

Transcript of the March 6, 2024, Orange County Board of Education Meeting

SHAW: We ready?

SPARKS: Yah.

SHAW: Hello and welcome. I would like to call the regular meeting of the Orange County Board of Education to order. Darou, can you call roll?

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Present.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Here.

SHAW: Thank you. We have the agenda for the regular meeting of March 6, 2024. Do I hear a motion?

WILLIAMS: So moved.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: All in favor?

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

SHAW: Any opposed? It passes unanimously. Approval of the minutes from February 7, 2024?

BARKE: So moved.

SPARKS: Second.

SHAW: All in favor?

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

SHAW: Any opposed? Okay, public comments. Renee, are there any comments regarding closed session items?

HENDRICK: Not at this time.

SHAW: Thank you. At this time, the Board will go into closed session. I will read this out, consultation with Deputy Superintendent of Operations regarding security of public buildings, per Government Code section 54957 (a). Then, we will also have an interdistrict appeal hearing, Capistrano Unified District v. Saddleback Valley Unified School District and closed sessions one through three with counsel for litigation purposes.

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

SHAW: Good evening, everybody. It is great to see so many of you here, welcome. We will reconvene and come out into an open session. Forgive us for being a few minutes late. We had a closed session running a little long, but it is great to have you. We are going to begin as always with our invocation, Pastor Craig Hill. Are you here? Please.

CRAIG: Let us bow together. Our great God, we come this afternoon in a room where authority is duly exercised, where decisions are rightly made for our county's educational system. For this reason, we think it is appropriate and right that we begin in a posture of humility, recognizing the many things we have to be thankful for in our lives and in this community are the result ultimately of your graciousness to us. We pray for board members Valdes, Barke, Williams, Shaw, and Sparks, Superintendent Mijares, that they would love what is true, what is beautiful, and what is good, that their decisions would promote student thriving in our schools. Grant them the wisdom necessary to make the decisions they must.

We also come and pray for our students as they navigate the many challenges of learning and growing up in our digital and distracted age. We have many things on our minds as we come into this chamber. We are reminded of our political divides that exist in our communities. We come to ask that you would open our eyes to the humanity of our rivals, and build in us a compassion for each other that transcends politics. Finally, we ask you our great God that we might honor you in this chamber today as we pause and recognize the overwhelming value of each student, each parent, each teacher, each administrator in the county of Orange, and that comments from tonight's contributors and board members would honor the inherent human dignity of every person here today, regardless of their position on any matter. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

SHAW: Amen. Thank you, Pastor Hill, I should have mentioned, of the Taft Avenue Community Church. Beautiful invocation. We will now be led—I believe we have a student, Veida Hurtado. Veida. Hold the mic down there.

VEIDA: Yeah. Place your right hand over your heart and face the flag. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WILLIAMS: Good job.

BARKE: Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you. You did great. Okay, wonderful. Okay, Renee, do we have any introductions?

HENDRICK: We have none this evening.

SHAW: Okay, so we move on to presentations. Trustee Valdes, I know you asked for items number two and three.

VALDES: Thank you, Mr. President Shaw. A little background on this, I was at the Santa Ana Mayor's Prayer Breakfast a few months ago. I had the distinct pleasure and honor to be seated at the same table with Chief James Henry, the Santa Ana fire chief. We got to talking over breakfast. I felt that it would be good and interesting to have him and his assistant come down and do a presentation for us on fire safety, specifically, fire safety in schools. I think that is a subject that we don't think about, but there is a lot there. I have asked the chief to come down. That is how this agenda item got to the agenda.

With that, I would like to introduce our Santa Ana Fire Chief, Chief James Henry, who began his career in the fire service in 1984 as a reserve firefighter with the Santa Ana Fire Department. Over the years, he has held various positions including firefighter, paramedic, apparatus operator, captain, training officer, public information officer, hazardous material specialist, incident command system and technical rescue instructor, and a member of the Urban Search and Rescue Team CA-TF5. In 2006, he was promoted to serve as battalion chief. As of 2019, he holds the position of division chief, serving as the area fire chief for Santa Ana. Our mission, he says, is to proudly serve the changing needs of our communities by providing exceptional emergency and support services. We pledge a commitment to preserving the quality of life of the communities we serve. Our motto is "In service of others."

His assistant, Fire Marshal Juan Huerta is also here. Juan was born and raised in Santa Ana. Juan attended Santa Ana College where he graduated with an associate degree in liberal arts. Upon graduation from Santa Ana College, he transferred to Cal State Fullerton where he graduated with a bachelor of science degree in kinesiology. Juan began working for the office of the Orange County District Attorney in 2006. In 2016, he decided on a career change and joined the Orange County Fire Authority. During this time with OCFA, he promoted through the ranks and now is in his current role as assistant fire marshal in the city of Santa Ana. Juan welcomes all opportunities to interact with the public. I would ask everyone to give a hand of applause to our Santa Ana fire chief and his assistant marshal.

JAMES: Good evening. Thank you for having us. I wanted to thank everybody for this opportunity and let you know that the Orange County Fire Authority serves 23 cities within the county, as well as all the unincorporated jurisdictions, as well as I'm sure you are familiar with. If you guys have questions about any of our services, orangecountyfireauthority.org. ocfa.org has a tremendous amount of information for educators, as well as students, about fire safety and all kinds of safety, right; bicycle helmets, ebikes that are out there now, drowning prevention, and all of that, as well as home safety tips and home hardening, depending on where you work and where you live, how to stay safe at work and all of that, and what to do for earthquakes and a myriad of other issues. Really, people think of the fire service as just fire, but we do everything. We are all at risk, so thank you for that.

Lastly, I would like to also welcome my assistant fire marshal, right hand person. He handles any technical questions. Really, the goal of this mission today is to kind of give an idea of what we look for when we build a school, as well as what we want the schools to do on an annual basis, making sure they do fire drills, and duck and cover, and secure our students and keep them well. Okay, so let us see. I'm just going to hit this button next. Right? As I said earlier, our mission right is really to serve the community in all capacities. Our value statement is, "In the service of others."

We conduct annual fire inspections of our schools on a yearly basis. This is mandated by the California Health and Safety Code. As you know, that is everything from private schools, charter schools, public schools, from entry level, all the way to high school. The things that we look for are really about three different things. Accessibility, can we get our resources there should there be an emergency? We always need to make sure that our access is available to us, making sure that we have got gates that have locks on it so that we can get there. Emergencies just don't always happen during the business hours. The other thing that we look for is water. Making sure the fire protection systems are working, sprinklers, alarm systems, all of those kinds of devices that give the students an opportunity to evacuate the school but also give early warnings so that we can get there as quickly as possible.

Exiting, a lot of times, right, we see that schools are struggling with maintaining exit access. Now we know that we live in a world where at times it can be violent. We understand that there is times when school doors have to be locked in an effort. But what we are really asking for is making sure that the students can leave the classroom, leave the building from the inside, making sure you have the appropriate exit hardware, panic hardware, and all of that, as well as maintaining school security. We ask that you do at least one or two fire drills a year so that you can practice. The one thing that we know is that people tend to leave the same way they come into a building. If we had an emergency today, I would guarantee you the majority of people would go out that way, even though the quickest way out of that building is right behind you. By practicing exit drills and practicing student exercises like that, it gives us the other thing.

The other thing that we really want the teachers and the administrative staff to do is when we get on scene at a school, the first thing that one of our company officers, one of our chief officers is going to say is, "Is everybody accounted for?" If there is any hesitation that there isn't, that means now we are going to commit resources to locate those individuals. Whereas, if we can get on scene and we are assured that we believe everybody is accounted for, then we can then focus

all of our resources to managing the problem, as opposed to having to search. Making sure your exit ways are not blocked, making sure that your doors have all the systems that work, make sure your exit ways are lighted, are all part of that process to make sure that your people can exit in times of peril.

Sprinkler systems, most sprinkler systems have a five-year life when you have to test the systems. On top of that, systems should be evaluated every year. That includes your fire hood systems in your cafeterias, your fire extinguishers, your alarm systems, and all of that. Most schools have two types of alarm systems. You will have local monitoring where there will be a bell or an alarm that will go off, and then remote monitoring that will occur outside of that. Making sure that, one, you have the information; two, you know how to get to the alarm system because a lot of times we will get an alarm for smoke in a building. Well, a lot of your facilities are very large. If you have somebody that can take us to the alarm room, it helps us identify where we need to focus our efforts when we get there.

That pretty much covers it. Short and sweet, to the point. Right? I will take any questions if you have any from the Board here.

SHAW: Thank you, Chief. Any questions?

SPARKS: Thank you.

JAMES: Did I miss anything, sir?

JUAN: No, I just want to add one thing.

JAMES: Thank you. See, that is why I brought him. See, you always got to have the right people with you. Right?

SPARKS: Your wing man.

JAMES: That is exactly it.

JUAN: One of the things that we really try to push, whether it is our operational folks doing the inspections, or what we call professional folks, our fire inspectors that do these inspections is typically we try to provide some education. There is a lot of times where we say, this is a letter of the code, this is a letter of the law. But then we also want to say this is the intent of that code. We try to work a lot with our school districts, with our schools, whether it is a facilities person or a custodian. A lot of times these schools have specific issues that are unique to that specific school, whether it is missing fire extinguishers, whether it is manual pull stations that are getting activated. We try to work with schools as far as still meeting the intent of the code, but working with them as far as, how can we prevent these things from happening. I just wanted to add that piece.

SHAW: Wonderful.

SPARKS: Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you, gentlemen. Okay.

VALDES: Thank you so much for coming down, Chief.

SHAW: Item number three, recognition of Laurie Tristan. Did I say that right? Sorry, Tristan, all right, the California School Counselor of the Year by the American School Counselor Association. Trustee Valdes also asked for this item.

VALDES: President Shaw, this one came to me in an email. I think many people think we don't read the emails that we get. I read all of them.

SHAW: Good and bad.

VALDES: I thought it was appropriate to, in light of the recent award that Laurie received, it was appropriate to bring her down and do a recognition of her down here at one of our meetings. I asked her to come down. Let me read a little introduction of her. Laurie Tristan is a passionate advocate for students and dedicated proponent of the school counseling profession with over 26 years of service as a middle school counselor in her hometown of Santa Ana, California. Laurie demonstrates a deep understanding of her community's needs, supporting students to overcome obstacles and fulfill their aspirations. Throughout her career, Laurie has exhibited steadfast commitment to student advocacy and the advancement of school counseling, holding leadership roles within the California Association of School Counselors, serving as a board of director in her district Educators Association, and offering mentorship to both students and aspiring counselors.

Laurie has consistently championed the cause of educational excellence. Laurie was named the 2023 California School Counselor of the Year and was recently recognized in Washington, D.C., by the American School Counselor Association. She was also honored as the Orange County Counselor of the Year in 2021 and received the Woman of the Year Award from Congressman Lou Correa in 2019. Laurie earned her bachelor of arts degree from UCLA and her master of science degree from Cal State Fullerton. She continues to reside in her hometown of Santa Ana where she enjoys spending time with her family, husband, and her two sons. I would ask everyone to give a round of applause to Laurie Tristan.

SHAW: I think we are going to do a picture.

LAURIE: All right, I wasn't prepared for speaking. But I would just like to say thank you so much, Trustee Valdes and the OCDE Board for having me this evening. If you went to high school when I did, back in the '80s, I'm going to date myself, and even the '90s, school counselors were more like a guidance role. Over the years we have evolved into school counselors to where we work with all students. We support students' academic, social, emotional, and college and career needs. It is my honor to have my life worth and career be dedicated to students. I have worked with middle school students all my life, as Trustee Valdes

said, and it is in my hometown of Santa Ana. I'm a product of Santa Ana as well. I'm just super excited to be part of this opportunity, and thank you so much.

I do want to thank my family for being here, my parents, my husband, and my brother and his wonderful family as well, and my colleague who is here this evening too. Thank you so much.

SHAW: Great.

VALDES: Laurie, I would like to thank you for all the work you have done with the students of Orange County over the years, deeply appreciated.

SHAW: Wonderful. Okay, we will proceed to public comments. How are we looking, Dr. Sparks?

SPARKS: Well, we are good. We have—

HENDRICK: If we can just remind—

SHAW: Oh, sorry.

SPARKS: Is this good? Yeah. Okay.

HENDRICK: Can we just remind them to use the podium?

SPARKS: Yes. I would remind you all to use the podium back here. This is for our public comments. We have three—I know. Sorry. We have three speakers, a few we are familiar with. I will call you in order. First, we have Windi Eklund.

WINDI: Oh, are you making me go first?

SPARKS: Yep. Followed by, on deck would be Heidi Landgraf. I may as well say the third. Stephen Smith will be third. You are up.

WINDI: Hi. Okay. Hello members of the Orange County Board of Education. I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support in authorizing our charter in enabling Suncoast Preparatory Academy to serve homeschool families in our community. Your foresight and commitment to alternative education models have made it possible for us to thrive. Our family's desire to partner with our public school and credentialed teachers speaks volumes about the trust they place in our institution. This partnership has been instrumental in fostering a relationship-focused school culture where collaboration between families and educators is paramount.

I'm thrilled to share some of our accomplishments made possible through your support. We have significantly increased professional development opportunities for our staff and teachers focusing on skills and empower our parents and non-classroom-based students. Our parent academy has flourished, providing invaluable support and resources to our home educators.

Additionally, our efforts to enhance family engagement have yielded remarkable results with 70% of our families actively participating on our Suncoast social community app and a remarkable 90% response rate on all of our family engagement surveys.

Your continued support has been instrumental in our success, and we are deeply grateful for the opportunity to partner with you in shaping a brighter future for all of our children in Orange County. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Heidi Landgraf is up, and on deck would be Stephen Smith.

HEIDI: Okay. Thank you. I have been with Suncoast for the last three years, and I'm so grateful to witness the incredible transformation of our school. We have in place amazing leadership, team-building opportunities, a parent academy, just like Windi just mentioned, an online group to support networking and build community, countless online classes offered by teachers, a dynamic SPED team, a yearbook club involving our students - grades fifth and higher. I personally offer in-person classes to build entrepreneur skills, a weekly hiking and nature club, as well as teach film and theater.

This year, my students are even taking part in producing a short film of Heidi, not because of my name. All of this would not be possible without the support of our families believing in our school and offering this learning model to meet their unique and individual family's needs. Thank you so much esteemed school board members for your continued support.

SPARKS: Thank you. Stephen, you are up.

STEPHEN: Good evening. How are you? There are no regulations on the amount of money that a single donor can give to a candidate for the Board of Trustees of Orange County. Hard to believe. Contributions to your campaigns and the effects on your decisions, that is my topic for tonight. There are two recent articles on this subject in two online newsletters. I did some research. Here is what I found. I estimate that the total donations for Trustees' Williams, Shaw, and Valdes combined were \$596,000 for their campaigns; 387,000 came from political action committees, 63%. For one of you, PAC money was a whopping 74%.

Your competition raised \$244,000, only 41% as much as you raised. Granted, they also received PAC money. One of the online articles is headlined, "Orange County's Wild West of Campaign Finance: The Board of Education." The article states that while there are no limits to donating to the campaign of a trustee, there are for the Superintendent. It is a mere \$5,500. At \$5,500 to Williams, Valdes, and Shaw, the total is only \$16,500. One Charter School PAC donated a total of \$158,000 to your campaigns. Talk about charter school influence.

At least one of you is aware of this limitation, that there is a no limitation rule. To quote Trustee Barke, "My understanding is that we have no limits." I think that is unusual. The article states that you, the board of trustees, have the power to set limits. My view is that you have to make the unusual usual. To rectify your problems, you could just match the Superintendent's limit of \$5,500. That is a fairly simple one. You could huddle in your closed-door session meetings with Attorney Rolen. His law firm could study the problem. You could spend a lot of money, taxpayer

money, on studying this issue. Here is my favorite, Trustee and College Professor Shaw could ask political science students, political science students in the classes you teach, to study the problem, develop solutions, and perhaps come to a board meeting and offer suggestions of what you should do.

You need to have the courage and the commitment to do the right thing and fix this problem. I trust that you can and will. Thank you for your time.

SPARKS: Thank you.

SHAW: We will proceed to the consent calendar, items four through seven. Would anyone like to pull an item from the consent calendar? If not, I will entertain a motion.

BARKE: So moved.

SPARKS: Okay, I will second it.

SHAW: Moved by Trustee Barke, seconded by Vice President Sparks. All in favor?

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

SHAW: Any opposed? It passes unanimously. We will go to item number eight, charter submissions. Renee, are there any new charter submissions?

HENDRICK: Yes. You have, Tustin International Charter School has submitted a petition. The public hearing for that will be on April 3 and board action on June 5. You have those. I think those binders were delivered to you actually.

BARKE: They were. Yes, in beautiful purple binders.

HENDRICK: Nice.

BARKE: Loved it.

HENDRICK: And you didn't have to carry them, which is even nicer. Right?

SHAW: Wonderful. Item number nine, charter school public hearing, Magnolia Science Academy, Orange County. Aracely Chastain, would you please lead us off?

CHASTAIN: Good evening, President Shaw and Trustees. Today, the Board will hold a hearing to consider public input regarding the Magnolia Science Academy-Orange County, countywide charter petition, which was submitted on January 31. The charter school proposes to operate a classroom-based—sorry. I don't want to move this, a classroom-based program serving students TK through grade 12. The charter petitioner notified four school districts of their intent to open facilities, Irvine Unified, Orange Unified, Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified, and Saddleback Valley Unified. Before public comments, representatives from the charter school are allotted 15 minutes

to address the Board. I now call representatives from Magnolia Science Academy-Orange County to the podium.

SHAW: You guys are popular.

RUBALCAVA: Good evening, Board Chair Shaw, distinguished board members, and entire community here. My name is Alfredo Rubalcava. I'm the proud chief executive officer and superintendent of Magnolia Public Schools. I'm also a founding teacher of our first ever Magnolia, Magnolia Science Academy I, which was opened in 2002. Lastly, I'm the lead petitioner of Magnolia Science Academy-Orange County. Magnolia Public Schools anchor values and pillars are excellence, innovation, and connection. These pillars have driven us over 20-plus years to success. I ask all of you in support of Magnolia Science Academy-Orange County to please stand up. Next slide. Thank you.

In 1997, a group of dedicated community members with backgrounds in a STEM education understood how vital it was for them to expose students to a rigorous STEM education, especially students in underinvested communities. This journey started as an afterschool program partnership with many local communities in the San Fernando Valley, and eventually, with the support of parents and community, turned into the opening of Magnolia Science Academy I in Reseda. When you read our mission and vision, visit our schools, and speak with our educational partners, what stands out are three critical components, number one, high-quality comprehensive college preparatory STEAM education. Number two, serving the whole child and community through our community school model. And, number three, early college high school program that ensures that all students are ready for college/career and beyond, and that our students have a firm understanding how they can contribute to the world as global citizens. I have witnessed our success over 20-plus years. Graduating 12 students in 2006, to just recently our 2,000th student. Next slide.

The Magnolia way represents a dynamic approach to education, high-quality STEAM education, number one; two, early college education programs; and number three, integration as a community school model. Our curricular instructional design is focused on hands-on learning, integrated, engaged and experiential learning. In other words, student-centered learning that has our students being active learners in the classroom. It also encompasses enriched learning with expanded learning opportunities, advanced learning opportunities, including before and after school programs, STEAM contests, competitions, excursions, lastly, Saturday, summer, winter, and spring sessions or academies. This fosters a comprehensive educational experience.

Early college education features dual enrollment and college access pathways, preparing students for higher education from an early stage. We support students to and through college. College attainment is our North Star. Partnerships with the LA Community College District, Rancho Santiago Community College District, and future partnerships with all the remaining college districts, CSUs and UCs and Orange Counties, partnerships with STEAM organizations that give our students real-life opportunities and experiences.

As a community school through the Community Schools Implementation Grant, we ensure a holistic educational environment that supports not only academic experience, academic

excellence, but also the wellbeing and diverse needs of our students and their families. At Magnolia Public Schools, diverse learners are at the core of what we do. We are committed to creating an educational space where every student, especially those from underserved communities, feel seen and supported. Our dedication extends to providing specialized support for our students with diverse needs including our English language learners and students with disabilities. By adapting our teaching methods and resources to meet the various needs, we ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed and thrive in our community and beyond.

Now, I focus my attention on some of our data that we are super proud of, our A-G completion and graduation rates. Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana Pirates, currently our only school located in Orange County, achieved a 2023 graduation rate of 100% and a 100% A-G completion rate, 14 percentage points higher than the state average of 86. Magnolia Public Schools was nine percentage points higher. MSA Santa Ana nearly doubled the A-G rate across California at 52% and was 48 percentage points higher than the state. We have also broken it down by our subgroup data, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, Hispanic/Latino students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. We are extremely proud of our data, especially with this group of students.

Further evidence that supports MPS's mission and vision is being fulfilled. Last Thursday, we were informed that two of our schools were recognized as 2024 California Distinguished Schools, Magnolia Science Academy San Diego Wizards and Magnolia Science Academy II Valley Mustangs. Across Magnolia, 95% of seniors were accepted to a four-year or two-year college. Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana, no. 7 ranking in Orange County by *U.S. News & World Report*. Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana, overall ranking in California by *U.S. News & World Report*. Across Magnolia, 96.5 UCCSU readiness. Across Magnolia, 95% graduation rate. According to the 2023 Dashboard, 67% of our students are college and career ready. And, based on the 2019, there is a typo, 2020-19, 68% of our students have a very high college going rate.

This one is one of the reasons we opened Magnolia, and we continue to push with a lot of intensity and vigor. STEM degree pursuit, females, class of 2015-2018, nationwide versus MPS females, Magnolia alumni were 54% more likely to graduate from a STEM field than their non-Magnolia peers. The next graph, again, STEM degree pursuit, class of 2015 to 2018, Magnolia alumni were 22 more likely to graduate from a STEM field than their non-Magnolia peers. Here we illustrate a short list of some of the CSUs, UCs, and prestigious STEM universities that our students have attended and completed their education in. During public comment, you will hear from some alumni about their college experience and our education partners regarding their experience at Magnolia Public Schools. Orange County has great schools across multiple districts, but there is still a need for more parent choice. There is still a need for programs at Magnolia that get students ready for college, and get students to complete college, and get students, especially underinvested students, to follow their passion with a degree in STEM or any other program that they would like.

Magnolia Science Academy-Orange County, TK-12, countywide charter is going to meet that need and continue to support the Orange County community. I ask for your support of our

petition. Now, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Dr. Maria Rowell, who will continue the presentation and give a glimpse of what happens in Santa Ana.

MARIA: Thank you. Okay. Hello, distinguished board members and President Shaw. My name is Dr. Maria Rowell, and I'm a founding elementary teacher at Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana when we opened our doors in 2016. I am born and raised in the OC. Growing up in Anaheim, attending local, primary schools and graduating from Loara High School. At Magnolia, they have given me the opportunity to ensure a growth mindset, both professionally and personally. I have been able to obtain not only a master's degree, but a doctorate in education in one fell swoop, all while being a wife and a mother of two school-aged boys.

At Magnolia, we specialize in building and instilling not only an academic, but behavioral and social emotional foundation. As we focus on the seamless transition of students from TK to 12th grade, it becomes imperative to establish a robust vertical alignment. Diversity is at the heart of our community with a total minority enrollment of 94%. We celebrate the rich tapestries of cultures that make us stronger together. Moreover, we recognize that education is the key to breaking down barriers with 81% of our students coming from historically underinvested communities. Next slide.

I stand before you today to emphasize the paramount importance of innovation and fostering strong teacher collaboration within the Magnolia Public Schools and our local professional learning communities. In pursuit of this innovation, we must acknowledge the power that lies in our universal design for learning, differentiated instruction and data-driven personalization with learning targets and expanded learning opportunities. Vital avenues for collaboration is our participation in Relay Schools, MTSS and SEL. The partnership with Relay or in Common Schools offers our administrators cutting edge coaching and mentoring techniques that support our dedicated teachers. Our strong MTSS and SEL partnerships that actually already exist here at OCDE have led to our staff's continuous professional development. Next slide.

Our key elements of high-quality instruction that not only differentiate and enhance the learning, but also foster a dynamic educational environment. We conduct three unique instructional rounds annually with our home office representatives and ensure that classrooms are rich in academic rigor, discourse, and combine an element of blended learning like face-to-face instruction with online tools, which creates a flexible yet personalized learning experience. It is crucial to address the diverse needs of our English learners. Our commitment to providing high-quality instruction extends to the implementation and seamless designated and integrated EL support that we offer. This involves not only recognizing the unique challenges that ELs face, but also proactively integrating strategies that exemplify the SaDI and Chats framework. By incorporating Rialya, graphic organizers, and hands-on activities, we make academic content accessible and meaningful to all our students. In every classroom, students will engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Next slide.

As we stand on the threshold of the future, it is critical to equip ourselves with the skills and knowledge that will propel us forward. Our college STEAM preparation program, specifically, our early college initiative, like our dual enrollment, allows students the ability to enroll starting the summer of their eighth-grade year into college courses and simultaneously complete the A-G

requirements. Imagine students delving into the intricacies of computer science where they learn to code, problem solve, and innovate in a digital landscape that shapes our world. Picture the budding artists exploring the limitless realms in the art courses, honing their skills to communicate ideas both visually and impactfully. That is not all. We are also proud to introduce our career and technical education and STEM pathways. These pathways allow students to explore real-world applications of their interest, whether it is in healthcare, business, or in engineering fields. It is about preparing our students, not just for college, but for the careers of tomorrow. Next Slide.

Our community schools and the impactful partnerships that have transformed our educational landscape is known as our connection. Our collaboration with First 5 California has been nothing short of extraordinary, and we join forces to foster early development from the critical age of zero to five. Furthermore, our commitment to education extends beyond the classroom with valuable partnerships such as PBS SoCal and UPK here at OCDE. These, together, bring diverse resources and expertise to our students, creating an enriched learning environment that goes beyond traditional boundaries. Our dedicated teachers are leading the charge in our strong clubs and tutoring programs before and after school that we offer from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily. Our Saturday school initiative has been a resounding success offering a range of enrichment classes like robotics, math counts—next slide. Sorry. Okay. Okay. About to wind up, yes.

I'm filled with immense pride to share our remarkable achievements that Magnolia Science Academy has ranked not only 49th in the state of California, but no. 7 in OC of our high schools, per *US News*. Next slide. I just want to wrap up. Together as a community, we are shaping the future leaders and innovators of tomorrow. We thank you for your consideration in taking part in this incredible journey. Please allow us in opening an additional TK through 12th grade model here in Orange County under the guidance, esteemed leadership, and direction of not only Orange County Department of Ed, but you esteemed board members. Thank you for your time.

CHASTAIN: The hearing is now open for 15 minutes of public comments. Trustee Sparks, please call for the first speaker.

SPARKS: Okay. Yes. Okay. Here is some ground rules. Because we have so many fabulous speakers, we want all of you to have a chance to speak. The allotted time for everyone is 15 minutes, so we are going to give each of you one minute. We will go a little bit over. If you guys could work with us on that, that would be super helpful. That will give everyone a chance to say a few words. Okay, so I will call the first name and who is on deck, and we will start it up. First, we have Gael Guevara, followed by Sarah Escobar. You will go to this mic back here for public comment. There you go. Perfect.

GAEL: That is good. Hi, my name is Gael. Today, I'm going to be talking about my awesome time at Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana. I'm currently in the robotics and drama clubs. Because of all of these amazing programs, I want to become an engineer. It is a direct result of the awesome teachers and staff here. I think it is an amazing opportunity to have more Magnolias like us in Orange County. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you, Gael. Amazing. Sarah and Anthony Quiterio is on deck.

YAZARI: Can I start? Okay. Good afternoon, my name is Yazari Estrada. I am currently a senior here at Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana, and I'm here to speak on behalf of the entire student body. My journey at Magnolia started when it first opened in 2016. I transferred from a public school to a charter school. Instantly, there was a great difference in the environment. Dr. Rowell is actually my first teacher at Magnolia, and it is amazing to think that she is now the principal. It is incredible how time flies. Watching her grow and evolve as an educator has been a truly beautiful experience. Her dedication, passion, and leadership qualities have always inspired me, and I feel fortunate to have had her as my teacher and now as principal. I have no doubt that under her guidance Magnolia will continue to flourish and reach new heights of excellence.

I went from being just another student to being part of a greater charter community that pushed me to achieve my full potential. From the moment I stepped foot on campus, I knew that this school was special. The teachers went above and beyond to help me reach my full potential, and their dedication to education is truly inspiring. Over 500 hours of community service has given me a sense of purpose and made me realize that I want to pursue a career in education as well. I have gained invaluable experience working with diverse populations and understand the impact that quality educators can have on young minds. The unconditional support—

SPARKS: Oh, your time is up. Actually, it went over. I guess it beeped when—

YAZARI: Oh, I'm sorry.

SPARKS: —when people were clapping. Yes, but thank you. Your passion is amazing.

YAZARI: Okay, thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. So, Anthony is up and Lordes Mejia is on deck.

ANTHONY: Good evening. My name is Anthony Herrera. I'm currently a senior at Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana. I'm happy to talk about all the excellent things this school has to offer. At our school, students are provided with the diverse range of engaging academic programs, supportive teachers, and helpful peers. Overall, I know this school is an exceptional place for students to flourish and prepare for a successful future. There are a lot of supportive teachers and staff that go out of their way to help those who need it. Our school has turned into a big family where we can all count on each other. During my time at Magnolia, I have been exposed to experiences that have now positively influenced my passion and desire to teach and help others.

Although it can be daunting being the first in my family to graduate high school and pursue higher education, I feel an obligation to my mom who has sacrificed everything for me to achieve more than we ever thought. My time spent assisting and supporting as a teacher aid through my high school career has been one that will always motivate me to positively influence the next generation. I see myself in a lot of the young students I help, and it motivates me to continue being an example as I move forward towards my dream of being an educator. In

conclusion, our school is committed to creating a positive, engaging atmosphere where dreams are never too high and our goals are never out of reach.

SPARKS: Thank you. Thank you. Now, were you Lordes, or were you Anthony or Lordes?

ANTHONY: I'm Anthony.

SPARKS: You are Anthony, okay. So, you are Lordes? Then, Veronica is on deck. Sorry, go ahead.

LORDES: [Spoken in Spanish and interpreted into English]. Good evening, my name is Lordes Mejia. I am of three students in Magnolia. They are in kindergarten, and second grade, and in fifth grade. I really like Magnolia because they have grades since TK and into 12th grade. This way, my children can go through all the studies in the same place. More importantly is that they have a lot of programs for students like robotics, drama, sports, and other clubs that they are helping them to learn more. They also have parent programs where all our kids can share with us the things that they have learned. In addition to this, they offer programs for parents. This way we can have a positive connection with our kids. We are demonstrating all our support, motivating them, and making them every day better. This way they can accomplish their goals. I also want to give thanks to all the principals because they always have their doors open when we have any questions or suggestions to benefit the school. Thank you.

SPARKS: Gracias. Gracias. Veronica Escobar is up and Luis Sanchez is on deck.

VERONICA: [Spoken in Spanish and interpreted into English]. Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Veronica Escobar. I have two girls in this school. One is in 12th grade and the other one is in fourth grade. I am very proud to belong to the Magnolia family. I have been in this school since they opened their doors in 2016. I have been very involved in this school. At the moment, I am in charge of all these sports in schools. I have seen firsthand all the development and the positive achievement during all these years. I have also seen the growth. This is one of the reasons why I am requesting the support of all of you, so we can expand the schools. They are great, great help for the community.

Seeing all the improvements of my daughter, Saray, telling me that she wants to be a teacher. I know that she is going to accomplish this with the help that she has had in the school. Because of this school, she applied for nine schools. She has been accepted in six schools, so we are waiting for the rest. Thank you. Thank you so much.

SPARKS: Thank you. Congratulations. Luis Sanchez and Nicole Vasquez is on deck.

LUISA: [Spoken in Spanish and interpreted into English]. Good afternoon. My name is Luisa Sanchez. I have two daughters in the school Magnolia. I am a mom of this school since their inception in Santa Ana. One of the reasons why I chose Magnolia were, first, because they never put a barrier based on my zip code. Second, it is ideal because of the scale for the beginning of school and dismissal time. Also, because this school is TK through 12, it is a community school.

Then, parents are accepted, and they can work as volunteers, and they can also make decisions to improve the school.

My daughter has been accepted to 10 colleges, and I think this is part of the amazing job that the school has done. They prepared her, and they gave her all the tools she needed for her success. She made the decision to go to UC Berkeley. She decided to take two majors. One is going to be in biology and the other one in psychology. As a family, we are super proud because she is the first one to go to a prestigious college. Thank you so much for your support.

SPARKS: Congratulations. Nicole Vasquez and Lubna Abdullah is on deck.

NICOLE: Okay, thank you. My name is Nicole Vasquez, and I am here. I fully support our mission and vision, and I support parent choice. I'm a fourth-generation resident of Orange County, and I have had the pleasure of working for Magnolia for almost 15 years. I have been an educator. I have worked in the home office as an ELD coordinator. I have always been treated with the utmost respect and like a professional, just had a wonderful experience. I want to continue working here. I have been serving in Los Angeles and commuting for close to 15 years, and I would love to come home. I serve my community through my church. I would love to serve my community through my role as an educator.

I was hired as a founding teacher at the school in Bell. This was a challenging time for us. But, what I saw in the city of Bell and what we did at our school was nothing short of miraculous, and absolutely transformative, and one of the most inspiring moments of my life. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Lubna Abdallah, and on deck is Candice Zakka.

LUBNA: First of all, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak today. As a secondary ELA teacher at Magnolia Science Academy, I can honestly say that our school has established itself as a guiding light to excellence in providing a private school-like setting that prioritizes academic achievement, ensures and promotes activities supporting physical, emotional, and mental health awareness, as well as an emphasis on college preparedness and lifelong skills. Students have a sense of belonging, voice, and choice. And most importantly, they know to listen. Especially students that I'm working with currently in student government. They listen. They hear what the students need, they meet together, they collaborate, and they get to work. As always, everyone in the community is included.

The best part about Magnolia is the diversity and the ability of teachers to embrace student-centered instructions by empowering students to use their funds of knowledge and to actively participate in the learning process. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Candice, and on deck is Kevin Littlefield.

CANDICE: Good evening. I stand before you today in support of Magnolia Science Academy's petition to open up more schools in Orange County. I have been an educator at Magnolia in Santa Ana for five years. Over those years, I have witnessed our school become synonymous with educational innovation, excellence, and a steadfast commitment to student success. From

our STEAM-inspired curriculum, to our dedicated educators, we have touched the lives of countless students and families. In addition to the quality education we provide, equity and inclusion is at the forefront of our efforts ensuring that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or ability, feel valued, respected, and supported.

By opening more schools under the banner of Magnolia Science Academy, we have the opportunity to extend the reach of our proven educational model to new communities and populations in need. Our schools will serve as beacons of hope, providing students with the tools, resources, and support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

SPARKS: Thank you. Kevin is up and then on deck is Michael Hahn.

KEVIN: Thank you. I love talking about the school. This is my 24th year teaching English in high school/middle school. This is my eighth year at Magnolia Santa Ana. I love it because we are making an impact on the underserved. Now, when I heard a little while ago, our high school is ranked number seven in Orange County, I wonder how many of the schools in the top 10 are bordered on three sides by mobile home parks like we are. Something wonderful is happening at Magnolia Santa Ana, and I know that each one of you on the Board is here because you love education. Take a good look at our school. Education is happening there. Our test scores are working. Our TK to 12th grade model is working. The PBIS is working. This is the very kind of school alternative that the students of Orange County desperately need. I urge you to allow us to open an expansion school. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Michael is up.

MICHAEL: How am I supposed to follow that?

SPARKS: Followed by Fevzi Oten.

MICHAEL: Esteemed members from the Board, today I would like to highlight Magnolia Science Academy's exceptional commitment to teacher leadership and professional development. Since joining the faculty in 2017, I personally benefited from the programs that cultivate a strong learning environment for both educators and students. Magnolia's tuition reimbursement program proven valuable during my induction period, this financial support ensured I could focus on acquiring my clear credential and honing my teaching skills without the burden of financial constraints.

Furthermore, recognizing leadership potential, school leadership actively encouraged me to pursue my master's in educational leadership at Cal State Fullerton. This financial backing demonstrably streamlined my path towards becoming a more effective leader in the classroom. Beyond financial investment, Magnolia fosters a collaborative spirit. We have access to exceptional mentors and ongoing professional development opportunities. This fosters continuous growth allowing me to learn from experienced colleagues, share best practices, and explore innovative teaching methodologies. This collaborative approach fosters a true team environment which is paramount for success full of student outcomes. By spotlighting my experience, I am—thank you so much.

SPARKS: Thank you. Fevzi Oten is up and Mustafa is on deck.

FEVZI: Who?

SPARKS: Fevzi, are you Fevzi?

FEVZI: Fevzi, okay. Yeah. Good evening. My name is Fevzi Oten. I stand before you as a proud parent, thrilled to share the extraordinary journey of my daughter at Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana. She not only secured an admission to the University of Southern California and University of California Berkeley, but also achieved a remarkable feat of earning three different associate degrees through dual enrollment classes while at MSA Santa Ana. Our family's connection with Magnolia has been transformative not only for our daughter but also my niece and my nephew both whom flourished at MSA Santa Ana, earned acceptance from UC Berkeley. The dedicated faculty and staff at Santa Ana has played a pivotal role in shaping our daughter into a highly accomplished individual. Moreover, the prospective opening of Magnolia Science Academy in Irvine also promotes a significant—reducing travel time for numerous Irvine families. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Thank you. Mustafa is up and on deck is Veida Hurtado.

MUSTAFA: Good evening, distinguished Board and all participants. My name is Mustafa Deliche. I stand before you as a proud parent of two Magnolia Science Academy students. Our family has been part of MSA Santa Ana community for several years. Today, I would like to share our heartfelt experience with you. First, let me express our gratitude for the incredible education and support our daughters received at Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana. As parents to decision to enroll our daughters at MSA Santa Ana was influenced by the school's commitment to academic excellence and its unique focus on STEAM education. Living in the Lake Forest area, we faced a challenge in finding suitable educational options for our children. The limited charter school choices and the existence of long waiting lists at other institutions made our decision to choose MSA Santa Ana even more significant. What would emphasize the importance of MSA Santa Ana in our lives is the fact that we need to drive more than 40 minutes each way to ensure our children receive the quality education that the school provides.

SPARKS: Thank you. Thank you. Your time is up.

MUSTAFA: Our daughters—

SPARKS: Your time is up, sir.

MUSTAFA: Is it?

SPARKS: Thank you so much.

MUSTAFA: Thank you.

SPARKS: Veida Hurtado and Jacy is on deck.

VEIDA: Hello, my name is Veida, and I am in second grade. Magnolia Science Academy Santa Ana is amazing. The math can be hard sometimes, but I always have help to figure it out. My favorite thing is Free Dress Friday where we can wear anything we want. I love Pirate Store where we can earn pirate dollars by doing good deeds. MSA Santa Ana has the best teachers there. My teacher helps me so much. MSA is a great school to learn at. When I grow up, I want to be a principal like Dr. Rowell.

SPARKS: Wow. Jacy, you are up, followed by Ariana Gil.

JACY: My name is Jacy, and I have two children that attend Magnolia Science Academy in Santa Ana. I want to start with the culturally diverse sense of community that MSA organically creates. The staff, educators, students, and parents are what makes this charter a success. There is an open-door policy for parent engagement so that we may be involved, embodying that learning is everywhere all the time. Magnolia SD better the lives of the family as a whole, starting at the TK level. A TK-12 school is beneficial for students to progress with familiar staff, creating trusting relationships and consistency. Also, a one-stop campus is conducive in a society of rising gas prices.

I am pleased with the education my kids are getting. If they struggle, MSA has resources. I attribute the success to these resources, coupled with smaller class sizes, so kids get the individualized attention that they need in the classroom. The afterschool enrichment program onsite has been a blessing with families, low income, no support while we still have to work. All kids are the future.

SPARKS: Thank you. Ariana, you are up. That is my daughter's name actually, followed by Yusuf Akbas.

ARIANA: Hello everyone. I hope everyone is having an amazing day. My name is Ariana Mia Gil, and I'm currently a junior attending Magnolia Science Academy. While being at Magnolia Science Academy throughout these years, I have seen an immense change in my education that has allowed me to grow and have many opportunities, coming from faculty coaches and administrators. There are many programs and clubs that allow all students to join MSASA, such as Learning New Languages, Helping Others in Need, and participating in activities. The sports I have joined here at MSA have been soccer, volleyball, and track.

My sophomore year I had the opportunity of receiving an award from Orange County Athletic Directors Association. Being the student athlete from all of Orange County, these opportunities have allowed me to become a leader and support others around me in order to motivate others. The dedication and risk I take day-to-day have formed me into truly reaching my goals that I want for myself with the help from Magnolia Science Academy. With the expansion of Magnolia Science Academy in Orange County, more students will benefit from these great resources. Thank you so much for your time and have a great rest of your day.

SPARKS: Thank you, Ariana. Yusuf is up followed by Mekan.

YUSUF: Good evening, board members. My name is Yusuf Akbas. I graduated from MSA in 2021 at the peak of Covid. I'm currently a junior at UC Berkeley studying molecular and cell biology. What makes Magnolia special is the special connection between the staff, the teachers with the students. At Magnolia, you are not just another student, your individuality is valued. It is because of this connection why my parents drove me, my brother, and my friends, 20 to 30 minutes every day for seven years from our home in Irvine to Santa Ana. I believe that this connection, this communication between the teachers and the students encourages the students to excel academically, personally, socially, and just become the best versions of themselves, to become leaders of the future. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Congratulations. Our cleanup is Mekan.

MEKAN: Yes, good evening board members, public, and MPS community. My name is Mekan Muhammad. I have a privilege. I am privileged to be here as board president for Magnolia Public Schools. I go back 20 years with Magnolia. We navigated as an organization through the landscape of education. We immensely progressed through Magnolia, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this growth. I was prepared for three minutes though. This is one, so you have to excuse me. But I want to emphasize one thing. If it has to be one thing, then that is our commitment to delivering high-quality STEAM education.

That is what community needs, and that is what our graduates have proven, that they can give back to this community. That is where we stand out. Our staff visits our students in their homes, so they know where they live and in what conditions. Just to leave you with two things with Magnolia, is that we give back to the community, and we know our community. That is what we are here for. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you so much. Thank you all for adapting to our time situation. You guys did great. All right, back to you President.

SHAW: Sort of, back to Aracely.

CHASTAIN: The public hearing is now concluded. The Orange County Board of Education staff recommendations, including recommended findings, will be published by April 16. At the May 1 meeting, the Board will conduct a public hearing and take action to grant or deny the countywide charter petition. President Shaw, I now close the public hearing and return the meeting back you.

SHAW: Terrific. Thank you. I think last time I started to my right. Maybe I will go to my left this time. Trustee Barke, do you have any questions?

BARKE: At this time, I really don't have any. I loved the presentation. I love the enthusiasm. I love the parents, the children, the teachers. You are obviously a well-connected community and it shows. I'm thrilled that you are here tonight and that you are asking to expand throughout Orange County, because we need more choice and more people like you delivering that to our students here in Orange County. Thank you.

SHAW: Okay, Dr. Williams?

WILLIAMS: Likewise, I'm very impressed with the diversity, the intention of educating these young children. I appreciate the young voices that got up to share a little bit about their experience. To you two, the leaders of the school, and to the faculty, thank you for coming and sharing your enthusiasm. It just makes it easier for me to give my check by the next time we meet here. You guys look good so far.

SHAW: Dr. Sparks?

SPARKS: Wow. I loved hearing about all the progress since 2016. You guys make our job just so enjoyable. Not every minute of every day of what we do is enjoyable. Gosh, you guys really give us a reason to be here, and I'm just so impressed with how far you have come, the stories you shared, the young people, the progress of the people who are already in college. The commitment of all you all to come out on a Wednesday evening, skipping dinner. Anyway, congratulations on your progress. We are so impressed, and thank you for all you do for our community. We are truly, truly grateful.

SHAW: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Dr. Rowell, I have a question for you and maybe the teacher who spoke earlier, Michael Hahn. Would you take the podium? I'm obviously up here looking out for parents and kids throughout Orange County. I am always particularly concerned about Santa Ana because that is the district that I represent. I'm particularly interested in knowing how Magnolia currently serves the underserved population of Santa Ana. I have been invited into homes where there are multiple families living in a home. Do you have any statistics on that? Do you have any numbers that you can share?

ROWELL: As far as numbers, well, I can paint a picture for you. How we serve our community is by offering classes as early as 6 o'clock, to as late as 6:00 PM. We offer, completely free of charge, a robust afterschool program that provides robotics, math tutoring, and supports. It provides—gosh, our clubs, our tutoring. If it is something that we don't even offer and it is of an interest of a child, we make sure that it happens. Mr. Hahn, did you want to add anything to that?

HAHN: I didn't hear the question, sorry. I was using restroom.

VALDES: Maybe I got the name wrong. But it was a teacher, and he was wearing a suit jacket.

ROWELL: Oh, Mr. Littlefield. Mr. Littlefield. Yes, yes, Mr. Littlefield. Yes.

VALDES: Sir, you mentioned how the school serves the underserved.

LITTLEFIELD: Right.

VALDES: That is what I want to hear.

ROWELL: Okay, yes.

LITTLEFIELD: We are located at Fairview and First Street. Okay. I think you know the area. I think you know the other school options that are in that area. One in particular, middle school, is notorious. We are offering an option that is something different for them. We do home visits. I have been in the same homes you have been and so has our faculty. We make home visits in that community. Is there any other thing that is specific that you have? I don't have the stats on the home visits.

ROWELL: Yeah.

VALDES: You know, maybe for next month.

ROWELL: Yes.

VALDES: I caught you off guard on this question, but I would like to know.

ROWELL: Okay.

VALDES: That is always a primary concern for me, how we are serving the underserved in Santa Ana.

LITTLEFIELD: Yup. Bro, I'm 68 years old. I have no intention of retiring, because I'm in a job for these last eight years that is really making a difference with the underserved. I will tell you, I only had one minute, but if I had another I would have told you that midway through my career in teaching, I made a decision that I wanted to work with underserved communities. I was in Watts for three years at the worst performing middle school in the LA Unified School District, number 251 out of 251 schools. What we are doing at Magnolia, we could not do at that school. It is happening. I have no intention of retiring. I love coming to work every day, because I'm making a difference in students' lives. I will give you more details maybe some other time.

ROWELL: Yeah, and just to add, we are TK-12, 505 students currently right now. Of that population we have 60 to 80 of our students that are currently living in our surrounding neighborhood that are either doubled up, tripled up. We support them not only with free breakfast and lunch every day, and it is the most nutritious meals that is provided locally. We offer meals that are not only like gluten-free or vegetarian, but they cater to the needs of our population, whether it is halal, or kosher, or what have you. We truly care about everyone's academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs.

VALDES: That is fantastic. Maybe next month when you come down here—

ROWELL: Yes.

VALDES: I know I caught you off guard. Maybe next month you can come down with some of those statistics—

ROWELL: Absolutely I will.

VALDES: —that you have.

LITTLEFIELD: If I come, I'm bringing a sandwich. Thank you, Mr. Valdes.

ROWELL: Thank you.

SHAW: I guess my comments would just be, yes, the enthusiasm you guys brought was very evident. I loved hearing the speakers. The data that you provided is really impressive on the graduation rates and the rankings for your school. Congratulations on that. I did want to ask one quick question if I could. I see on page three, I'm not sure if that is slide five, but it talked about special education services you have. Is it 18% of the students? Does that mean they are on an IEP, 18%? You better go up there.

HENDRICK: Since we are taping, we need you to be at the microphone please. Thank you.

ROWELL: Yes. About 18% of our students have either an IEP or a 504 plan. But our model is completely full inclusion. Regardless of whether it is an IEP, 504, or they are even GATE identified, we differentiate our instruction to meet the needs of every single child.

HAHN: Across Magnolia it is close to 16%. As Maria mentioned, it is our focus on serving the whole child, not only the academic needs, the social emotional needs, behavior needs. Taking all those things through a community lens and really supporting the families. That is why on that slide you did see our students with disabilities, their graduation rate, and A-G rate. We truly want to push all of our students to be successful.

SHAW: Well, I think that is wonderful. Thank you. I did want to make one other comment. I saw a lot of parents recording the comments, which is great and fine. If you go onto the ocde.us website, you will find the link. This meeting is being recorded and will be on YouTube. You might be able to pull up a video of yourself that way as well.

HAHN: Thank you for that.

SPARKS: Thank you.

ROWELL: Thank you.

SHAW: All right, very good. Well, we will look forward to seeing you next time, guys. Okay, I imagine you guys are going to want to leave. Why don't we take a five to 10-minute break and we will let everyone leave?

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

SHAW: Okay. Can we invite everyone to grab their seat again, and we will jump into item number 10 now, charter school public hearing, Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts III. The bar has been set pretty high for enthusiasm, so you guys—all right.

CHASTAIN: The Board will now hold a public hearing to grant or deny the Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts III, countywide charter petition submitted on December 18, 2023. OCASA III proposes to operate a classroom-based TK through high school program for an initial charter term from 2024 through 2029 with a planning year. The charter school has notified four districts of their intent to open school facilities, Irvine Unified, Orange Unified, Saddleback Valley Unified and Tustin Unified. The Board held a public hearing on February 7 to consider the level of support for the charter school. The petition has been reviewed according to California Education Code as legally required, and you have been provided with the Orange County Department of Education Staff Report that summarizes any findings from that review and offers recommendations for consideration by the Board.

Based on information gathered throughout the review process including a clarification meeting held with petitioners on January 31, staff recommends approval of the Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts charter petition. I want to point out to the Board that while the charter petition and Mr. Mathur's presentation at the public hearing included student achievement data for the current Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts Elementary School, it did not have data for OCASA College Prep, the high school, which is in its fourth year of operation. OCASA College Prep has shown a decline in CAASPP scores, both in mathematics and language arts. However, only two years of data are available because the school began operations during the pandemic. We look forward to seeing the results of Mr. Mathur's improvement plan and know that the staff and teachers are all committed to supporting student achievement.

If the countywide charter petition is approved as part of our standard oversight, we will collect further information on the high school program including the plan for career technical education and the fine arts program as those high school grade levels are added to the school. That said, Mr. Mathur is an experienced charter operator and we appreciate his responsiveness and continue to be encouraged by the strong working relationship between the school and our office.

Prior to Board discussion, OCASA III representatives will have equal time and opportunity or 10 minutes, whichever is longer, to present evidence and testimony responsive to the staff recommendations and findings published on February 20. I now call Mr. Mathur to the podium.

MATHUR: Thank you, President Shaw and members of the Board. First, I want to express some gratitude to a number of groups. The entire Orange County Department of Education, Aracely Chastain, Anna Day for their complete and thorough review of the OCASA III petition. The review was very transparent and a professional process. We appreciate their engagement and consideration. I would also like to thank the Deputy Superintendent's Office, Dr. Miramontes for his consideration and support. Dr. Miramontes did come to visit OCASA to see our incredible program firsthand and engaged in thoughtful discussion with our team. Of course, I want to thank our teachers, staff, students, and parents of OCASA. Every day you work to build a joyful community of learners, supporting each others' academic and social needs. I'm proud of the

work that we have done to be the number one school in growth and the number one school in achievement.

Finally, I expressed my deep appreciation to the Orange County Board of Education. Your vision and leadership have created an environment where students and parents have a voice in education. Over the past nine years, I have witnessed the board members engaging with the community in a discussion about the future of our children's education. Your work ensures that our unalienable rights are protected. Without strong education, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are not possible. I thank you for that. Now, onto the matter at hand, OCASA is in strong agreement with the Staff Report of February 20, 2024. In the report, the Orange County Department of Education staff recommend that the Board approve the Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts petition to establish our third school as a countywide school.

We submitted a legally compliant petition and appropriately notified applicable school districts. We included the district notifications in attachment 6 of our charter petition. I request that the Board concur with the staff recommendation and accept option one, to approve the charter petition as written. But as a matter of clarity, I ask that the Board be explicit in their motion to be something in the order of, I move to approve the Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts III charter without conditions and with a finding that the educational services to be provided by the charter school will offer services to a pupil population that will benefit from those services and cannot be served as well by a charter school that operates only in one school district in the county.

It is with great appreciation and respect that we ask for your unanimous 5-0 vote in approval of OCASA III tonight. Thank you.

CHASTAIN: The hearing is now open for public comments. Trustee Sparks, are there any public comments for this item?

SPARKS: We do have public comments, and you all have a total of 15 minutes. We have about, let see, five or six. I wouldn't say take your time, but you can take a little more than a minute. Just say what you need to say. I will call the first name and then the person on deck. First of all, we have Javier Orduño followed by Alicia Baillie. There you go. Alicia Baillie. Okay, so Javier, you are up.

JAVIER: (Inaudible). I'm Javier Orduño for the Orange County local representative for the California Charter Schools Association. CCSA is a membership and professional organization serving our member schools and advocating for fair-share policies for over 1,250 public schools in California. Our mission is to meet the needs of parents, educators, and communities for excellent public-school options by supporting and advocating for high quality, nonprofit charter schools, ensuring their success throughout California's public schools.

I represent the association in recommending the approval of the new countywide charter petition for Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts III (OCASA III) as an Orange County Board of Education authorized charter school. OCASA is a member in good standing in our association. In our opinion, it meets the legal standard for a new countywide charter petition under the

California Education Code 47605. CCSA has worked with the leadership at OCASA and knows they are providing programs for students throughout the community that families want. Approval of this new petition would allow the school to ensure that continuing expanded services are available to students under their care.

CCSA supports this school and respectfully urges you to approve this petition. We have reviewed the Orange County Department of Education Staff Report for OCASA III and do not believe that their Staff Report provides any legal barriers to the Board approving this petition. For this reason, we encourage you to approve the petition. Your approval will allow parents the right to choose a public charter school option in the community. Thank you very much.

SPARKS: Thank you. Alicia, you are up, and followed by Yazari Estrada and Milagros Flores.

ALICIA: Thank you. Trustees and staff of OCDE, we greatly appreciate your consideration of OCASA III. I'm the proud principal of OCASA College Prep in its fourth year of existence. I am about a 19—when I applied for this position, I was a 17-year veteran of local schools and school districts throughout Southern California. Primarily though, I worked in college preparatory schools, at district schools, non-charter schools. What I was looking for, and I am intimately aware and familiar with, is the amazing qualities of college preparatory schools as well as the weaknesses. When I saw this application open about two years ago, I went, oh my goodness. They have taken care of that. They have taken care of that too. Well, I'm applying.

I have been proudly leading this school for about two years, OCASA College Prep. In that we have developed amazing programs that further our students and make sure that they can not only achieve their dreams, we like to say that our students go boldly in the directions of their dreams, our students are also able to explore their careers. We have every student at every year take a CTE course, as well as have vibrant experiences for arts and apply to arts programs. You should see our students' Swallows Day parade floats. They build it. They design it. We just teach them how to use the power tools, though, many of them already know.

This is the greatest team I have ever been a part of. We like to say that we hire unicorns. We have people that are not only dedicated to students, but they have the talent and the drive to see that students truly come first here at OCASA. That is just going to extend to OCASA III. We greatly appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Yazari, Milagros. It looks like they are up together and then followed by Braeden Valenzuela and Tate Brinson.

YAZARI: Hello. My name is Yazari Estrada. I have been with the OCASA College Prep ever since eighth grade. I am currently finishing up my junior year now. OCASA has offered me continuous support throughout the years. The school staff and teachers are very helpful with every student encouraging us to do our best. OCASA also offers extracurricular activities such as Cooking Club, Chess Club, and Robotics, all geared towards students' interest. ASB is another way that students can be involved. It is through ASB, I was able to take my role as high school ASB president. I have learned what it means to delegate, to be part of a team, and work closely with my administrators to plan events for school.

I enjoy OCP because I have delved into opportunities that assisted in finding my identity and purpose in life, which is helping others. Without the school semester career prep project, I would have never been able to partake in the community service events that I did, shaping who I am and realizing how my actions can have a positive impact in the world.

MILAGROS: Hi. My name is Milagros. [Spoken in Spanish and interpreted into English]. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I would like to say thank you to everyone for the opportunity to be here today. In the past seven months, which I have been part of OCASA, I have learned many things that I have never imagined that I was going to learn. I also wanted to say thank you to the teachers that have helped me and my brother Eric, knowing that we do not speak the same language. I really appreciate all the help they are giving us. I appreciate also the help that Ms. Vogle has given us, because she is bilingual. In her free time, she is teaching us English. She is making sure that we are included in all the school activities. She is making us feel that we are important and that we count.

Also, another thing that I'm very thankful for is for the work that Ms. Martha at the cafeteria has given us. The dedication that she has so we can have a good lunch. One of my favorite things at school and special are the clubs, the arts, and the cooking club. Thank you so much for your time.

SPARKS: Gracias.

MILAGROS: They have giving us all the materials that we need. At the same time, the school has offered us all the things that we need. I really, really enjoy my time in the school. Thank you very much for your time.

SPARKS: Muchas gracias.

MILAGROS: Thank you.

SPARKS: Gracias. Okay, we have Braeden and Tate up. Then, our cleanup will be Julie Beddow-Schubert.

BRAEDEN: Good afternoon honorable members of the Orange County Board of Education. My name is Braden Valenzuela, and I'm currently a sophomore at OCASA College Prep in San Juan Capistrano. I have been at OCASA ever since I was in fifth grade. I think OCASA has a really nice and small community. The teachers are all very interactive with the students and are always willing to help whenever they can. It is sort of a family environment, and that is what I really love about the school. Additionally, at OCASA, we get the ability to take college courses at Saddleback so that we can advance on what career we want to pursue and for our own future.

I think this is really helpful because it gives us the benefit to explore what path we want to take. Personally, I'm taking architecture classes at Saddleback, and it has really helped me get an idea of how architecture is going to be for my future at a career and academic standpoint. Overall, I think OCASA is a very good school and deserves a lot of attention because of the positive impact the school has on students' education. I think there should be more schools like OCASA

not only in Orange County but in the whole world, because it is a really good school. Thank you for your consideration.

SPARKS: Thank you. Is Tate around because we had two names on your card? Tate?

AUDIENCE: She had a lot of homework today. Sorry.

SPARKS: She had homework, okay.

AUDIENCE: Sorry.

SPARKS: I honor that. I honor that. Okay. Julie Beddow-Schubert is our last speaker tonight.

JULIE: President Shaw, Trustees, and Superintendent Miramontes, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you regarding Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts III and growing and getting better. My name is Julie Beddow-Schubert, and I have had the last four years of privileged work at OCASA Elementary in the kindergarten through fifth grade program, soon to be TK through five program. I want to let you know that I have over 35 years of experience in education, in public education. I believe in public education. These last four years have been the most joyful years of my professional experience. That does include 20 years of working in school administration as well as district level administration in multiple settings. I have got a very broad sense of experience.

OCASA is a joy-filled learning environment. You walk on campus, it is magical. I can say that because I have had so many experiences as a parent, as a mother of three, and now a grandmother of two. When I see what is happening on my campus and I see kids laughing, and singing, and dancing, and playing, and collaborating together, that I think about Felix who is seven and Theo who is four, they are my grandchildren. I'm like, oh my goodness, I wish my grandchildren could have this. The children that are on that campus are my grandchildren. The teachers and the staff members are my family. Every day that I go, it is full of joy and full of passion for that school environment.

Over those 20 years of trying to work in public education, I have tried for 16 years of those 20 to develop this school. When I was able to read the charter and I said, oh my goodness, I think I finally found home, it was true. I can say it is home because of the joy that is happening every day, because of the fully integrated, interdisciplinary STEAM plus-based courses. STEAM with the plus being Spanish, culture, heritage, and language as a part of every child's learning opportunity. We agree in mastery on our campus.

Children take time to learn socially, emotionally, academically, and behaviorally. It is not chronological. It is a step forward and two steps back. It is wonderful to see the work that our staff does to pull together personalized learning plans, grounded in interdisciplinary learning that is hands on and full of joy and love every day. Thank you for this opportunity to promote OCASA III.

SPARKS: Thank you so much. Thank you.

CHASTAIN: This concludes the public hearing. The Board has three options for action regarding a charter petition, a countywide charter school petition. Option one, approve the charter petition; option two, approve the charter petition with conditions. This action would result in the approval of the charter and require the execution of an agreement to address issues identified by the Board. Option three, deny the charter school petition. President Shaw, I now close the public hearing and turn the meeting back over to you.

SHAW: Terrific, thank you. Maybe I will mix it up here. Dr. Sparks, do you have any?

SPARKS: A comment, I have a comment. You all may not know, but when I was first sort of being asked to run for this seat, in, I guess 2017, you were one of the first schools that I toured. Remember, Kapil?

BARKE: Yes.

SPARKS: Yeah, we went together. You are my inspiration. You are part of the reason I'm sitting here, right? Yeah, yeah. What I saw, I felt the same energy that you were talking about, that all of you have talked about. I have been an educator for more than 30 years myself, mostly in higher ed; but nonetheless, I have worked with a lot of K-12 schools across my journey. What I saw in my tour was so inspirational. I thought, you know, this is really important. This is really important stuff. What you all are doing is so important to our community, and I felt it. I saw it, and I'm so happy that I could be a part of your journey. I am just grateful for all that you all have done to become what you are. I have seen the growth and it is just amazing. I just wanted to start off with that.

SHAW: Thank you. I guess they can turn off our microphones from the control room. We are always playing a game of like, okay. Trustee Valdes, do you have any questions?

VALDES: I really don't have any questions. I looked at this closely. The numbers are there, and I mentioned last time I'm really impressed with Mr. Mathur's leadership.

SHAW: Thank you. Dr. Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes. I have a question for Mr. Mathur. If you can come up, sir? You earlier in your presentation asked us to approve you under the condition number one. Then you added some language, I just want to make sure I understand your request here. We can approve a countywide charter, per Education Codes. But you said something, that there needs to be some specific findings. Is that what you are asking us to do when we make the official recommendation? Is that because of Education Code 47605.6 (b)? It is (a)?

JANELLE: Janelle Ruley, legal counsel, 47605.6 (a).

WILLIAMS: Okay, so this is a technical reason why you made that request. Is that correct?

JANELLE: That is right. Charter schools that come through school districts, the default there is for approval, so, shall approve unless you make a finding. For countywide benefit, there is an expectation that you make a finding on the front end in order to approve.

WILLIAMS: Okay. I understand the charter petition is for a countywide charter. But this is more for public documentation and for discussion that this is a technicality that you are requesting?

JANELLE: I don't think of my profession as a technicality, but yes. It is a legal request. It is a legal request. Thank you for indulging me. It is a legal request.

WILLIAMS: No offense was meant.

JANELLE: Understood.

WILLIAMS: That is it.

SHAW: Okay. Trustee Barke?

BARKE: I would ditto a lot of what my colleague, Dr. Sparks said. I ran for this job to expand school choice, and your school was the first school that we visited. I was just like, wow, we need more of this in Orange County. You do inspire me. That is why I'm here, to see the growth. You guys had a really tough act to follow after Magnolia, and you guys did great. You are just awesome. I love the comments. That word magical, that is just a great way to describe it, magical. I'm just thrilled that you are here. I'm thrilled at the expansion I have seen. This is my sixth year on this board from that first visit, to see what I see now. Today is super, super exciting. I do look forward to voting for your very, very specific ask. Thank you.

SHAW: Okay. My comment, I really appreciated hearing in the public comments the reference made to teaching new languages, learning Spanish. We heard Spanish this evening. I kind of feel like maybe, probably, our country, we don't do a very good job of teaching young people second languages and things like that like a lot of countries do. Once upon a time, I went off to do a mission for my church, and they told me to learn Spanish. That was a really big challenge, but something I was glad that I undertook. I think it is great if we can instill that in our young people. I commend you guys for that effort. I saw Janelle here, and I just wanted to hear you talk. I always just feel smarter and edified. Do you have anything else to say? You are here.

WILLIAMS: Now, you are forcing them to pay more to their legal counsel.

SPARKS: Billable hours.

WILLIAMS: This is going to cost them.

SHAW: She is billing by the word?

JANELLE: Six minutes. Thank you all. I appreciate that. I just want to say, I also have worked with OCASA since the beginning. To see it flourish and blossom in this way, and really under Kapil's leadership, it has just been terrific. I'm just super proud to be here tonight with them, so thank you.

SHAW: Wonderful. With that I would like to make a motion to approve option one, approving the charter petition as written without condition. We will be finding that the educational services to be provided by the charter school will offer services to a pupil population that will benefit from those services and that cannot be served as well by a charter school that operates in only one school district in the county.

BARKE: I second that motion.

SHAW: Okay. All in favor?

WILLIAMS: Wait.

SHAW: Comments?

WILLIAMS: Comments. Just more of a technicality.

SHAW: Oh, thank you. Yes.

WILLIAMS: I do believe at our organizational meeting in July that we chose Mr. Valdes as our clerk to the Board.

BARKE: I think you chose me, actually. Yes, it is me.

WILLIAMS: It was you? Okay.

BARKE: Yes, it was me. Just a technicality. On pages 35, 50, and—

SHAW: Forty-seven.

WILLIAMS: Forty-seven, thank you. It has our good recording secretary's name down there. Officially, our clerk is Mari.

BARKE: Me.

WILLIAMS: Just a technicality when we do all the paperwork.

SHAW: I will include in my motion a revision to list that as Trustee Barke as the clerk of the Board on those pages, 35, 47, and 50. You got them?

BARKE: I'm very proud to be the clerk of the Board.

SHAW: Is that an agreeable amendment to the seconder of the motion?

BARKE: Yes. Yes.

SHAW: Very good. Okay, all in favor?

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

SHAW: Any opposed? Passes unanimously. Okay.

SPARKS: Thank you for all the kids that came out on a school night.

BARKE: On a rainy school night.

SPARKS: Right?

SHAW: Okay, this time we really will make it a five-minute break. I know you guys are going to want to leave, so we will reconvene in five minutes.

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

SHAW: All right, guys. We are going to go ahead and pick it back up. Goodnight. Let's proceed to item number 12, budget presentation. David Giordano, Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services is going to let us know how wonderful the budget is.

GIORDANO: This thing drives me nuts. All right, well, thank you and good evening, President Shaw, members of the Board. Tonight, we are going to review with you our 23-24 Second Interim Financial Report. This report represents the second official revision to the Department's Adopted Budget the Board approved back in June. It also incorporates the key components of the Governor's Proposed Budget that was released in January for next fiscal year, 24-25. The report also contains our actual financial transactions through January 31, as well as revised revenue and expenditure forecast for the current and then the two subsequent years as well.

Here is a look at the agenda for tonight. First, we are going to review with you the Governor's January Budget Proposal for next fiscal year, followed by the changes that occurred since the First Interim Report was approved by the Board back in early December. Tonight, we are also going to discuss some of the key budget challenges that we face as a department moving forward and then talk about the next steps in the budgeting process. Here is a glance at the Governor's January Budget Proposal for next fiscal year. We know that the Governor's proposal was released back on January 10, and it represents the start of the budget cycle for the coming fiscal year.

Here is just a quick recap of some of the key highlights contained in the Governor's proposal. First, the Governor's estimating that the state budget shortfall next year is estimated at \$37.9 billion, and this is largely due to the tax collections coming in well below estimates for last fiscal year, 22-23, which were not known during development of the State's Adopted Budget for the

current year. Of course, this is directly related to that November tax extension and will have a major impact on the state's operating budget in the coming year. The good news is that the Governor's proposal for next year aims to protect education funding from that significant drop in the Prop 98 guarantee due to those lower tax collections.

The Governor's plan also includes—one second here. The Governor's plan also includes a series of budget balancing measures including drawing down \$13.1 billion in state general fund reserves and another \$5.7 billion from the state's Prop 98 reserve account. The budget also includes a series of other budget balancing measures including proposed borrowing from other funds, including reductions in non-Prop 98 areas, funding delays, deferrals, and the use of more optimistic revenue assumptions. I'm going to change something here real quick. There we go. We are going to review the Governor's revenue assumptions here in a moment. Here is a look at the Governor's Big Three Tax Revenue estimates as compared to the LAO's office estimates. This is for fiscal years 22-23 through the budget year, 23-24, excuse me, 24-25. As you can see from this chart, the Governor's estimating personal income tax collections to come in higher by \$9.1 billion. That is in the current year, 23-24 and \$1.8 billion higher in the budget year 24-25.

On a similar note, the Governor's estimating that sales and use tax collections are going to come in higher by \$1.6 billion in the current year and then \$2.3 billion higher in the budget year. Additionally, the Governor's corporate tax estimates are estimated to come in about \$400 million higher than the LAOs office estimates. In total, the Governor's Big Three tax revenue estimates are up roughly \$15.2 billion higher than the LAO's office estimates, which of course will pose significant risks come May Revision if those revenues don't come in as projected. Unfortunately, state revenues are trending currently about \$5.9 billion below the estimates contained in the Governor's January Budget Proposal as of the month end January. We will of course get a look at the February tax collections. They are expected here any day now.

This chart just highlights the impact of the Governor's revised revenue estimates on the Prop 98 Minimum Funding Guarantee for schools. Due to those lower revenue estimates, the guarantee has been revised down since budget adoption by \$9.1 billion for last fiscal year. That is 22-23 and \$2.7 billion for the current year, 23-24, for a combined downward adjustment of nearly \$12 billion over those two fiscal years. Had the Governor used the LAO's office revenue estimates, the Prop 98 Guarantee would be roughly \$4.5 billion less than the estimates for the current year, 23-24, and then the budget year, 24-25, combined. As a result of the use of the Governor's higher revenue estimates, again, it poses significant risks to the state budget moving forward. If those state revenues continue to come in less than projected through April of this year, this will have a significant impact on the operating budget at the state level. And, of course, we will be keeping a close eye on those state revenue collections all the way through April month end. The good news is really what is not in the Education Budget. Despite that significant drop in the Prop 98 guarantee for last year, 22-23, the Governor is proposing no cuts in overall Prop 98 funding and then no deferred payments to schools either. Additionally, the Governor is not proposing to sweep any of the unallocated program funds, at least at this point.

Here is a look at the state's Prop 98 reserve account. As you can see from this chart, the Governor's proposing to withdraw roughly \$5.7 billion. That is in fiscal years 23-24 and 24-25 combined. This would leave roughly \$3.8 billion in the state's Prop 98 reserve account at the end

of the budget year 24-25. This slide just highlights some of the risks surrounding Prop 98 as we move forward. First, the 0.76% estimated cost of living adjustment does not factor in any cost increases for government goods and services purchases for the last quarter of 22-23 and then the first quarter of 2024, which is really very unlikely. As a result, the COLA is likely going to come in higher at May Revision, which will only exacerbate the state's projected deficit in the coming year. Second, the state is proposing to fund roughly \$5 billion of ongoing Prop 98 obligations at a one-time Prop 98 reserve funds. Again, that is creating greater risk, greater uncertainty in those out years.

Then lastly, if state revenues continue to fall short of projections, which is how things are currently trending, again, this is going to exacerbate the state's projected deficit in the coming year. Next, we are going to take a look at some of the key changes that occurred since the First Interim Report was approved back in December. Here is a look at some of the key changes that occurred since first interim. In this chart, you can see the cost of living adjustments and the CalSTRS and CalPERS employer contribution rate estimates for each of the next two years. For fiscal year 24-25, that COLA estimate has been revised down from 1.27% at first interim, to .76% under the Governor's Proposed Budget next year. Similarly, if you look at 25-26, that COLA estimate has been revised down from 3.29% at first interim to 2.73% as of second interim. That is based on the latest estimates from School Services of California.

Regarding the CalPERS employer contribution rate for fiscal year 24-25. That estimate has been revised up from 27.7% at first interim to 27.8% under the Governor's Proposed Budget. Additionally, for 25-26, the estimate has been revised up from 28.3% at first interim to 28.5% at second interim. You will note that there are no changes currently proposed to the CalSTRS employer contribution rates and their forecast to remain the same at 19.1% for the current year, 23-24, and then the two subsequent years. This slide just highlights the changes in our estimated average daily attendance since we last reported back in December. For fiscal year, 23-24, you can see that our projected ADA increase has been revised down, by 46 students. That is since first interim. Then on a similar note, you will notice our projected ADA increases over the next two years have also been revised down slightly. With that said, our estimated ADA for the current year, 23-24, is up by about 130 students over the prior year. Next, we are going to talk about the key purpose of the Second Interim Report and then review some of the key assumptions that we use to build the report.

We know school districts and county offices of ed are required to certify their financial condition twice each fiscal year, once at first interim, which includes our actual financial data through October 31, then again at second interim, which includes our actual financial data through January 31. The First Interim Report is due to the California Department of Ed by December 15 each year. Then the Second Interim Report is due by March 15 of each year. Then both of these reports of course contain updated revenue and expenditure forecasts for the current and then the two subsequent years.

Here is a look at our multi-year projection assumptions. I'm not going to go through all these, but I do want to highlight a few. You can see on here we have included the current year, 23-24, and the two subsequent years as well. If you were to take a look at the salary accounts, you look at our SACS reports, you would see that we have included the step and column class for all of our

classified, certificated, and management employees. If you were to drill down and take a look at the statutory items, you would see the increased cost for CalSTRS and CalPERS pensions as well. If you were to take a look at the health and welfare benefit line items in the reports, you would see the increase in costs projected for health and welfare benefits as well. Those are all contained within the salary lines. The statutory COLA for the current year coming in at 8.22% and then in 24-25 you can see it is coming in at 0.76%, significantly less. Average daily attendance for the current year coming in at 4,608 students. You can see projected to increase ever so slightly over the next couple of years.

We are going to take a look at the LCFF funding projections when we review our multi-year projection here in a moment. But you can see between 23-24 and 24-25, that our average daily attendance is projected to increase slightly. But when you look at the LCFF revenue projection, you will see that drop there. That is because of that, and we talked about this back in December, there is this new three-year rolling average on average daily attendance. Because of that decline we experienced back during the pandemic years, we are still feeling that ADA loss in the funding formula. We are looking at about a \$1.6 million reduction in LCFF funding in 24-25. Then you can see a slight increase in 25-26. Tuition for both our ACCESS and Special Schools program coming in this year at \$43.5 million, and then again, projected to increase slightly in the next couple years.

Next, we will take a look at some of the key financial information that is contained in the Second Interim Report. This is a look at our multi-year projection. Of course, this is in very summary format. You can take a look at the detailed report in the Budget Book, but you will notice on here we have got the current year again and then the two subsequent years. Since this is the combined general fund, it includes all of our unrestricted operating accounts and then all of our restricted accounts as well. For 23-24, you can see that we are going to close out the year in very good financial position, very strong position, heading into what looks to be a very difficult year for the state of California in fiscal year 24-25. That is likely going to continue into 25-26. For 24-25, you can see that we are forecasting a small operating surplus of just over \$2.2 million and then in 25-26, forecasted at about \$5.1 million surplus. Again, we are definitely in a good financial position, but we are definitely going to keep a close eye on state revenues to see how things are trending over the next few months.

As mentioned earlier, a county office of ed are required to certify their financial condition twice each fiscal year, once at first interim, and then again at second interim. There are three types of certification. First, we have the positive certification. It indicates the district will be able to meet its financial obligations for the current and then the two subsequent years. We have the qualified certification that indicates the district may not be able to meet its financial obligations either for the current or two subsequent years. Then, finally, we have that negative certification, which indicates the district will be unable to meet its financial obligations either for the remainder of the current year or the subsequent year. Of course, our office is recommending a positive certification be assigned to the report this evening.

Next, we are going to talk about some of the key budget challenges that we face moving forward. Here is a look at some of those challenges. We know that costs for step in column, health and welfare benefits, and CalSTRS and CalPERS employer contribution pensions are going to place

additional strains on our operating budget as we move forward. We also know that inflationary cost pressures in other areas, such as supplies, services, and equipment are going to continue to place strains on our budget too. Other challenges include the expiration of all the federal and state COVID-19 relief funding that we received, our county offices minimum state aid excess tax status, as well as the continued decline enrollment that we are seeing in districts throughout Orange County, which could have an impact on our programs as we move forward.

Then finally, we just want to wrap up with a look at the next steps in our budgeting process. Again, back in December, the Board took action and approved the First Interim Financial Report. In February, the staff presented the mid-year LCAP update. Then in this month, March, we are asking the Board for consideration, approval of this Second Interim Financial Report. Again, that includes our actual transactions through January 31. It also includes the updated revenue and expenditure forecast. Of course, that is based on the latest information that we have available, including the Governor's January Budget Proposal. Next month we will have the budget study session, and then in early June we will hold the public hearings on both the LCAP and the Adopted Budget. Then in late June, we will present both those items, the LCAP and the Adopted Budget for the Board's consideration and approval. That is the presentation this evening. Again, I just want to say a big thank you to our Fiscal Services team. Patty Banuelos is our director over Fiscal Services. Her and her team put a lot of work, a lot of effort into the budget tonight. I just want to say a big thank you to them.

SHAW: Thank you for that great presentation. I'm sure we have questions. Maybe I will start going this way this time. Dr. Williams, do you have any questions?

WILLIAMS: Thank you for all this data to look at and review. Thank you for the presentation. That was very, very good. What is the ending reserves that we have for the Department, both restricted and unrestricted? That is on page, what B?

GIORDANO: Let me find it in here for you. If you go to the multi-year projection, it will be tab number five.

WILLIAMS: Tab number five.

GIORDANO: It is in here multiple places.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

GIORDANO: On the very second page, it is actually B61 in your Budget Book. See that there? Total reserves, so designated amounts—let me start with the ending fund balance. Ending fund balance for the 23-24 Second Interim Budget, it is \$401,454,360. The components of ending fund balance are listed there as well. You have the \$70,000 reserve for revolving cash, which is a requirement. You have the legal restricted reserves of \$96,331,482, and those are for all the restricted categorical programs. Then you have your designated amounts of \$92,461,411. Those are also for unrestricted funds, program funds that are reserved in the unrestricted accounts. Then you have your reserve for economic uncertainties of \$212,591,467.

WILLIAMS: I know we are going to talk about this on item number 13. Where are the excess \$25,000 in this document here?

GIORDANO: Sorry, Dr. Williams, your—

WILLIAMS: We are not at item 13, but we have the \$25,000 limits—

GIORDANO: Oh, yes. Yes.

WILLIAMS: —that we have to vote on.

GIORDANO: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Is that in this document here?

GIORDANO: It is. It is on page B2.

WILLIAMS: B2.

GIORDANO: And B3. It carries into B3.

WILLIAMS: Okay. What number is that?

HENDRICK: It is the very first page.

GIORDANO: Yeah, very first page.

HENDRICK: Of the budget booklet.

BARKE: At the bottom.

WILLIAMS: These are them all here in B2?

BARKE: Yeah, B2.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Okay. That is all for now.

SHAW: Okay. Trustee Barke?

BARKE: I don't have anything else at the moment.

SHAW: All right, Dr. Sparks?

SPARKS: Yeah. Well, what it seems to me is that, I mean, we all know that we are kind of watching the numbers very carefully. The declines, we are all kind of very cautiously making these predictions. But it seems to me, looking at the numbers now, we look like we are going to be okay, especially when you see these reserve numbers. That is great, but doesn't a lot of this depend on the numbers that come out in April? I feel like right now we are kind of swimming in the dark.

GIORDANO: Sure.

SPARKS: Maybe that is the wrong metaphor. But anyway, we are kind of in the dark with the real numbers. I feel like it is kind of funny money right now. We are not really going to know until April. Right now, we would approve in good faith that it looks good with what the numbers that are presented look pretty good. We know though there is a lot of uncertainties and a lot of really just lack of information until those April numbers come out. Am I correct in that?

GIORDANO: Yeah, there is a lot of uncertainty. There definitely is. I mean, the taxes that come in through April could have a big impact. I think the LAO's forecast is that the revenues come in significantly less than the projections. The number that they threw out there was about another \$7.7 billion in Prop 98 Guarantee, less than what is included in the Governor's Budget. That definitely could have an impact for schools. I think there is a lot of things that the Governor can do to help minimize reductions. They do have excess state reserves that they could tap into. He has got a number of things that he has included in the state budget that he could pull back. That he doesn't have to—

SPARKS: Right.

GIORDANO: —go forward with. That would help. There is a lot of program funds that are out there that were just allocated that haven't been distributed or allocated at the school site level yet that they could pull back. There is a number of things that they could do to help mitigate reductions. I think if the revenue trend does deteriorate the next year will more than likely be the most difficult year. I think he might have another year to get by.

SPARKS: To get by, yeah. I just wanted to kind of, again, throw out that cautionary language. I feel like I would like to approve this in the positive certification given the numbers that are presented as such. But at the same time, I think as a board, we need to let the public know that we are watching as carefully as possible, given the information that we are given. We know that it is kind of a little bit shaky information until we get real numbers. When is that going to happen? I'm guessing April. I guess by June we will know for sure, but that is kind of where I am on this.

HENDRICK: Yeah. Dr. Sparks, maybe it will help. David, if maybe you can just explain some of the steps you have already instituted in the office about planning for the next year, about looking at every vacant and new position and those types of things.

SPARKS: Yes, that would be helpful. Yeah.

GIORDANO: Yeah, yeah, for sure. That is one of the things that I noticed right off the bat when starting with the organization. As far as all the positions when they do, we have positions that come vacant, one of the things we are doing is looking at those positions to determine whether or not we need to fill them. Whether it is from a resignation, a retirement, each of those positions are already being looked at. I think that is one of the things I think is really important. I think about 57, 58% of our budget is spent on people, so we are definitely looking at that. The other thing that we always try to do that is really important is make sure that you are spending all your restricted program funds first. You are spending those dollars before you ever spend your unrestricted discretionary dollars. We are looking at a lot of the Covid monies that we received, the one-time dollars, making sure we are utilizing those first. We are always looking at our spending, looking for ways to save. One of the things that we are doing this year is we are going out to bid for health and welfare benefits to see what the best price that we can get on those benefits. They are very, very expensive.

SPARKS: Yes.

GIORDANO: We are doing that this year, but that is a continuous process that we do. Transportation is another area that can be very costly. It is an area that we will probably look at at some point as well. But there is a whole slew of things that we are looking at.

SPARKS: Yeah. And at the same time, I think we also certainly want the teachers and the staff to know that they are in a safe space.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

SPARKS: In terms of supporting them. There aren't going to be financial cuts that hit them directly. But finding ways, creating ways that maybe areas that could be more efficient that otherwise we weren't paying as much attention to, those would be the ways to start. I'm not telling you anything you don't know, but I just want the real numbers so that we can make an informed decision. All of us. Right?

HENDRICK: I think one of our concerns is, we won't know the real numbers.

SPARKS: Exactly.

HENDRICK: Even in June. I think that there will be multiple plans and backup plans. I think the good news about our reserves is we have time to make thoughtful choices, but I think the scary part we are nervous about is that they could pass a budget that may not be exactly accurate.

SPARKS: Right. Right. Right.

HENDRICK: I'm trying to use a politically correct term, and I'm not sure which one to use. But we have seen that before, and then they send trailer bill language in and after the fact that makes changes.

SPARKS: Right.

HENDRICK: That is what makes it very difficult for our office. We run year-round programs. We have got expenditures starting July 1.

SPARKS: Sure.

HENDRICK: If they make changes after the fact, that is difficult for us.

SPARKS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: I think our concern is the Governor not realizing the financial issues—

SPARKS: Yes.

HENDRICK: —the state may have is very concerning I think for all of us.

SPARKS: Absolutely. And it is concerning for you all in your office. For us, it is one of probably the top three things that we do as the Board in terms of our responsibilities. We can only make decisions on the information we have, just like you all can only make the best decisions on the information that you have. I just want to put that cautionary language, as I know you guys are looking at the budget in a very cautionary way with the numbers that you are getting, which may be a little bit of funny money here and there until we get the real numbers. Those are my questions and comments all kind of rolled together. Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you. Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Mr. Giordano, on page B2 at the top are the certificated salaries.

GIORDANO: Yes.

VALDES: I see that the variance is a negative 517,234. then I go to page 14 and I realize and see that certificated salaries, part of that is teacher salaries, \$30,763,229. I would ask that in the future when we do this, I would like to see instead of that lump sum in the first row, just kind of lumped together where teacher salaries are part of that. I would like to see all the rows on certificated salaries, teachers, pupils, support salaries, supervisors, and other salaries, and how they have individually changed row by row. I am looking very carefully at the first row to make sure that there is the absolute minimum impact on teacher salaries. That is my first request, that the first row be brought out row by row, per page B17 in the future reports so that I can see how teacher salaries have been impacted.

GIORDANO: B17, if you were to turn to page, it is B38 in the Budget Book. It is a summary. It is the form 01, summary of our unrestricted and restricted accounts. If you look, you will see sort of a more detailed breakdown of the certificated salaries. These are the state reports that we are looking at here. You can see certificated teacher salaries listed, the projected totals, the certificated pupil support salaries, supervisors, administrator salaries, and other certificated. There is detail.

VALDES: Help me out here then. How has that changed from interim budget one to two, the teacher salaries in particular?

GIORDANO: There is a multi-year projection that would show you more of that detail. That is listed in item number five, but it is not broken out by that breakdown. But if you wanted us to, in the changes spreadsheet or the changes sheets, that are the first two pages—

VALDES: Yes, that is going to be my request. In the changes spreadsheet, the B2, which is easy to read, I would ask that certificated salaries be broken out completely the way you have listed them in 17 so that I can see how teachers and frontline—I call them frontline people. I'm not trying to create a war reference.

GIORDANO: Sure.

VALDES: But I would like to see what happens in the classroom to be minimized, and that to me is a very important row. Speaking of that, so of the \$517,000 that we have gone down, have teacher salaries gone down from the First to the Second Interim Budget?

GIORDANO: No, they haven't gone down. I think one thing I would say about the reduction that you see there, that is not elimination of any positions or cuts or anything of that nature. Really what that is, and for that line item, you are right. It includes administrators, it includes nurses, psychologists, all certificated salaries. That line item is really salary savings. What we do is we will budget all of our positions at the start of the year. Then, as the year goes on, we will adjust those budgets based on what the latest salary estimates for all of our certificated salaries. What we like to do to try to prevent a lot of fallout at the end of the year is if some of those positions go unfilled for part of the year, we are booking that savings in the budget. That is what you are seeing there, that negative \$517,000. It is salary savings for those unspent positions. The position may be budgeted for 12 months, but it didn't get filled until the ninth month. That is really what that is, if that helps explain it.

HENDRICK: I think, unfortunately for us, we have counselors, nurses, positions like that, that are very hard to fill. They are staying vacant quite a while until we can fill them, if we can fill them for some of them. Speech pathologists is our really difficult one. Because we are not filling them, we are creating the savings. We are still budgeting because our hope is to actually fill them.

VALDES: I get it.

HENDRICK: That is the goal, so that is why you see that savings. It is not actually a cut of anything, just a budget from what we budgeted.

GIORDANO: Yes, a savings.

VALDES: I see—let's see here. Materials and supplies went down. Is that also the same thing? It just wasn't filled or wasn't purchased? Is that kind of what I'm looking at here then?

GIORDANO: On materials and supplies, it is the 43 XX account that you see there. The 4,300 series went down by \$233,593. I think that is probably the line item you are looking at. There was a couple things included in that line item. There was a \$2.5 million decrease in the holding accounts. This is where, and that is actually listed in the Budget Book as well, all the ins and outs out of the holding account. But we are taking budget out of the holding accounts and then we are spreading that to all the budget line items that it needs to be spread to. Again, when you set your budget up, it is a living document. You may not know exactly how you are going to spread those dollars at first. They sit in that holding account, then you spread it out later. So, \$2.5 million of that reduction was included in there. That was partially offset by a \$2.3 million increase in instructional materials and supplies for various programs. Then our ACCESS program, our Special Schools program, but the net change is that \$233,000; but, a lot of ins and outs in there.

VALDES: Okay. I guess then the last comment I would make is simply just telling the staff that as we go through this budget shortfall, and I think the Governor has really, really put some very, very rosy expectations out for people that are not realistic, I am really going to look very closely that things that happen in the classroom, that has to be impacted last. Administrators, love you guys, but what happens with the kids directly and the teacher's assistants, that to me is paramount and that has to get impacted last.

SHAW: Thank you. I was looking at your PowerPoint presentation on the slides related to Prop 98 and wondered if you could refresh my memory. I know we have test one, test two, test three. What necessarily triggers which tests? Can you remind me? I mean, I know in theory if we are in a recession, presumably the revenues come down. We are in an interesting environment, I guess. We are not in a recession, technically, but the revenues have really come down. What test are we at here?

GIORDANO: I believe we are under test one. Yeah, test one. Under test one, basically the way it works is that we receive roughly 40% of the state revenues. If state revenues are going up, that is great because we are going to keep about 40 cents on every dollar. But if they are going down like they are right now, we are going to lose 40 cents on every dollar. Think about if state revenues are going to drop by \$10 billion, well, we are going to lose about \$4 billion of that for K-12 education. I think the latest estimate by the Governor was \$7.7 billion less than, I should say the LAO's office, \$7.7 billion less than the Governor. Our share of that would be fairly significant, K-12 as a whole.

SHAW: Now is that K-12 or K-14?

GIORDANO: K-12.

SHAW: What happened to community colleges?

GIORDANO: Is it?

HENDRICK: It is K-14.

SHAW: Aha, caught you.

GIORDANO: You got me.

SHAW: I caught you red handed.

HENDRICK: He did a really great job. This is the only thing I could actually answer differently.

SHAW: The community college guy in me I guess was coming out there. If, heaven forbid, we have the LAO numbers coming in versus the Department of Finance, I'm just thinking about under test one what that is looking like. I don't know. I'm looking at slide seven of your presentation. That would be at—it is \$2.7 billion less. Am I looking at that right?

GIORDANO: Let me look at this.

SHAW: Then, 40% of that? Yeah. It is going to be \$1.5 billion dollars from that. I don't know. You see on slide seven?

GIORDANO: Yeah.

SHAW: Okay. The difference between Department of Finance and LAO is \$15 billion total. That is the difference in their revenue estimates?

GIORDANO: Fifteen billion is the revenue number.

SHAW: Okay. And under test one, it is 40% of general fund revenues, right?

GIORDANO: It is.

SHAW: Yeah, I'm just trying to do—I haven't had a math class in a long time.

GIORDANO: Yes.

SHAW: I'm just thinking about what that would be if—it is obviously many billions of dollars.

GIORDANO: Yes.

SHAW: All right, any other questions or comments on this? Let's see, where were we? This was just a budget presentation item 12. Okay, with that we will just move to item number 13, approve the revision of the annual budget in excess of \$25,000, as per Education Code section 1280. The revision has been included in the Second Interim Report that is certified positive by the County Superintendent of Schools. So, let's see, yes, Dr. Williams?

WILLIAMS: Just real quick, going to B2 on the \$25,000 increase. I'm not sure who will answer my question, whether it is David or Renee. The Career Technical Education Initiative Program and the model curriculum, those are, I guess, new that we have introduced into the budget. Is that a correct assumption?

HENDRICK: They are not actually new. We are just expanding. The model curriculum actually was in last year's budget, so we had an increase in that because the Legislature changed the definition on the Vietnamese piece. They added more pieces to it, so that is why we received more funding for that. It also requires more meetings and more outreach so that was part of that one. Then for the Career Tech, it is probably, I don't think it is a new one. I think it is just an expanding one. We gave you a supplemental grant sheet because the one in your book we realized wasn't color coded. It is in your red folder. It highlights the ones that are new since the last one. It should have been in your book that way; but unfortunately, the copier didn't color code it. I will tell you there are multiple career tech programs slating through the process right now. I'm not sure if that one is really new. Dave? I think it is just an expansion of expenditures.

WILLIAMS: It is left blank in the first interim and then in this second interim there is almost \$900,000. So, these are existing programs?

HENDRICK: They are existing programs, but it was probably a new expenditure. We may have found out more of what we were allowed to spend it on.

WILLIAMS: Then, going to item 5220, the travel and conferences, that was reduced. Then object code 5230 conference workshop registration that went up \$111,000. What conferences and workshops are we now going to that we weren't going to in the first interim?

HENDRICK: I'm not sure there are really new conferences we are going to.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

HENDRICK: I think what is happening is since some of the COVID funds are professional development, where we may have sent one or two people, we may now be sending five or six. The reason why you are not seeing it in the other travel expenses is because they are probably local. We may have sent an accounting staff. We may have sent one person before, and now we are going to send six for this year.

WILLIAMS: Why is that?

HENDRICK: I'm sorry, what?

WILLIAMS: Why did we increase from one person now to six people?

HENDRICK: Because we had additional money for professional development this year under Covid funds.

WILLIAMS: Okay, so these are Covid funds?

HENDRICK: They are probably Covid funds, yeah. You are just seeing the expenditure piece. A large piece of some of those COVID funds are professional development. Even some of the teaching staff have that too, although we have an issue with substitutes. That is limiting some of

that. Because we have had additional funds this year, we are increasing the amount of people that we would send to conferences.

WILLIAMS: Moving on to object code 5810, the consultants, we have some changes here. Elementary and secondary school emergency three, are these new or just increasing the monies that are in these projects?

GIORDANO: For 23-24, at first interim, we had budgeted \$912,000 out of ESSER funds in that object code 5810 for consultants/instructional. Then at second interim, we increased it by half a million dollars. It went up to \$1.412 million. This increase was to cover ACCESS and Special Schools instructional program consulting. But again, it is using the ESSER one-time funds.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

GIORDANO: These are dollars that we have to spend by September 30.

WILLIAMS: Okay, so these are consultants we are paying for?

GIORDANO: That is right.

WILLIAMS: Okay. And that is a \$500,000. Are one of those consultants a former Newport-Mesa Unified School District Superintendent Fred Navarro?

GIORDANO: Don't know where that is charged, that consulting contract. It could be in there.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Could you get it to me and let me know what he is doing?

HENDRICK: Yeah, I can tell you that Dr. Mijares had hired him when Christine Olmstead had left.

WILLIAMS: Pardon me?

HENDRICK: He didn't hire him. He hired the consulting firm. When Dr. Olmstead had left and we had a vacancy for Ed. Services, Al had brought in Dr. Navarro to kind of help fill that gap. Then, since Dr. Miramontes has been hired, that wasn't needed. But he is helping with some of the program changes and things we are looking at for the ACCESS program.

WILLIAMS: What is his contract?

HENDRICK: Off the top of my head, I honestly don't know.

WILLIAMS: Is it under a half million, under a quarter million?

HENDRICK: I honestly do not know.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Do we have a contract with him that we can see?

HENDRICK: We have a contract with the company he works for. Yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Could you get that to me?

HENDRICK: Mm-hmm.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Then, under the same object code, CalHope Mindfulness and Wellbeing Project, is that a continuation of the same project?

HENDRICK: It is. That grant is actually through Sacramento County Office. We are a recipient, so this is the funds that we are spending with that.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Under object code 5851, these are new programs here, Stop School Violence, Project Sunshine. These are new?

GIORDANO: Yeah. STOP is new. I think Ms. Hendrick referenced it earlier, included in the Board book is that list of entitlements, contracts and grants. In there, you will see in there the STOP program. It is highlighted. Let me find it here for you. It is highlighted on page six, six of 11, and we have multiple STOP grants. But you will notice it here highlighted in this, like a light pink color, \$143,038. The contract period is October 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. That is for the STOP program. The other item listed here, Project Sunshine. These were expenditures tied to current contract funding or current contract funding to develop a three-year plan for developing instructional strategies and pedagogy. This is also—it should be listed in here.

WILLIAMS: Project Sunshine?

GIORDANO: Yeah, Project Sunshine. This may have been one—it wasn't a new funding source, but it was an increase in funding. If it was new, we would highlight it and include it as this pink color. I don't see it on here, so this is probably just an increase in the—

HENDRICK: —in expenditure.

GIORDANO: In the funding.

WILLIAMS: Are any of these grants require Board approval?

HENDRICK: No. If you remember, they all are posted on our website now. You could actually go in, and click on those, and receive all the background materials also. We do still have an Arts and Music Block Grant that needed to come to the Board that we have been, I think waiting to see if the Governor is going to pull it back.

GIORDANO: Yeah.

HENDRICK: And because we also have ESSER funds to send, but that one is one that you will be seeing.

WILLIAMS: Okay. I'm done.

SHAW: Thank you, Trustee Barke?

BARKE: No, I'm good. Thank you.

SHAW: Okay. Dr. Sparks?

SPARKS: No, I mean I just was looking also at the other service contract, the 7.396 for the first budget and then the 7.7. That is a lot of money for those other service contracts. It would be kind of nice to know where those are listed.

GIORDANO: You are looking at the object code 5865?

SPARKS: 5865.

GIORDANO: 5865, yeah. At first interim, we were budgeted at \$7.4 million roughly. Second interim it increased to seven point, roughly \$8 million. It was about \$359,000, a little over a \$359,000 increase. Again, on this one, \$168,798 of that increase was charged to the one-time ESSER funds.

SPARKS: Yeah.

GIORDANO: This was actually the final expenditure for the shade structure installation, one of our shade structures, so just the installation piece.

SPARKS: Yeah. No, I appreciate that. I was just asking, it would be nice to know where the list of those other service contracts, the miscellaneous for the \$7.4 million and the \$7.7 million.

GIORDANO: Oh, you just want to list all service contracts?

SPARKS: Right. A list of all those.

GIORDANO: Gotcha. Gotcha.

SPARKS: Yeah.

GIORDANO: Yeah, this is just changes.

SPARKS: Are those listed out somewhere on another page?

GIORDANO: You know, I don't think we do have them listed under (inaudible).

HENDRICK: No, we haven't. We could give those to you. In the past, I think we did at one time. It is a lot.

SPARKS: Right.

HENDRICK: But we can definitely give you the detail.

SPARKS: Yeah, I think we would take a PDF if it is—you don't need to print off all the paper.

HENDRICK: Okay.

SPARKS: But if we could see it.

HENDRICK: That would be something great for the budget study session.

SPARKS: Yeah.

HENDRICK: If those are the type of things that you would like to see, that would be helpful for us to know that we could highlight that stuff for you.

SPARKS: Yeah, I just want to know before, so we can look at it before we need to approve things. I don't want it at the 11th hour.

SHAW: Thank you.

SPARKS: Okay.

SHAW: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yup. Could we stop with the microphone on and off?

SHAW: It is so much fun though.

VALDES: Could the guys in the video room just stop turning off my microphone? I don't have any questions.

SHAW: Okay. Thank you for that. With that, we do need to take action, right? Okay. Do I hear a motion?

WILLIAMS: I will make a motion.

SHAW: All right.

WILLIAMS: To approve the interim report as positive.

SPARKS: I will second that.

SHAW: Yeah, Dr. Williams moved that we accept the interim report as positive, he said, and seconded by Dr. Sparks. Okay. All in favor?

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

SHAW: Any opposed? Thank you. I believe we needed to report out of closed session. Is that correct? Should we do it now? All right, I think there is a lawyer lurking around here somewhere. Oh, there he is, Mr. Brenner.

BRENNER: Good evening, members of the Board and attending staff, good to be with you. This is the report out for closed session items one through three. The Board held a discussion with counsel, no action was taken other than to approve Epstein Becker Green invoice numbers 1150527 and 1150528. I also want to take this opportunity to correct the report out from the past closed session items from the last meeting on February 7. At that report out, I indicated that the Board had approved invoice numbers 1147237 and 7238. That was an error inadvertently. The actual invoice numbers that were approved were 1147234 and 1147235. The approval on all of these invoices, including the two from last month and the two this month, was by a vote of 5-0; all trustees being present in favor. That is the report out for the closed session. Thank you.

SHAW: Thank you. Did you get that Renee and Darou? Okay, good. Okay. You kind of go a little fast there Jonathan, but it is all right. Okay, so information items. Let us see, annual transportation update.

HENDRICK: In your red folder, you have the annual update to our transportation plan. You saw that for the first time last year. You either have to see it annually or we can put a date on it. We did give it a two to three-year date. We use this for our Special Education program specifically. Once we do the plan, we actually are able to receive additional dollars from the state. That is why it is important to us, so it helps the district save funds also. For many years transportation never received a cost of living increase. Nothing. They went like 14 years without an increase. Now the state does it incrementally.

SPARKS: Even with gas prices?

HENDRICK: Even with gas prices, yes. But now you have to do this very long report and you have to show your increases. Our staff does do that. That new plan is in your packet to look at. You don't need to approve it. We just have to show the plan. Then, the next one was the Memorial Day Contest, so I did email. I have only heard from one person that you would want to do it. I'm assuming you would like to continue it. And then—

SHAW: Now, who was the one person?

HENDRICK: You.

SHAW: Oh.

HENDRICK: But you did say you are pretty sure Ken wanted to do it.

SPARKS: Yeah.

SHAW: You never ask a question you don't know the answer to.

HENDRICK: I'm sure, yes.

SHAW: That is an old lawyer rule, right, Jorge?

HENDRICK: In the past you have wanted to do a certain dollar amount or something, so I was just wondering what the Board's wishes were on that.

SHAW: Well, I didn't want to speak for all of us. I'm sure we want to continue that. That was my assumption.

BARKE: I think we could each just send you what we want rather than publicly announcing.

HENDRICK: Okay. If you could just give me an idea because the prizes we give will depend on that. Staff, the Cabinet also gives money towards that also. I just want to make sure we get that number correct. If you get a chance, let me know.

SHAW: Okay.

HENDRICK: And so—

SHAW: Oh, sorry, go ahead.

HENDRICK: That is it that I have there. I have some other items when we go announcements, but it is up to you.

SHAW: I was just going to ask one thing on the transportation plan. I believe we got that whole street car deal in Santa Ana about, it should be operational at some point. I know there is some schools along the way. I don't know. Can that be—what is the one school that is right there? NOVA? Right? I don't know. There may be others.

HENDRICK: Yeah. Maybe. For us, this is for our Special Education. These are normally—

SHAW: Yeah.

HENDRICK: —have aides on the bus with them and usually non-ambulatory students. Probably wouldn't help for us, but I'm sure it will help for other things. I think for our ACCESS program, that would be awesome too.

SHAW: Great. Please continue with your announcements.

HENDRICK: Wednesday, April 3, is the next board meeting. That means the submission deadline is March 20, and the board packet delivery will be March 29. Also, there is a National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, this year. That is from June 30 to July 3. If anybody was interested in doing that, they could let us know as soon as

possible. The board meeting is July 3, so we just have to keep that in mind. Then the other item I have is, we have received a complaint regarding a charter school. Based on this complaint, the Board has to choose who investigates the complaint. It is a complaint about whether the school is accepting students fairly. The Board could assign staff to do it. We can have our attorneys do it. You could have your attorneys do it, except for Mr. Rolan would not do this one, is my understanding. This one you—yeah, no. I asked him the question. This is for Orange County Classical. I just need the wish of the Board of how they would like us to proceed.

BARKE: Is that something that we would ask our board counsel how to proceed, though?

SPARKS: Yeah.

BARKE: Is that something we should chat with him about?

HENDRICK: You could if you wanted to. Yeah.

SPARKS: Definitely.

BARKE: Yeah.

SHAW: Do you need an answer from us, like right now, or?

HENDRICK: I can send it to your board counsel. Well, I think you didn't want to see it, actually. So, that is my question.

SHAW: We can't tell you next month, though, at our meeting, or it has got to be—

HENDRICK: I think—

SPARKS: If it is the will of the Board, they could toss it to the Executive Committee and we could make a decision for the Board.

ROLEN: Without giving any substance of the complaint. Thank you for keeping that away and just let us get back to you in a day or two.

HENDRICK: Okay. That would be great. Thank you.

SHAW: Okay. Any other announcements?

HENDRICK: That is it for me. Thank you.

SHAW: Oh, okay. Let's go to—are we now going on to legislative updates? Do we have any legislative updates anyone knows of? Any committee, nothing? Any other committee reports? No committee reports, okay. I guess we will just go to the board member comments. I will start with Trustee Barke.

BARKE: The only thing I have to comment is I attended the, I believe it is, the State of the City and the District for Garden Grove Unified. I saw Dr. Miramontes there, so that was lovely. It was a great program. Hundreds of people were there. As a matter of fact, after dinner I literally ran to my car. You have to leave via electronic gate, and I didn't want to be behind 593 people. But it was a lovely program. They did a great job. It is a great district, so I really enjoyed participating in that.

SHAW: Terrific. Dr. Williams?

WILLIAMS: No, nothing to report.

SHAW: Okay, Dr. Sparks?

SPARKS: I just wanted to congratulate our gentlemen—

BARKE: Oh, yes.

SPARKS: —for their election victories.

BARKE: Yes.

SPARKS: Their victories it looks like, and I gave everyone some chocolate.

BARKE: Yeah. Congratulations, gentlemen. We are glad you will be staying around.

SPARKS: Yeah. That is all.

SHAW: Okay, thank you. Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Earlier in the public comments, we had a gentleman comment about donation limits for candidates on the OC Board of Ed. I view that as, really, a very political issue. It is not appropriate for me to comment. I have a response, but it is not appropriate for me to make that here. He should know that. I also wanted to mention that at the last meeting, I know that it is basically our policy to allow people to come here and say whatever they want. I think that is something that we do. But we allowed a comment at the last meeting that was after the board comments. I don't know if that is a policy issue or not. Maybe we have to draft a policy on this, but I don't think a public comment should happen or be allowed after board comments.

SPARKS: If you notice, we moved that around this meeting because of that instance. We don't have public comments at the end of board meetings anymore.

VALDES: Oh.

SPARKS: We took care of that.

VALDES: Oh, okay.

SHAW: All right.

VALDES: I'm not part of the Executive Committee, so I don't hear about that stuff.

SPARKS: That is okay. Sorry. See, we don't, yeah.

SHAW: Well Lisa went and jinxed it, talking about the election. Good grief.

SPARKS: Well, I had to congratulate the gentleman.

SHAW: Well, thank you. I was looking at my phone here. I think something like, let us see, 273,000 ballots according to the Registrar's website in Orange County still over 273,000 ballots left to count. It is always amazing how long the process goes after election day of counting ballots.

BARKE: You can mail it election day, and mail is pretty slow these days. You used to get it the next day, but now you might take 2, 3, 4 days to get the letter, so.

SHAW: Yeah. It really has become election month.

BARKE: Yes.

SHAW: More than election day.

BARKE: Yes.

SHAW: But yes, yesterday we did officially have the election. I didn't want to jinx anybody, but I wanted to congratulate Jorge and Ken on doing a great job and appearing to have gotten reelected. We will see how the vote gets certified, but it is a pleasure to serve with you all. I wanted to thank as well the voters of the Fourth District who let me sit up here representing them. Fingers crossed. It looks like I'm going to be around another four years, so hopefully that works out.

BARKE: Woohoo.

SHAW: Yay. Anyone who has ever stood for office knows it is really tough for one person to talk to tens of thousands of voters out there. There is always a lot of help you get. There is just too many people to thank. But obviously, it is always, you feel like it is a team effort. Just thank you to those who helped me out there. Gosh, it seemed like it was raining every time I wanted to go out there and walk door to door. It just started raining.

BARKE: I agree. I agree. Yeah.

SHAW: God didn't want us to walk.

BARKE: It has been a rainy season.

SHAW: We did get out there a little bit. So, anyhow, I also wanted to mention, I am going to be, in case I didn't mention this out loud, I will be up in Sacramento on May 1, that board meeting. I will be in Sacramento that week for a work conference. I hope to participate remotely, but I will ask Vice President Sparks to run that meeting. We will try to do it that way. Okay?

BARKE: Well, I guess I will mention just as a warning, if my daughter delivers on time, she has a June 30 due date. I will probably do the July meeting remotely. I have purchased a ticket for July 1, July 7, and July 9, because I don't want to, right before July 4, have to get an emergency ticket. I don't know why she thinks she is going to be late, but she is due June 30. If she delivers on time, I will do the meeting remotely, and I will give you that address.

HENDRICK: Great. That is helpful. I was glad I didn't have to leave the meeting early. My daughter-in-law is due with twins.

BARKE: Oh, wow.

SPARKS: Wow.

HENDRICK: She is now going to have a cesarean on Monday, unless something happens.

BARKE: Okay.

HENDRICK: But they have been texting me so that is why I have been checking my phone.

SHAW: Well, congratulations and good luck on that deal.

BARKE: Yes, that is exciting. Is that first grand babies? No?

HENDRICK: Number three and four.

BARKE: Ahh, okay.

HENDRICK: All girls.

BARKE: Oh wow.

SHAW: Congratulations, Renee. We will stand adjourned until Wednesday, April 3, 2024, at 5:00 PM here at 200 Kalmus.