is not easy or else everyone would be doing it. It is just easier to go with the flow, but I admire your guys' courage to stand up for parents. That is what is what I would say it is the challenge that you have, but it is your biggest responsibility on this board to stand up for parents.

SPARKS: Thank you. Then, my last question will be: What do you see as the role of outside vendors in things like teacher training?

IGLESIAS: Listening to, especially what happened with OPA, with having that vendor, they need to be vetted. Those are the questions that I asked when I was on the school board whenever we had vendors. I needed to see who they are being supported by? What is it that they are teaching? Who are the ones that align with them? Because it is very troubling, like what Dr. Williams said, you know, you let them in, you know, a little bit of darkness and they just start spreading like wildfire. Unfortunately, it happens in a lot of the districts that don't have a lot of parental involvement. That is why it is very important for this board to be the eyes and ears for the community. Because there is so much going on with these vendors that I saw when I was on the school board.

I questioned a lot of them. On a lot of them, I was a no vote. I was just the dissenting vote all the time, because I would ask those questions and I don't think we should be giving them access to public funds. This is the public's money and we need to be good stewards of public funds. Having individuals that are going to come against what parents believe or what, you know, what students should be taught, I think it is something that they need to be well vetted. It is the only way. You know, it is too bad, so sad if they are not going to get it. But they have to be with the same mission of what this board is, and if it is not, then I wouldn't approve it.

SPARKS: Thank you. Well, since I have a minute left, you gave an extra minute. If any board member might want to take a little bit of our extra minutes, he or she could do so.

BARKE: Go ahead, Ken. I will yield to you.

WILLIAMS: I am so intimidated by you. I'm not so sure I even want to take an attempt to ask an extra question.

SPARKS: I am giving you two minutes.

BARKE: You got a quick one, come on.

WILLIAMS: Okay. You opened the door. Okay. Summer of 2020, this board took the courageous step to talk about opening schools when schools were closed. As you may or may not have attended that community meeting, this board had a significant say so in setting an agenda for which is currently now the CDC recommendations. We stood up against mandates for COVID vaccination for kids, as well as masking, as many studies have shown that masks, despite what King Fauci says, is effective. Did we do the right thing and is that part of the cultural war that we stood up for and defended the rights of parents?

IGLESIAS: My understanding of what you guys did was to stand up for parents, also questioning what the establishment wants us to do. I think they are so used to, just for any board or anybody to say yes to what they are they are saying. The mask mandates were something that many of the parents didn't believe in. I think it was just an excuse by the Teacher's Union to keep the schools closed. It showed in different districts how they handled it. Tustin opened up sooner than Santa Ana, and they didn't require many mandates because they knew the parents didn't approve. The cultural wars, like I stated before, I think it is something that they want, when I say they, it would be the union. It just goes back to them. I mean, they are the ones that are controlling them. As you know, they were the ones giving recommendation to the CDC on when to open schools and when not to open. They just wanted to get paid for doing nothing and our kids suffered the consequences.

WILLIAMS: I have one more question.

SPARKS: You know, we have time because we are almost to our full 20 minutes. If you rush through that question, I will let you have the last question.

WILLIAMS: Now, Attorney General accused parents, Mr. Garland, he accused parents of being terrorists, along with the NEA and a few other organizations. He accused them of being terrorists. How do you feel about being accused of being a terrorist? Because you have certain perspectives and political beliefs and cultural beliefs that are different than Mr. Garland?

IGLESIAS: He is so out of touch with what is really going on in our country. But thanks to his remarks, parents stood up. Now there is a parent revolution and parents know. In a way what he did was, he took out the blindfolds from parents. Knowing that the ones that were controlling all this were the special interests, which were the Teachers Union. They are the ones that led him because it is political. They want to politicize everything. In order for our kids to be left with the short end of the stick when it comes to education. Him calling parents terrorists, I think it is a shame. If parents want to get involved, they should.

If anything, being a terrorist, they are the terrorists to our kids. Because they are the ones that are stopping the growth of our education for our children. And they shouldn't be intimidated. Parents should not be intimidated because they just use buzzwords. But it costs them a lot. Because of

him, I think it was Governor Young Kim, he was able to win because he did connect with parents and parents know. What he did by calling parents terrorists, he woke up the sleeping giant.

SPARKS: Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Williams. And thank you, candidate Iglesias. We appreciate you. We will have our second candidate come up and we will start the process again. I think we are making really good pace, good time. I appreciate the efficiency of everyone including Dr. Williams. Okay. We will start with Trustee Barke.

BARKE: All right. I am going to start with: What do you think about charter schools? What do you think about their role in the public school system?

BARBA: I have been personally blessed by charter schools. I had my son in Curry Thurman when it was under one principal. I experienced horrific treatment there. Like I said, I was yelled at because I refused to falsify documentation to put money in the bank. When the district had said not to be selling food, cooked food, and I refused to put my signature on the deposit with a lie. He chastised me and yelled at me in front of the other board members with his office door wide open and everybody in the office heard. From that moment on, the other board members treated me horribly, horribly. I was forced to put on a jogathon by myself for both schools. That marquee that he has out there makes me so angry every time I pass by it, because our students got bus rides to the library instead of field trips. I was so sickened by it. I personally, as a low income mother, single mother, would not have had an opportunity to homeschool my child, had it not been for the opportunity to enroll him into a charter school.

He has got the best education through charter. They come alongside, they provide the funds for the education materials. We were able to do field trips because of it. The community that we have, the other mothers coming together from the charter schools, just being able to have our kids together and growing up together. It has been the most amazing blessing in my life. And even now with all that is going on and with all the concern of parents, I point them to charter schools. If they feel like their schools are not doing what they are supposed to. I send them to charter schools. Yes.

BARKE: Okay. Thank you. And my next question will have three parts. President Sparks, doesn't have to come back to me. Do you plan to run for reelection and what are your short term and long-term goals please?

BARBA: Yes, I absolutely plan to run for reelection. My short term goals is just empowering parents. I believe for so long we have allowed schools and unions to really capture our children's hearts and minds. We send them to school for eight hours a day, and we have no idea what they are being taught there. And they come home and they are sitting with books for another two hours and parents have no idea what the homework and curriculum is. The Healthy Youth Act, that was passed two years before it came to America, before it came to California and started being written into law by Planned Parenthood. I was screaming from the rooftops.

This is happening in Australia and it is coming to America. Nobody listened until it was too late and it was being implemented in our schools. Our parents need to know what is going on, and I feel like we are always on the back foot. We are always playing catch up. We are always

playing: oh no, it is here; now what are we going to do? Instead of taking the lead and enacting, like what you all did with the mask mandates.

I can't wear a mask. I have a trach on my face, on my neck, sorry, on my neck. My son would wake up in the middle of the night to check to see if I was still alive. I had him sit and do a paper looking at SARS-CoV-2 versus other SARS viruses and identify similarities and differences. And he wrote a paper for his school explaining that SARS-CoV-2 is the same exact as other SARS. They have the same spike proteins. They act the same exact way. Then we went ahead and looked at the First Amendment and the Constitution, in fifth grade. The Constitutional limitations on the First Amendment on the Supreme Court decisions, and I had him explain to me if he believed shutting churches down was constitutional under the First Amendment and the Supreme Court decisions that limited it. My son was absolutely upset.

I don't—yeah, that is my short term and long term. Because I believe we need to be on top of the things. We don't need to be playing catch up all the time. With Orange County, you all are leading the charge. I have been so blessed to be in Orange County.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

BARBA: Thank you.

SPARKS: Dr. Williams, you are up.

WILLIAMS: The political left is openly hostile to the concept of parental rights and have engaged in a war against parental rights. As I mentioned, Attorney General Garland believes outspoken parents are domestic terrorists and even former governor and recent Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe, who lost by the way to Glenn Youngkin, stated “I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should be teaching.” And now we see another individual from the far left, Beto O'Rourke, who has [inaudible] on CRT. He said that parents shouldn't be telling teachers what to teach. What is your opinion on all these events?

BARBA: Well, growing up again in the inner city as a victim of abuse, if there was anybody that had the right to be a victim of their gender, of their nationality, or race, what have you, or of their circumstances, it would have been me. What disheartens me is the fact that we have parents that are trying to protect their children. The Healthy Youth Act, I had a brother that was one year older than me doing horrific things when we were in elementary school. I could distinctly remember assemblies where the teachers would tell us, if somebody is doing this to you, tell a teacher. But now we are having teachers tell students, this is how you do X, Y, and Z. And now students go home and they can practice on their family members. There is a division that is coming in between parents and their children. What really bothers me is that, especially in my community, the Latino community, we are about family and faith. With whatever is being taught in the schools, our children have enough on their shoulders. And now we are trying to put the weight of the world on their shoulders too and tell them that they are victims, instead of empowering them and allowing their parents to empower them. No.

WILLIAMS: I'm impressed, Marlene with your enthusiasm and spirit.

BARBA: I am so sorry.

WILLIAMS: I love it. Go for it, girl. You are doing great. I'm going to get back to the question that I asked previously about the Minneapolis School Board and the Teacher's Union there. If in the event of a teacher layoff that they would lay off individuals based upon their skin color, rather than the performance or teacher years in service.

BARBA: Yes.

WILLIAMS: What is your opinion on that?

BARBA: Well, I think it is absolutely abhorrent. We have lost—I mean, we can see what is happening across the country. Because of the mandatory vaccine mandates and these horrific new laws coming into effect, like Title IX that was just signed by President Biden, giving teachers more authority over their own parents' children to allow them to have gender affirming treatment. We have lost really good teachers because they didn't want to be part of research. They didn't want to be a guinea pig. And yet, here we now are going to have layoffs because parents are what, taking their kids out of school because they can't trust the public school system. It is backwards. It is one million percent backwards. It is—I'm sorry. I just, yeah.

SPARKS: Okay. We will move on for now and see if we have any extra time. Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Thank you. I will try to be consistent and ask the same questions, so I will skip over a little bit of what we do here. But, you know, approving the budget, taking action on charter schools, inter district transfer requests, expulsion hearings, where do you think you would make your greatest contribution?

BARBA: I have been looking at the budget and it is very extensive. It is very extensive. I am overwhelmed at the amount of money just going into public schools. We look at the cost of charter schools in relation. My mind is boggled right now. Like I said, I was at a school in the PTA and we literally were not able to afford field trips for our children. And the principal would rather get a marquee on the wall, that means nothing to kids that are being raised in an inner city, low income area. A marquee, to have lights fly by, that is wasteful. That is wasteful spending of money that could be used for children.

And charters, just like what was happening today with OPA. I mean, 100% we need to understand what vendors are coming in, what we are exposing our children to. You all are amazing the way that you oversee, the way that you oversee just every school and every dollar coming in. I applaud you. I'm really grateful for you.

SHAW: Along those same lines, I have the question: If you were one of the four trustees having to pick out of the three applicants here, why Marlene? What is your number one reason we should pick you, you think?

BARBA: My entire life is about serving. Even now, as a suicide survivor, I travel Southern California going into schools. I go into high schools, I go into junior high schools and I give children hope. I give them a reason to continue pushing forward. During the entire lockdown, I had these kids reaching out to me, telling me that they were thankful that I was giving information that they weren't getting anywhere else. This is what we need. We need somebody to come forward and be that voice that is going to be able to reach the kids. I don't look like the other candidates. I don't sound like them. I have tattoos. I'm genuinely me. My heart is to reach the kids and to be a voice for the parents.

SHAW: I just wanted to say, I agree very much with Ken. You are doing a great job and your spirit is very, very strong, and we appreciate you being here.

BARBA: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. I agree. For consistency, I am going to ask similar questions as before. What do you think is the most difficult issue really facing our board that you have seen?

BARBA: The lies and the falsehoods. You all are the voice of one crying in the wilderness. We don't have that. When you all brought forth that regulation to open up the schools in 2020, my heart leaped for joy. I couldn't believe that there was somebody out there that was screaming for our children. We have children that were locked in homes with their abusers. We have children that didn't make it out of the pandemic alive. I'm so grateful for you for taking that stand that other school boards in the nation were able to turn around and copy. I'm thankful for you. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. I have just one more question for you, and then we may have a little extra time for any board member who might have another question. How do you view the role of outside vendors in terms of teacher training?

BARBA: Definitely, I believe that vendors should be vetted. But I also believe that there is a place for vendors. I learned so much. A smart person learns from their experience, but a wise person learns from others experiences. I learned so much from my friend. She is a child psychologist. She did all the IEPs in Santa Ana, but I love her. I love to pick her brain, and I love to learn from her. I believe if we have really good vendors that that can expand our learning and our growth. That would be amazing, but they must be vetted. We cannot just let anyone come in contact with our children or in direct contact with people that have contact with our children.

SPARKS: Thank you so much. Thank you for your passion, really appreciate it.

BARBA: Thank you.

SPARKS: We do have a few extra minutes in case any said board member up here would have an extra question.

BARBA: He is looking up.

WILLIAMS: Are you thinking of me?

SPARKS: Anybody, any board member who might have an extra question. We have a few extra minutes.

WILLIAMS: I appreciate your thoughtfulness. The South Dakota School Board this last week has reported in the news, voted to remove the Pledge of Allegiance because it was too divisive.

BARBA: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Give me your opinion on that?

BARBA: As an Army veteran, I cannot agree with that. God, country, and family, that is how it is. As someone who comes from a military family, my brother served two tours in Iraq. He had friends die in front of him. He is disabled because of the multiple IEDs that he experienced. I'm thankful for our veterans, and there is nothing more special than wearing the flag on your shoulder. There is a million percent nothing more special than saluting the flag, because that is a right that not many people have. That is pride in our nation, and in the foundation of our nation, and the Constitution that we swear to defend and protect against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

SPARKS: We have a couple of extra minutes.

WILLIAMS: Okay. I have another one. Many would agree that prior to the era of Martin Luther King, who was one of my personal heroes, he is a good man, in addition to the civil rights era that occurred in the '60s, that systemic racism existed. But do you believe that systemic racism exists today in America?

BARBA: I do not. I believe that there are laws passed that people turn into their own kind of perception of racism when the reality is we all have individual responsibility. We need to be responsible for the way that we interact with others, the way that we conduct ourselves in everyday life. I am the way I am. I have had to raise my son—my son has a mother that looks the way that she does because of decisions I have made, not because of abuse I sustained in my past. But because of decisions I made when I was an adult. That is how I'm raising him, and that is how I believe this next generation should be raised. Not even my past is responsible for things that I have done.

SPARKS: Thank you, candidate Barba. Thank you, Trustee Williams. We will move on to our final candidate, candidate Valdes. I will start with Trustee Barke.

VALDES: Good evening.

BARKE: Good evening. I'm going to start with: Do you plan on running for reelection and what are your short term and long term goals is my first question?

VALDES: I do plan to run for reelection. If I am appointed, I will be contacting my campaign treasurer to begin a new committee, as early as tomorrow. I would start the fundraising efforts as early as tomorrow. As far as my short term goals, I believe it would be my responsibility as a trustee for District 1, to—I'm going to pay a visit, a personal visit, to every public school and every charter school in my district. I'm going to set out a plan over the next six to nine months and make sure that I'm going to visit the campus of every school in my district.

SHAW: You got a lot of them in District 1, so be careful.

BARKE: Get your walking shoes.

VALDES: I will report back. The reason for that is, I need to know what is happening on the ground. If I'm going to represent a group of people, this is just what I believe. I need to know what they are thinking, how we can help them from our perspective, what we can do for them. So that would certainly be my short term goal.

BARKE: Okay. This can tie in with a long term goal: What do you think is the biggest contribution this board can make and how do you fit in with that over the next two years or beyond?

VALDES: Well, I mean, the biggest contribution is something that you guys are already doing. I mean, you are bucking the tide of California. It is really, really difficult to be right sometimes. It is really, really easy to be wrong when you are just catching a wave, so to speak. The biggest contribution is parental rights. I absolutely believe in that, I know the other candidates do as well. There is nothing more important than having a parent make a decision for their child, whether it is a public school—and I want to make clear, I am not against the public school system. I grew up and went through a public school system.

I will absolutely respect the public schools. I will respect the Teacher's Union; nonetheless, I do believe in choice. If a parent believes a public school is a better fit for their child, then great. If they don't, then they should have an opportunity to move that child to where they see fit.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Okay. Dr. Williams, you are on deck.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Leading off with a question that was brought up by a public comment, by Linda Cone. Assembly Bill 1184, you may not be familiar with that, but the essence of that bill is prohibiting parents from knowing the medical/emotional status of their children. There is a great effort in our community as well as this nation to treat those kids who suffer from gender dysphoria. Especially those kids at risk, and no one is arguing that we should know—in fact, we should take care of those kids, providing whatever cognitive or psychological support and treatment that is needed. But what has happened is that parents have been removed from the equation, and this bill would codify, along with removing parents from the rights to know if their kids are being referred to Planned Parenthood. The parents would not be allowed to know if their

parents are being referred for gender dysphoria treatment, or puberty blockers, or whatever it may be. What is your position on the rights of parents to know their children's wellbeing?

VALDES: From the medical perspective, you know, I want to be clear, I'm not an M.D. Whatever the child's medical needs is, is a separate and distinct issue. The issue of not notifying a parent is an absurdity. To me, it is simply an absurdity. That is absolutely a critical event that a parent must know about. It is almost angering to hear that someone is trying to pass a law that would prohibit me from knowing what my daughter is thinking or the medical treatment she is undergoing.

WILLIAMS: I earlier made the statement that Martin Luther King and all those great men in the civil rights era made a positive influence upon the society and this country, and there was problems with systemic racism, and Jim Crow laws, and bad things like that. But do you believe that systemic racism in 2022 exists in America?

VALDES: From a historical perspective, I can tell—

WILLIAMS: No, right now, 2022.

VALDES: I promise I will answer your question, Doctor. We did have an issue, a major issue with systemic racism back in the 1950s. We had a Supreme Court case called Plessy versus Ferguson that allowed separate but equal. We had a Supreme Court decision for about 11 years that said that was okay. Obviously, overturned in Brown versus Board of Education 11 years later. That was 60 years ago. That is not where we are today. I have grown up my entire life—I am a Cuban American. I'm proud to be one. When someone asks me my heritage, I tell them I'm an American. I'm not a Cuban. I'm an American citizen.

I have probably been the victim of racism a handful of times. I remember once in law school, it was exam week, and I hadn't shaven, and I wasn't really dressed all that well, and I was in a grocery store, and I asked a woman to help me pick out a piece of fruit. She jumped back at me. This was at Rutgers. She jumped back at me like she was scared. I said, "I'm sorry, Ma'am if I scared you. She said, "No, you didn't scare me." She said, "Just looking at you, I just didn't know that you would speak that way. Let me show you how to pick out the fruit." I guess I have been a victim a few times, but to me, racism is an invisible wall. It is there if you think it is there. I never pay any attention to it. I have been pretty successful in my life. If you think it is there, then I suppose it is there. But I don't go forward in my life thinking that way, I just simply do not.

SPARKS: Thank you, Dr. Williams. We will move on to Trustee Shaw.

SHAW: Thank you. I think Mari sort of asked about the contribution that the Board can make. So I wanted maybe to just focus on what you would make as an individual member of the Board. What would be your greatest contribution to the things that we do, budgeting, looking at charter schools, inter district appeals, expulsion hearings, and those things? How would you best contribute?

VALDES: Trustee Shaw, I clearly think that my legal background would be my greatest asset to the Board. I'm going to provide a legal perspective on the issues that the Board deals with. Both with the cases that you deal with, the interdistrict appeals, I can be an insightful voice for the board from a lawyer's perspective. I can tell when a lawyer is talking to me and they are minimizing something that is not a minimal issue. I can see where a lawyer may be overbilling the Orange County Board of Ed. for services they are providing, so I clearly think that my strongest asset would be from a legal perspective.

SHAW: Let me ask you this, we do have a lawyer for our board. Are you going to be okay? I'm sure lawyers aren't experts in all areas of the law. Are you prepared to take Mr. Rolen's advice on education laws, you know, specifically?

VALDES: I am a worker's compensation defense attorney and I limit my practice to that. Nonetheless, there are certain things about being a lawyer that we all share, and I think that insight could be very good for the Board.

SHAW: Thank you.

SPARKS: Okay. Again, I'm going to ask similar questions just for consistency. Given what you have learned to understand about the Orange County Board of Education, particularly the last several years, what do you think is the most difficult issue that we face?

VALDES: I think the Board has been branded in a way that is completely unfair and unjustified. In preparation for today, and I did do quite a bit of prep preparation for today, the Board has been accused of pushing a very conservative agenda. It is not a conservative agenda. It is a parent's rights agenda. I don't see how that is a conservative issue. It is not. It is putting parents and children first before others. That has nothing to do with being conservative. That has something to do with who are we prioritizing?

SPARKS: Absolutely, I would agree. Then, what do you see as the role of outside vendors in teacher training?

VALDES: Well, we always want our teachers to be consistently learning new things. I'm not immediately opposed to an outside vendor coming in, but I think the other candidates and myself would all agree, those vendors need to be vetted. We always want our teachers being at the foresight of new ideas, but we have to vet those ideas. I was very appreciative of Dr. Williams' comments earlier when he said he was almost going to be a no vote with respect to that contract. I thought to myself, if I was sitting in that chair, I would be saying the exact same things. I certainly want to know who is talking to the teachers who in turn are going to be talking to our kids?

I have two of my kids in this room right now, and I do not want a political agenda forced upon them, period. I just don't want that. I grew up in New Jersey. I can't remember even once where a teacher through college or law school ever pushed a political agenda on me in a classroom, and I'm just really kind of shocked to see where it has come.

SPARKS: Thank you. We do have a few extra minutes if any board member has any extra questions. Dr. Williams, do you have any additional questions?

WILLIAMS: Yes. By the way, all three of you are incredible. Wow. That is my impression. But Mr. Valdes, we have behind us, “In God we trust.” We have been attacked by atheist organizations to take that down. Were we write and proper to defend our right to have that sitting behind us as a model.

VALDES: I believe you are right and proper, and I also would tell you that the Supreme Court agrees with that.

WILLIAMS: Very good. The Pledge of Allegiance, as I earlier asked, was removed by a South Dakota School District because they felt it was too divisive that the words “under God” were wrong, were bad for this nation. Your opinion on that?

VALDES: I just simply would not remove the Pledge of Allegiance from our school calendar or our school curriculum during the day. I just simply would not do that. I'm a patriotic American. I remember in 1992, there was small talk of holding a draft. I don't know if you all remember that? But I do because I was of that draft age. My mother turned to me and said, “If they start a draft, I'm going to send you to Canada.” And I turned to her and I said, “I am absolutely not going to Canada if I get drafted. I'm going into the military, period.” She cried, and that was a very upsetting conversation. But I would not remove the Pledge Allegiance from the school day, certainly not.

WILLIAMS: No more.

SPARKS: Okay. Wow. Well thank you, candidate Valdes and thank you all. We just had I think an amazing set of Q&A. At this point, we need to make a decision. How do we that? Do we go into closed session? Do we do it here publicly?

SHAW: No.

BOYD: It has to be public.

SPARKS: Okay.

SHAW: Before we get into that, Madam President, might I ask the staff something? I know you verified that all three of the applicants do live in Trustee Area 1 under the current version of that, I guess the trustee map that was adopted in 2011, correct? That is the map. Now we are kind of having this redistricting situation right now with the Census, and I should have asked to verify this before tonight—but it was occurring to me. Do all three live in the new version of Trustee Area 1 that would be after the election?

BOYD: That I can't answer, because we did not verify that.

SHAW: Okay.

BOYD: We just simply contacted the Registrar of Voters with regards to the current map to complete this term.

SHAW: Okay. I don't know if all three of you did take a look at that?

AUDIENCE: I actually have it on my phone.

SHAW: That is the current map though, I think, from what I saw.

AUDIENCE: Okay. There is—there will be a new looking version of that map.

BOYD: They may or may not qualify to run.

SHAW: Right.

BOYD: That would have to be something researched, but that is not before this board right now, it is just fulfilling the seat based on the existing.

WILLIAMS: Madam President?

SPARKS: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Do you mind if we take a restroom break for five minutes?

SPARKS: I think that is a grand idea. Let's do that.

BARKE: I would enjoy one myself. Yeah, I would like that.

SPARKS: We will take a seven-minute break. We will come back at 7:35.

[The Orange County Board of Education takes a short recess.]

SPARKS: Okay. All right, I think we are all back. Thank you all for coming back. Here we are. Hey, let's get started.

SHAW: There we go.

SPARKS: Zip it, no. Okay. Let's just open up with some additional discussion from board members, amongst ourselves, and I would like to hear your thoughts. Any additional questions amongst us that we would like to discuss or for Deputy Superintendent, any guidance?

BARKE: Can I ask a question and maybe, you know, this isn't part of the original discussion? But I would sort of like to know that we are not appointing somebody that might be in somebody else's district.

SPARKS: Yeah.

BARKE: Come two years from now, is that inappropriate to mention?

BOYD: I would ask your counsel to answer that for you.

ROLEN: We didn't do the research to determine whether the candidate would be residing in the upcoming redistricted trustee area simply because the redistricting is still being litigated, and we don't really know which district that they would be coming of. But the purpose for this agenda item is to fill the vacancy. If we don't fill the vacancy tonight, we may be facing a special election.

BARKE: Okay.

ROLEN: Regardless of where they may be residing in relation to the redistricted trustee area, which may or may not be finalized, I would urge the Board to vote this evening.

BARKE: Thank you. Appreciate that.

SHAW: Well, if I could make a comment? It wasn't that long ago I was sitting down there interviewing to be appointed, and I'm just glad I wasn't up against you guys. You all three honestly did amazing. It is very difficult to choose between a good applicant and other good applicants, of course. But in all sincerity, I believe all three of you guys are very well intentioned. Your hearts were in the right place. You are interested in serving and doing what is right, so I commend all three of you in all sincerity. I know that might be easy to say since I'm about to vote against two of you, but I really feel like we can't go wrong honestly with all three of these applicants. I'm just really proud of how all three of you did.

SPARKS: I would definitely echo those comments. Each of you spoke with passion and conviction, and you could tell that you had done a lot of research. The candidate pool was small, but mighty, really amazing, very impressive. Could we just use that hat again and just pick out of that hat? Just kidding.

BARKE: I would concur with the comments. You guys all were amazing, and yes, Tim would have had some really tough competition.

WILLIAMS: Madam President if I may, I would like to nominate to replace District 1 with Celia Iglesias.

SHAW: I would nominate, Jorge Valdes.

SPARKS: How do we handle that situation? We need a second for one of them?

BOYD: You do.

SPARKS: Either one of them?

BOYD: Ken made the first motion. If there is a second for that, if there is not, then that motion dies. You can do it one of two ways. Since Tim spoke up, now you have a subsidiary motion also. I'm not sure point of order how you want to move forward in terms of—

WILLIAMS: I can speak to the parliamentary procedures. My nomination was not seconded, so it doesn't go anywhere. Tim's nomination was not seconded, so it doesn't go anywhere. We start over. We did this for Dr. Bedell 12-13 years ago. Well, now you can probably recall that one. That was a long meeting and it was a 2-2. We took several votes and it was 2-2. Finally, the vote was taken and somebody abstained and Jack got on. I will make the motion again for Ceci. This is the way we did it with Jack Bedell. This is probably the best way to do it. If someone doesn't want to second that, then there is no vote.

SPARKS: The motion dies. What is next?

SHAW: I will move Jorge Valdes.

SPARKS: I will second that motion, so we will take it to a vote.

BARKE: I'm going to abstain

SPARKS: All in favor?

SPARKS, SHAW: Aye.

WILLIAMS: I will abstain.

SPARKS: So what does that mean?

SHAW: It fails.

WILLIAMS: It fails because you don't have a third vote. You have to have three.

SPARKS: Okay.

BOYD: You don't have a majority.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Counsel, could you just verify that if you have—?

ROLEN: You need a quorum.

WILLIAMS: You need a quorum which is three.

BOYD: Correct.

WILLIAMS: Okay. So that motion dies.

BOYD: You got to write them all down and keep track. I'm trying to keep—

SPARKS: This is going to be interesting.

WILLIAMS: It always is. It always is. I will make the motion again for Ms. Iglesias.

SHAW: I will second.

WILLIAMS: We have motion and a second that is on the floor. Any questions? Comments? Otherwise, we go to a vote.

SPARKS: Any comments or questions?

BARKE: No, I think I'm going to abstain just because of my working relationship.

SHAW: Okay. We will call for a vote for Iglesias.

SPARKS: Call for a vote. I'm going to abstain.

WILLIAMS: I will vote for my measure.

SHAW: You are voting—oh, I'm voting aye.

WILLIAMS: Okay. But it fails.

SHAW: But it will fail.

BOYD: That is 2-0, again.

WILLIAMS: 2-0, again. So if you need a quorum, you need three positive votes. It is kind of like voting for the house speaker in Washington, D.C. Sometimes you make it. Sometimes you don't. It takes several votes, or it is like voting for the Pope.

SHAW: I will make a motion to appoint Jorge Valdes.

SPARKS: I will second it.

BARKE: I'm going to stick with my abstention

SHAW: Call for the vote.

SPARKS: Call for the vote.

SHAW, SPARKS: Aye.

WILLIAMS: Abstain.

SPARKS: I didn't hear you.

WILLIAMS: Abstain.

SPARKS: Okay.

BARKE: And I abstained.

SPARKS: Okay, so 2-0 again.

WILLIAMS: So the consequences of not finding someone is, I believe the estimated cost from the last time we met was like \$1.2 million. Help me out if—

BOYD: I don't think it was that high, but I think there is a question of whether or not this would become part of the—it could go into the General Election in November, so the costs would be substantially less, but I haven't verified that. I don't know if either counsel?

WILLIAMS: I think it goes within 60 days.

SHAW: When did Beckie resign again? What was the date?

BARKE: July 1.

BOYD: July 1.

SHAW: Okay. And it is 60 days.

BOYD: 60 days.

SHAW: We have 60 days. It is really—

BOYD: It is July 2nd.

SHAW: We are already a month and a half into her resignation, so we don't have a lot of time. It is kind of now or never I would say if we are making an appointment; otherwise, we are going to have a vacancy for an even longer period of time and the cost of that election. I would urge my colleagues to find a way to come to a consensus here.

SPARKS: As would I.

SHAW: I meant it when I said it. I think we do have several good options here. We just got to come up with one of them. Can I try again? I will nominate Jorge Valdes.

SPARKS: I will second it.

SHAW: Okay. Call the question.

SPARKS: Call the question.

SHAW, SPARKS: Aye.

WILLIAMS: Abstain.

BARKE: I am going to abstain.

WILLIAMS: I will make a motion to, again, appoint Ceci Iglesias.

SHAW: I will second

WILLIAMS: Call the question.

SPARKS: I call the question.

SHAW, WILLIAMS: Aye.

SPARKS: Abstain.

BARKE: Abstain

WILLIAMS: This is what happened with Jack 14 years ago.

SHAW: I have voted for Jorge and Ceci, what five times now, each. I don't know what else I can do. I will nominate Jorge Valdes.

SPARKS: I will second it.

SHAW: Okay. Call the question.

SPARKS: Call the question.

SHAW, SPARKS, BARKE: Aye.

WILLIAMS: Abstain.

SPARKS: Passes 3-0.

WILLIAMS: It is 3-0-1.

SPARKS: 3-0-1.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Valdes is elected.

SHAW: Congratulations.

SPARKS: Congratulations. You all are all amazing candidates. This is really, really tough, really tough.

BOYD: Who is going to do the swearing in?

SPARKS: Well, I have the Oath of Office here. I would be happy to swear you in unless you have someone in mind. Okay.

BOYD: Maybe if you both stand there? We can pick it up on the microphone.

SPARKS: Right here?

BOYD: Mm-hmm. You can switch it back and forth between you.

SPARKS: All right. So you hold up that hand, your right hand.

BOYD: You need to talk louder or either have the microphone closer to you.

SPARKS: Okay. You hold up the right hand. We will both speak into the microphone. You say, "I" and then you state your name.

VALDES: I, Jorge Valdes.

SPARKS: Do solemnly swear

VALDES: Do solemnly swear

SPARKS: That I will support and defend the constitution of the United States

VALDES: That I will support and defend the constitution of the United States

SPARKS: And the constitution of the state of California against all enemies

VALDES: And the constitution of the state of California against all enemies

SPARKS: Foreign and domestic

VALDES: Foreign and domestic

SPARKS: That I will bear true faith and allegiance

VALDES: That I will bear true faith and allegiance

SPARKS: To the Constitution of the United States

VALDES: To the Constitution of the United States

SPARKS: And the constitution of the state of California

VALDES: And the constitution of the state of California

SPARKS: That I take this obligation freely that I take this obligation freely

VALDES: That I take this obligation freely that I take this obligation freely

SPARKS: Without any mental reservation

VALDES: Without any mental reservation

SPARKS: Or purpose of evasion

VALDES: Or purpose of evasion

SPARKS: And that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties

VALDES: And that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties

SPARKS: Upon which I'm about to enter

VALDES: Upon which I am about to enter.

SPARKS: Congratulations.

BOYD: If you just stay there for a moment, there is a request to get your photo with your family.

WILLIAMS: Let's get your family up here. Oh yeah, good time for a board picture. Yeah, yeah.

SPARKS: Then we need to come back to the meeting to finish the meeting, right?

WILLIAMS: Yes. Yes.

SPARKS: Okay. So do you guys want to come up for a board picture?

BARKE: Do you want to get your family one first?

SPARKS: Oh yeah.

WILLIAMS: Get the family one.

SPARKS: Okay. Do the family picture and then yeah.

BOYD: A better picture is in front of the dias.

SPARKS: Yeah, come in front the dias. Yeah.

BOYD: And then you have the backdrop of the Orange County Board. The board members, they would like a picture with the board members. We will get it at the next meeting when everybody is prepared for it. Yeah. Take one with them and then one with you; then one with Al. You need to get in the front. Al, she is going to get one with all of you in there. Then she will get one without you in there. Thanks. Yeah. We will we will order a name plate.

BOYD: Next meeting, you will have papers.

SPARKS: Okay. Well, that was exciting. Wow. Thank you all for your patience with that process. That was new to me. Thank you, Dr. Williams for guiding us through that. What amazing candidates we had. That was just a really, really difficult decision. Alright, to finish up the meeting tonight—first of all, what I would like to do is call up our good counsel to give a report out. Mr. Brenner.

BRENNER: Thank you, Madam President and good evening to the members of the Board and Superintendent Mijares. This is the report out for closed sessions 1-4 for today's meeting. The Board held a discussion and had an update from counsel with respect to all of those four closed session items. The Board took no action other than to approve Epstein, Becker and Green invoices. Those are invoice numbers, 1091735, 1091736 and 1091737, and that is the report out for tonight's closed sessions. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you, Mr. Brenner. All right, we will move on to our staff recommendation, particularly information items. Do we have any discussion around communication and information? Mr. Shaw, do you have anything to report on that yet?

SHAW: No.

SPARKS: Okay. We can table that.

SHAW: Sorry.

SPARKS: We have had a lot of excitement. We can table that until next time. No problem. Anybody else have anything related to the communication or information discussion?

WILLIAMS: Are you going to talk about 286?

SPARKS: Oh, sure. I think we posted a press release about the latest kill bill of SB 286, which is really very good news. And essentially that bill was proposing to move the Orange County Board of Education elections from the primary cycle, which was in June like we just had to the November cycle, the General Election cycle. But yet not at the same time, had the Superintendent run at the same time as us. It is a bill that didn't make really any sense whatsoever, and it ended up getting killed. We do have a press release up about that on our website if you would like to kind of read into the details. There will be some coverage

forthcoming, because people are interested in how that played out and all the steps along the way. It was sort of fraught from the very beginning.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Rolen, do you have that available to read it into the record, that press release?

ROLEN: I don't have it, but it is on the website.

BOYD: Do you want to wait till you get to the mic? Thank you.

ROLEN: I don't have it on my person, but it is available on the Board's website. If somebody can bring it up, I would be happy to read it into the record. Mr. Brenner can get it.

WILLIAMS: Is it on the website?

BOYD: Yes.

ROLEN: It is already up.

BOYD: It was posted to the website on Monday.

WILLIAMS: Okay. That is the new one, right? The OCBE.

SPARKS: Yes.

ROLEN: Right.

WILLIAMS: It is not the OCDE?

ROLEN: No.

WILLIAMS: It is the Board?

BOYD: The Orange County Board of Ed.

ROLEN: It is identified as August 15 Press Release.

SHAW: If you would like, I can read it?

SPARKS: Yeah.

SHAW: "On Thursday, August 11th, Senate Bill 286 was held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee's Suspense File, blocking the bill from any successful path forward. The controversial legislation would have stripped Orange County local control over its elections by forcing the Orange County Board of Education to move the election from the June Primary to the November General Election ballot. Besides usurping the local control, SB 286 would have created a new reimbursable state mandate by adding significant workload responsibilities to the

Orange County Registrar. This new state mandate would have resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in State General Fund expenses every election cycle under the mandate.

Quote: ‘This is a victory for Orange County voters, local control, and common sense engineering,’ Board Chair Dr. Lisa Sparks said. “Rather than meddling in local school elections, lawmakers in Sacramento should be focused on solving the many real problems facing our state.’

The tabling of SB 286 is a significant win for the Orange County Board of Education, whose Charter County status allows the Board or County to adopt a resolution to adjust election dates if needed. The Board has long seen SB 286 as an intrusion into local control of Orange County elections and officially opposed the unwanted and unnecessary legislation.”

SPARKS: Thank you, Trustee Shaw. I appreciate that. We could move on to superintendent announcements.

MIJARES: Yes. Thank you, Madam President, members of the board. Congratulations to new Board Member Valdes.

VALDES: Thank you.

MIJARES: It is nice that your family was here tonight. I do want to say that having sat here and listened to the other candidates, it was extremely enlightening. I think it was mentioned by the board. People spoke with a passion, and conviction, and with a calling to do everything possible to keep our parents advised. We have established on our webpage, a special spot for us to put updates in terms of laws or whatever policies that may be forthcoming or have been enacted by the Legislature. We are putting information on there in terms of what parents should know regarding laws that emanate from the Legislature or from Washington, D.C.

All of the candidates that spoke, they were passionate about keeping parents informed. I do appreciate the fact that the Board has also taken that up as a number one mandate. I just wanted to let the Board know, and you know this, that of all of our districts, the 28 of them, 17 of them are in session. So gone are the days when you would start school after Labor Day. We just don't have the luxury for that. One of our districts, sponsors a year-round calendar. That is Irvine Unified, so they really never stop. They just continue going around the clock. I'm pleased to say that the superintendents and board members have done a great job in preparing their schools to open.

We did have a meeting with our superintendents, then a subsequent meeting last Friday with our charters and our privates to update everybody with respect to CDPH, and the Healthcare Agency, and updates on COVID, and other things that surfaced in terms of the preparation of schools. I'm happy to say that I think those meetings were good and accomplished a lot to get people ready. It is a different environment today as it was in the past in terms of the mandates regarding COVID. I think that what we are doing today is giving parents and students much more flexibility than ever before. We are doing it consistent with the law.

I also wanted to let you know in case you haven't heard, all of the schools in California, we now have Universal Meals Program. So there is no more segregating of students in terms of who gets the free and reduced priced lunch or breakfast. They are all able to be fed by the government, so those gears are churning now in terms of making sure that our schools are fed. We have a number of people/agencies out there and many churches who helped us during the pandemic to make sure that there wasn't any shortage in terms of students who needed food.

Also wanted to commend our ACCESS team. Vern Burton who is Assistant Superintendent of ACCESS, as all of you know, we played a significant role along with the OC Sheriff to sponsor the 13th Annual Safe Schools Conference. And we had about 500 people show up for this, people in law enforcement, education, and community-based organizations. Many, many parents were there and it gave us an opportunity to really examine the matter of keeping our schools safe, being able to detect all threats. I'm very pleased that the Sheriff's Department and the other police municipalities have done a tremendous job in terms of making this a number one priority.

Then I just want to call out that there were two awards given. We gave an award—Orange County Department of Education gave an award to Monique Yessian, she is the director of Student Services at Tustin Unified, for rising to the top and doing an exemplary job in keeping Tustin Unified safe and serving as an exemplar for the other districts. She was given an award. And then the Sheriff's Department, this is Sheriff Barnes, he makes the decision here. They gave it to a group of people, the School Mobile Assessment and Resource Team. The Sheriff's Department was obviously involved and did a lot of work in terms of workshops.

I also wanted you to know that the Festival of the Arts of Laguna Beach showcases artwork from OC students. Many of our students across the county, they are demonstrating their artistic abilities through the Festival of the Arts. But one thing very significant, is that we have our special needs students. Marleena Barber who is the director of VSA Orange County, talked about this. These pieces were so seamlessly integrated into the overall junior arts exhibit. This is a true example of inclusion. I like to say that our special needs students have gifts, and it is up to us to help them celebrate those gifts and really help them to understand that they too are made, as all of us, in the image of God. So let's use the gifts that they have. Let's find ways to celebrate them and allow those gifts to bless the general population. If you want to see any of those pieces, you are welcome to do that.

I think since it has been an emotional evening, I think I'm going to stop there unless the Board has any questions that might be rolling around in your mind of anything that we are doing. Let's see, just one more thing. Bank of America Leadership Program recognizes four Orange County students. There is 300 students that Bank of America recognizes across the nation, and these students get scholarships to go on into higher education. Just as a shout out here at this board meeting: Jenny Chavez from Katella High School, Jay Morgan from Huntington Beach High School, Cindy Ding from Portola High School, and Kevin Sohn from Northwood High School. They were chosen to receive these awards.

That is all I'm going to report on today, Madam President, unless the Board has any questions.

SPARKS: Thank you. Does the Board have any questions at the moment? Okay. Thank you so much. Nina Boyd, Deputy Superintendent, any announcements?

BOYD: Yes. Actually, I would like to call Renee up so that she can give you a brief update regarding the 45-day revisions to the budget that is in your red folder. There is a handout that she will draw your attention to.

HENDRICK: Normally we don't have very many changes from when the governor, we do our budget proposal in June and when the governor adopts the budget. This year, it was much more substantial, so I just wanted to give you some ideas of what that looked like. Due to the time of the evening, I'm not going to go through it in detail, because you do have the slides there for you. But if you look on page three and slide number four, it does talk about how—even though there is a lot of new money coming into schools this year, the majority of it is one time, but then some major investments for schools.

If you look on page four, you will see the LCFF investments. One thing just to keep in mind is you talk to school districts, all of us got the 6.56% statutory COLA. Then school districts got an additional 6.28% added to their base funding. County offices did not get that, so I just want to make you understand the differences. Then earlier when we did our last presentation, we talked about there was \$8 billion for a Block Grant that was actually negotiated out. We were saying that could be \$1,500 a student, that was negotiated out of the budget. What you will have now is a Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant, so it kind of tells you what that is for. We anticipate getting \$1.6 million for that. It is in a little orange box for you on page five.

SPARKS: What do you mean negotiated out of the budget?

HENDRICK: The Legislature and the Governor go back and forth, right.

SPARKS: Oh, okay. Okay.

HENDRICK: They each have their own priorities.

SPARKS: Okay. Okay. Four our county, or is that state?

HENDRICK: No, that was state.

MIJARES: State.

SPARKS: Yeah. Okay.

HENDRICK: That is why it is always hard to tell.

SPARKS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: We don't include it in our budgets until we know.

SPARKS: Got it.

HENDRICK: This now has been adopted, so it is \$1.6 million that we will be receiving. It looks like it is one-time only for those funds. For the state, that was \$7.9 billion though.

Then, the next one is an Arts and Music and Instructional Materials Block Grant. We are projected to get \$540,000 for that. You will see that in the upcoming budget, but it tells you the guidelines. Special Education had some changes in that we haven't really been able to quantify what those are except for an increase in funding. On page seven, it has expanded learning opportunities. This was one of the large investments from the governor. We actually don't receive these funds, so I just want you to be aware of that. These go for K-8 programs and county offices are not included in that. It talks about a large investment in transitional kindergarten, which we don't have.

Home to school transportation does have a new—you are supposed to be getting additional dollars for that. You will be seeing a plan from us to show what we would do with that. That is all the information I know about that at this point. We will give you more information as we find out. We are grossly underfunded in that program. The districts pay for that, so we are hoping that helps with that.

Big news for us though is on page 9-17, the new programs that we do know we have. I think last time I had mentioned about the Career Pathways, \$18 million, so we did receive those funds. That is for five years. That averages about \$4.5 million a year. That is a program we had. They changed it to the Stronger Workforce, back to the Career Pathways and Stronger Workforce. We did receive some help with the National School Lunch Program. Dr. Mijares mentioned it is now Universal Meals. We feed every student. We kind of were doing that anyway so that is not new for us, but we were having a lot of supply chain issues and cost inflation.

We are getting an additional \$20,000 for that. There is funding for the pilot program for our Community School Partnership Program so that our ACCESS program can implement MTSS across all of its school sites. We had talked about a change for the county office funding model, so we did receive that. I saw the preliminary dollars for the first time today, so it does look like that is going to be about \$11 million for us ongoing.

SPARKS: For the county only?

HENDRICK: For our office.

SPARKS: Okay.

HENDRICK: We were the big winner in the state in that funding model.

SPARKS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: A lot of that is because the number of students we serve is much larger than other county offices. It goes based on the number of students in the county and also the number of

districts we serve so that is for our county operations. A lot of that goes back to the Local Control Accountability Plan and the LCFF requirements that are on our office to oversee. Then on the last slide, we anticipate getting \$2.8 million for the Classified School Employees Teachers Credentialing Program. We have had that in past years. That is getting refunded. This would help our classified employees who want to become a teacher to give them their tuition pay. We are very excited about that. I had mentioned before, the statewide model curriculum, we had originally been told we would be receiving \$900,000. We are now getting \$1.2 million for that, and that is for specific subgroups that Orange County has a high population in. If I'm going to remember them correctly—? I'm looking at Dr. Mijares. It is Hmong. Christine knows.

MIJARES: Laotian.

HENDRICK: Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. It is \$300,000 for each of those. Then I just mentioned that the two other programs we talked about in the previous we are not getting, and that is it.

SPARKS: Okay. Question.

HENDRICK: Yes.

SPARKS: For the classified school employee teacher credentials, would an example of that be like a staff person who wants to train to become a teacher?

HENDRICK: Yes.

SPARKS: They are in the school environment?

HENDRICK: Yes.

SPARKS: They want to move up?

HENDRICK: Right. So we really are targeting our para educators who are already working in the school program.

SPARKS: I see.

HENDRICK: But it could be any classified employee.

SPARKS: Okay.

HENDRICK: So the 2.8 is a consortium, it is not just our office.

SPARKS: Do they just express interest in that and apply, or how does that work?

HENDRICK: They have to actually be applying to a qualified university.

SPARKS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: In order to receive those funds.

SPARKS: Okay.

HENDRICK: And they have to pass?

SPARKS: Right. All that stuff.

HENDRICK: All those requirements. Yeah.

SPARKS: Okay, cool. Okay. Any questions from any board members regarding that?

BOYD: I should have mentioned, for the public, we did place those brochures on the back table.

SPARKS: Oh.

BOYD: So that the public would have access to the same information that you have related to the revisions that Renee just spoke about.

BARKE: I think our public is super smart because I see most of them holding them.

SPARKS: They are. Thank you so much for that detailed additional report. I appreciate that.

BOYD: And then I just remind the Board that the next board meeting is Wednesday, September 7th and submission deadline is next week, August 24th. Since the board meeting moved, this is a shorter timeframe. We will include the carryover items. But if the board members have any items that they would like to have included on the agenda, we would need those by next Wednesday. Also, we will set up a meeting with you Trustee Valdes, welcome, so that staff can give you some information related to the budget, to the board policies and protocols, and so forth. We will get you educated so that you are up to speed. We will get that scheduled with a time that works with you.

VALDES: Great. Great. Thank you.

BOYD: Okay. So don't feel like you will come into the next meeting and be at loss. We will try to get that scheduled if your calendar permits prior to the next meeting.

VALDES: Great. Thank you.

BOYD: Okay.

SPARKS: And does that include some Brown Act training and things like that as well?

BOYD: We will go through an overview of knowledge, but we don't do provide a Brown Act training.

SPARKS: Okay.

BOYD: In talking with counsel, we have been talking about some things that I know that Greg is working on. I will dialogue to see if that is something that will be this year or where you all are.

SPARKS: Okay.

BOYD: But there is ethics training that is required.

SPARKS: Yeah.

BOYD: I would be giving him the information.

SPARKS: Right.

BOYD: Related to how he fulfills that requirement, and the timeline, and so forth.

SPARKS: Okay. I just remember when I did my little training, you had at least some information on—

BOYD: Yes. I had a little brochure, I mean a pamphlet and so forth.

BARKE: A handout, yeah.

SPARKS: Right. Okay.

BOYD: So we will put all the packet of information together, and we will sit down and spend as much time as he needs to go through. Then we are always available to answer—I'm your liaison, and so questions that you have so that there is not a violation of Brown Act with fellow board members and so forth. Then Darou supports with the correspondence as well as getting the agenda and so forth together.

SPARKS: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. Anything else?

BOYD: Nope. I think we covered everything that we have.

SPARKS: Okay. Any other updates from any of our board members?

BARKE: I will just mention that a few weeks ago, I stopped by Vista. It was their first day that staff was back. I was able to see all of their upgrades and renovations, and it is very exciting what they are doing there and they are continuing to expand. I was out there and it was very, very exciting to see what is going on out there.

SPARKS: And very hot.

BARKE: Yeah, it was hot. It was hot as well. But they have got—I mean, you know, their gaming room—there is so many things that are going on there that are really, really exciting about students.

SPARKS: Okay. Trustee Shaw, anything?

SHAW: Just wanted to say welcome to Trustee Valdes. Great job.

VALDES: Thank you all.

SPARKS: Thank you. Trustee Williams, any final words for tonight?

WILLIAMS: Great job.

SPARKS: Well, thank you.

WILLIAMS: You did a good job.

SPARKS: We may have made a record. I'm not sure. It is still 8:15, but 4 hours and 15 minutes is not too bad for everything we had on the agenda. Hopefully it was a decent pace. I was so impressed with the candidates and it was a really, really tough decision. But I certainly welcome you, Mr. Valdes to the Board. We are very excited that we didn't have to go to a special election, so thank you all board members for walking through that together. I look forward to adjourning the meeting tonight and seeing you all in a couple weeks. Meeting adjourned.