

**BARKE:** Is it on? Yes. Welcome everyone. Mari Barke, the president of the board. Welcome. We're going to start with, let's see, call. What's that?

**WILLIAMS:** Call your statement.

**SHAW:** You could just read that.

**BARKE:** Oh, oh, just I'm sorry. For the benefit of the record, this is a regular meeting of the Orange County Board of Education, as called to order at 3:35 on Wednesday, August 6th, all right and a roll call Darou.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Sparks?

**SPARKS:** Yes. Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Valdes?

**VALDES:** Present.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Shaw?

**SHAW:** Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Barke?

**BARKE:** Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Williams?

**WILLIAMS:** Present.

**BARKE:** All right. May I request an agenda? Somebody to...

**SPARKS:** So moved.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** I'll second.

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

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

**BARKE:** All right. Anyone opposed? All right, the agenda's approved and may I also have the meetings from the last minute?

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

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** All right, all those in favor?

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

**BARKE:** Anyone opposed? All right, we're all set. Meetings are approved as well. Okay, so now we are going to go into closed session. Are there any comment cards for closed session? Okay, then we will move into closed session. The board will take a recess and go into closed session to conduct student appeal hearings followed by closed session. So, we should be back at 5:00 PM.

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

**BARKE:** Welcome everyone. Thank you for your patience. Do we have any introductions? Renee? Great.

**HENDRICK:** We do. Dr. Bean.

**BEAN:** It's time for announcements already?

**BARKE:** Yes.

**BEAN:** Wow.

**BARKE:** Introductions.

**WILLIAMS:** No, no, no, no.

**BEAN:** Introductions. That's what I meant. I'm sorry. Introductions. Yes. I have two introductions of two new teammates turned cabinet that I'd like to share with the board. I'm pleased to announce that Dr. Maria Poulin has been appointed as OCDE's new chief of alternative education following a collaborative selection process since joining us in March and I think I introduced you to her in March as well. She came on board as the ACCESS director of curriculum instruction and has brought a student center approach, helped launch the ACCESS 2030 vision with me and has demonstrated empathy, professionalism, and a deep respect for staff and student voices. So, with over 30 years of public education, she previously served as an interim superintendent of Culver City, deputy superintendent at LACO and superintendent of Whittier City School district. Of course, among other roles that she's had. Her broad leadership experience combined with her passion for inclusive purpose driven work makes her an outstanding choice for this role.

So, you could stand up Dr. Poulin. Please join me welcoming Dr. Poulin as our new chief and then I'm also excited to announce Dr. Kimberly Benaraw as our new associate superintendent of student services and programs, a newly unified division that integrates ACCESS and student

services to strengthen support for students across Orange County. This is a forward-looking structure grounded in our 5-3-1 strategic plan enhances academic behavior and wellness services for our most vulnerable learners. With over 20 years in public education, Dr. Benaraw brings deep experiences, a teacher, principal, district leader, and most recently guiding Robert Fisler school to multiple state and national honors. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Benaraw and those are introductions.

**BARKE:** Well great. Welcome both of you. I've read all about you. We're real excited with your new position, so thank you. All right, and next we will go with the invocation and I'm going to invite Reverend Jack Veatch, who is the director of church relations at Chapman University. So welcome and thank you for being here.

**REVEREND VEATCH:** It is a pleasure to be here. I apologize that I cannot stay for the whole board meeting. I have an eight month old at home that does not go to sleep for anybody but papa. I have a time limit.

**BARKE:** Love it.

**REVEREND VEATCH:** In the center of Chapman University's Orange campus, there's a fountain with four pillars jutting out of the ground and they're labeled physical, social, spiritual, and intellectual. These are Chapman's four pillars of education and they're a declaration that each student that comes to the campus will not only engage in the life of the mind, but they will develop as citizens, family members, friends and neighbors, and that the university is a place for the flourishing of the moral landscape and for attendance to their lived reality as human beings. So is in that spirit of holistic education that I offer this invocation.

May those gathered in this space embark upon good and courageous work. May every new beginning be rooted in compassionate understanding, grounded in efficacious theory and practice spurred forward by creative energy and nurtured with attentive care. For those who are tasked with raising up and the preparation of our future generations, may they be blessed with ears to hear and hearts to listen. May they find joy in the work and renewal in its midst and may they understand the importance of that which they have been entrusted with. May the policies and work of this board be fair, just, loving, and kind. May it enable our school's teachers, faculty, and staff to provide a safe, holistic education for these children that rely on us and trust in us. I ask these things in the name of Jesus, may it be so. Amen.

**AUDIENCE:** Amen.

**REVEREND VEATCH:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you very much. Enjoy your toddler or your eight month old, I guess that's not quite yes. Next, I'd like to invite Jill Wallace up to do the Pledge of Allegiance please.

**JILL:** In honor of our great flag and all those who have previously and still today work to defend the freedom that it represents. Please place your hand over your heart and join me as we do our pledge of allegiance.

**AUDIENCE:** I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**BARKE:** All right, public comments?

**SHAW:** Yes. So, I think we ended up with just five. Oh, I thought there was more. Okay, so oh, more coming. So, these are just the public comments, so I'll call Robert will lead us off, followed by Linda and I think we'll have you go back to that one and we'll have a three-minute limit. Okay.

**ROBERT:** Good evening. My name is Robert Wojtkiewicz and I'm here today to speak on behalf of my wife, my sister, and my friends, all of whom are teachers and administrators at public schools in Orange County. More so than at any point in my life. I'm concerned for their safety and the safety of their students this coming school year. I'm concerned because the policies and guidance provided by the Orange County Department of Education regarding immigration enforcement on school campuses are woefully inadequate and will put students, teachers, administrators, and staff at risk. Over the last six months we have seen the impact of unprecedented and unconstitutional immigration enforcement in our communities. Masked agents conduct raids without providing judicial warrants or identifying themselves. The Department of Homeland Security moves shackled children through underground parking structures under the cover of night. We even see criminals impersonating federal agents to kidnap and assault people.

Historically, there have been two places that have been off limits for immigration enforcement, churches and schools. On January 21st, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security issued directives which broadly ended these protections. If the board believes that the Trump administration is above conducting immigration enforcement on school campuses in Orange County, it is delusional. I do not want to see children being forcefully removed from classrooms, nor do I wish to see hardworking teachers and administrators like my wife or my sister or my friends be arrested by federal agents for simply being in the way. If this board believes that either of these scenarios is somehow beyond the realm of possibility, then I urge them to simply read the news or listen to their constituents. Things like this are already happening and they have been steadily escalating each time. Institutions fail to implement guardrails to keep them in check. Current state and county level guidance is insufficient to address the possibility of masked federal agents demanding access to students on campus without a judicial warrant.

Current OCDE guidance only advises that staff should quote, inform the officer that no action will be taken without consulting legal counsel or the designated administrator. This policy is anemic and insufficient. Staff have received no guidance regarding what to do when these agents show up with their faces covered without a judicial warrant and force their way onto campuses anyway. Again, if you think that this cannot happen, I will remind the board that ice agents conduct enforcement in this unconstitutional manner every day throughout Orange County. Agents attempted to enter campuses in Los Angeles without a judicial warrant at the end of last school year when they were far less emboldened than they are now. Teachers, students and staff need concrete solutions to this threat. The most obvious of which is calling local police and placing the campus on lockdown. Teachers and students need to know that they'll be protected and institutions like the board of trustees have a moral responsibility to do so. I'm aware of the

limitations that the board faces in enacting actual concrete policy per the board's website. One of its responsibilities is to quote, "Maintain an awareness of operations of the school districts in the county." End quote. This issue lands squarely in your purview. I'm asking that you do the bare minimum and pass a resolution urging local school boards to implement policies that keeps teachers and students safe. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** Linda will be followed by Heidi.

**LINDA:** I really don't know what to say to begin. If what the gentleman says is true, we need to do something, we need to at least look into this particular charge. I'm speaking on an entirely different topic. Actually, what I feel is some good news in the form of two very significant, I would call them monumental events that have happened very recently on a national level and my own involvement on a local level. I want to begin with Mahmoud versus Taylor, which is the US Supreme Court decision regarding parental right to opt out their children when literature or topics are being introduced in a classroom setting, dealing with gender and sexual orientation. I really want to thank a couple of organizations, particularly CLEO and the California Justice Center because they provided me a day ahead of time, thanks to my good friend Brenda Lebsack, some crucial material when I had to speak on this issue at my own local board meeting, I had 24 hours to prepare.

I had excellent documents in the form of a report from CLEO highlighting the events. Thank you very much. And also, the report from the California Justice Center, which is a three and a half page analysis of Mahmoud versus Taylor. These were incredibly helpful and I finally had a copy of the opt out letter. I believe that also comes from the California Justice Center. The only thing I would ask of you is I'd like to get more legal opinion on what Julie Hamill has written. I'm not questioning what she's written, I just want it backed up. It's heavily documented with multiple court cases including a California Supreme Court case that underscores parental rights and I think the more backing that we get that this is a valid interpretation of Mahmoud versus Taylor, the stronger our case is going to be. And so, I understand that you have a very good attorney representing both the Department and the board.

His name is Mr. Rolen. He might want to look into this. I also understand you have another attorney on the board. So, my invitation to both of these gentlemen, anybody else that you can think of as take a look at this document. The second event, strangely has been receiving practically no coverage to my knowledge, but it's a Federal Trade Commission investigation into the gender transitioning industry. What we do know is that on, I believe it was the 22nd of July, children's Hospital of LA closed its doors and I think that's very important. So, I've run out of time, I'll say more on this later, suffice it to say that what the Federal Trade Commission is doing is major news. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** Thank you Linda. So, Heidi will be followed by, forgive me, Brigitta. Brigitta, sorry.

**HEIDI:** She's been here before. Hi, our monthly meeting. Okay, good evening esteemed board members and Superintendent Dr. Bean. I wanted to share progress as they do every month with Suncoast Prep Academy Charter as we prepare for the '25-'26 school year. Also changing subjects. We are offering grade level classes with cohorts of teachers as a team delivering innovative classes online and park days weekly. I'll be offering a film class for the third year in a row. We're doing Narnia this year and we also have a dedicated team this year for our high school students and we'll offer opportunities for our students to work as leaders and volunteers as interns and mentors within our communities. And also, we'll work closely to offer a glimpse into their civic duties while hopefully attending one of these monthly board meetings, which I think would be really powerful for them to see all what leadership looks like and to observe that and witness. Our school continues to thrive, bringing more innovation and community building experiences and we are very excited for the upcoming school year. Thank you also for your support in standing with us with your firm opposition to AB 84. We need to continue to protect parents' rights to choose and preserve charters like Suncoast Prep Academy and small businesses within our communities throughout California. And most likely I'll be in Sacramento next week to stand in the opposition or actually two weeks from now, August 18th. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** Okay. Brigitta followed by Brenda.

**BRIGITTA:** Good evening esteemed board. I am going to be very brief. I'm very, very thankful and grateful that you are standing in opposition to AB 84 and I just wanted to mention a little thing about something even bigger than that and that is AB 495. And this bill would allow any unrelated adult to gain guardianship of a child without the parent's knowledge, consent, or court oversight just by filling out a form. We need help. This bill would legalize child trafficking. I will leave California with my twins. This is Charlotte and Isabella. I am scared to death of 495, so I hope we can discuss that a little bit more. And otherwise, I thank you so much for your great work.

**SHAW:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** And last but not least, Brenda.

**BRENDA:** Hello. Good evening, President Barke, trustees and Superintendent Bean. My name is Brenda Lebsack and I speak to you today as a representative of the Interfaith Statewide Coalition. I'm also a school board member in an Orange County district. Though I'm not speaking on behalf of that district or its board, we are here to request that the Orange County Board of Education provide clear and timely guidance to our county superintendents and local school board members regarding the recent Supreme Court ruling Mahmoud versus Taylor. This landmark decision affirmed the constitutional rights of parents under the 14th Amendment to opt their children out of instructional content that conflicts with their sincerely held religious beliefs. This ruling is not abstract for Orange County families. It is deeply personal. We represent a broad coalition of faith-based communities across the state and we have already heard from

hundreds of parents, clergy and community leaders who are eager for clarity, Orthodox Muslims, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants.

They deserve to know how the Supreme Court decision will be implemented in the schools for every grade level as soon as possible, especially now as our school year is beginning. We understand the Orange County Department of Education has a legal counsel team whose role includes interpreting federal and state legal developments and advising our school leaders accordingly. The responsibility at this moment is to ensure that the guidance provided to our superintendents and boards align with both constitutional law and local policy. We urge OCDE's legal counsel to issue a public legal bulletin or advisory to clarify how the Mahmoud decision will affect current curriculum opt-out policies and parent notification practices. To assist in this process, our religious and parental rights legal advocates have already drafted an opt-out template letter for parents. We ask can this letter be formally shared with districts to streamline implementation? We believe this would save time, prevent confusion, and create a smoother path for compliance and communication. We don't want to fight school districts, we want to collaborate. Our coalition is willing to work with your legal team, superintendents and board, and we know that this board has respected families and we are so grateful for all your hard work. So, we hope that we can continue to work together and I'd like to give you these opt-out drafts for your consideration. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** Thank you Brenda. I think that's all the public comments.

**BARKE:** Great. All right, next we will move to item number three to nominate and approve board member assignments for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. So that's page nine, and it looks like some of the boxes already filled in. Tim was the OCSBA, but now that he is on the executive committee, would you like somebody else to fulfill that or do you like that? It's up to you or is anybody dying to have it?

**SHAW:** I'm not dying to keep it.

**BARKE:** Is there somebody that might want to help Tim out since he has executive committee duties now? All nominations, any?

**SHAW:** I don't mind doing it, I guess.

**BARKE:** All right. Well it doesn't look like anybody wants.

**SHAW:** Don't all speak at once.

**BARKE:** All right.

**WILLIAMS:** So this is for what Tim?

**BARKE:** This is for the OCSBA where he is right now.

**SHAW:** I don't mind doing it. I actually, oh, you want to do it, Ken?

**BARKE:** Okay. Okay. Well, Ken, you're already signed up for ACCBE. Do you want both?

**WILLIAMS:** No, I can do both.

**BARKE:** Okay, wonderful. Is anybody opposed to Dr. Williams doing both?

**SHAW:** Oh no.

**BARKE:** Well, Dr. Sparks, would you like to keep your PTA duties?

**SPARKS:** I could, unless Jorge wants to engage in that.

**VALDES:** I will do it. If you want to give up that role, I will do it.

**SPARKS:** I don't know. I don't know if I can give it up. I don't know.

**WILLIAMS:** Can I make some suggestions? They both split the duties and responsibilities.

**BARKE:** Oh yeah, we do that you want to share? Okay, great. All right, so we'll put Sparks, Valdes down and they'll split it. Wonderful. So that was simple, easy. All right, moving on to item number four is Working Wardrobes and we have two lovely ladies here tonight to present to us. Thank you so much for taking out the time to come visit us. We've been looking forward to it. Yes, right there would be wonderful. And if you want to introduce yourselves and all that.

**SUZY:** Absolutely. Thank you. Good evening president, board members, members of the community. My name is Suzy Betz and I am a board member and a proud member of our public affairs committee. Giving back to our community is a deep passion of mine and I'm thrilled to be here tonight to share the incredible impact that Working Wardrobes has in transforming lives. Through career development and workforce readiness, we empower individuals to achieve stability, confidence, and meaningful employment. I'm also here to explore how we can continue to collaborate to ultimately build a stronger, more resilient county. To do that, I'd love to share with you a quick overview of the aspects of amazing resources in our community for Working Wardrobes.

**VIDEO:** We each year Working Wardrobes reaches thousands of people of all ages on their employment journeys. People who have served in the military, been involved in the justice system, face homelessness or food insecurities or simply said, need a helping hand up. Career coaches and navigators are ready to help you build your career and employment journey. Starting with resumes and mock interviews, workshops provide soft skill training, technical certifications, and hands-on learning in a safe, welcoming environment. When you bring a gently loved item to the Working Wardrobes donation center, you are starting a ripple effect. Change makers and volunteers sort through 500,000 pieces annually to ensure top, top-notch quality. And when you're ready for the big meeting, we'll make sure you look the part. Personal stylists will help build your confidence by finding the perfect outfit for your upcoming interview or first day on the job.

Working Wardrobes team of change makers will help with every step in your transformation. When you look your best, you feel your best and all the hard work you put into rebuilding your



career will pay off. Then when you're ready to use your sustainable paycheck for good, you can shop at one of Working Wardrobe stores, The Hangar. Choose from The Hanger outlets or high-end boutique. From board shorts to ballgowns, you'll find something for everyone on your list. And remember when it's your turn to give back the impact that one donation can make. The ripple effect it creates on another. At Working Wardrobes, your future is our purpose.

**SUZY:** Working Wardrobes empowers people to overcome barriers to gainful employment, fostering independence and dignity. Although we are best known for our finishing touch, we pair job seekers with styling in our success suit. This is only 15% of the work that we do. The other 85% focuses on inner transformation, equipping clients with skills, confidence, and resources for lasting career success. Before a client steps into their new suit, we help them rebuild their mindset, ensuring that their outward appearance reflects profound internal growth. Since 1990, Working Wardrobes has empowered more than 135,000 people in Orange County. You may recall that in 2020, a fire destroyed our headquarters, but with community support we rebuilt stronger. This resilience mirrors our client's journeys, reinforcing our commitment to helping them overcome obstacles.

Our program support working age, youth, adults and seniors. Justice involved individuals reducing recidivism with job training. Veterans and military spouses easing transitions into civilian life. Orange County's high cost of living creates significant challenges. A minimum wage earner needs 113 hours per week to afford a one-bedroom apartment. Our clients face barriers like homelessness or housing instability, unemployment or under employment, reentering the workforce after age 55. People often overlooked or seen as a burden, but who are fully capable of meaningful work and contributing their skills. Without stable employment, people face impossible choices, paying rent, but skipping utilities or buying groceries, but delaying medical care. By addressing their individual barriers, we prepare them to secure jobs that provide enough income to cover all the essentials, housing, utilities, food and healthcare, eliminating these painful trade-offs, this strengthens the social and economic fabric of our community. To share more about our impact, I'd like to introduce Bonni Pomush, the Working Wardrobe, CEO.

**BONNI:** Thank you so much, Suzy. Our holistic approach really meets people where they are. We start out by identifying their assets. What do you already have to contribute? And then we identify what is the goal, where are you headed? With those coordinates, we map an individualized employment plan where we build skills, specifically soft skills, transferable skills, certifications, apprenticeships, work experience of course too. And as Suzy mentioned that finishing touch is where the outside is matching now, the updated inside. This roadmap ensures people are ready to succeed for a lifetime of fulfillment and contributing their skills. Our approach is unique and I'm going to tell you the secret sauce to our way of creating transformation. We start out with individualization. No two people are the same. And is life ever happening in a straight line? We recognize this and we meet people with dignity. This ingredient is best described I think by Maya Angelou, right?

You're not going to remember what we said or did, but you'll remember how you felt. And thirdly, we approach our method of teaching with literally teaching people to fish skills that they can use for a lifetime and continue to journey. When we teach people in this way, we truly empower their abilities and we never ever are able to do it alone. We provide all of these services

at no cost to the thousands of people we reach each year. And we're able to do that because pretty equally we are funded by government contracts, our retail stores and donations, individuals and corporate giving. Support from all of these create possibilities, futures that are much brighter for all of us. In fact, four times a year we come and partner with you, Department of Education in four of your campuses, providing four of our skill building workshops and culminating in our wardrobe experience.

One of the workshops is you've got skills. And this workshop is all about learning to discover, embrace and testify to what you already have as assets. Next door interview skills workshop where we literally teach people how to represent themselves using the STAR method and practice interviews and you can see pictures of that actually happening there. The third is our job search strategies and applications where we literally teach how do you strategize your job search? How do you get past the AI and into the people? And determining those areas of industries of interest, practicing completing the applications and answering the tough questions. You don't have any experience, but wait, I know a lot. Right? And finally, our signature power of your image workshop, which is all about personal and professional branding, the elevator pitch, how we represent ourselves, how we make a first impression and a lasting one at that.

And of course, finally that signature wardrobe experience that's in our name and is quite the transformation moment. I know that all of you are wondering already how you can help, so I want to make sure I answer that question right away. First of all, you could take my word for all of this or you could come see it for yourself. I invite you all on the third Thursday of any month to come join me for a tour and see where all of this possibility becomes reality. Secondly, we are celebrating this year. This is our 35th year of service to the community. And I don't think it's an accident that this year we reached our 135,000th client. Come celebrate not only the impact we create, but the ripple effects that that impact creates. And if you knew her, we'll also be hosting our late founder Jerri Rosen.

In November, I invite you also to come join us in the city of Santa Ana at the county's administration buildings. We'll be hosting our final power up for success event of the year. This is like a full day conference. This particular one is targeting our veterans, active and reserve guard and their families, so spouses, et cetera. And we will literally take the village to the county buildings to create the experiences I've described for you. There will be a keynote speaker, a career panel, workshops, the wardrobe experience, headshots, and we will need about a hundred volunteers to help us do that. And I invite you to come be a part of creating the magic we do and giving back obviously to our service members. Anyone is welcome to host a drive and you have already led this effort. Thank you so much. Your drive recently brought many, many pieces that you even took the time to dry clean and really lovingly deliver to Working Wardrobes. Clothing, accessories, even small amounts of gas cards or grocery cards can be that last piece of getting someone to their interview and are great ways to catalyze the efforts of our community.

You can also volunteer with us individually or as a group. And this is a great way as a board if you would like to come and volunteer together as an administration in any respect, we invite you to come and be a part of this. And finally, every single person has had a person in their life who showed them. You've had a teacher that took the time to say, this is what it's really like. You've had a mentor, someone who took the time to really crack the code with you. I want to invite you to be the code cracker for our clients. And what I mean by that is will you please register

yourself to guide real world career exploration? If you scan that code and put your name in our database and say what you're willing to offer, maybe it's I'm really well connected, I will connect you with a person that you want to talk to in that industry, in that occupation. Or it could be, I can do an informational interview. I can tell you what it's like to be a school principal. I can tell you what it's like to be a parent of a child in special education, whatever that might be, to share your journey, your trajectory and demystify it for our clients who are considering employment in those industries and occupations. That would be immensely helpful. Do we have time for one minute to hear from a client?

**BARKE:** I think so.

**BONNI:** Yeah. This is Isaias and I am literally walking through the lobby at Working Wardrobes and I see Isaias who in literally one of our team meetings, his success was being celebrated and they were celebrating that Isaias got into barber school and he is on the road to his dream. So, I walk into the lobby and I see Isaias and I feel like I'm seeing a celebrity, can I get your autograph? I go up to Isaias, how are you? I just heard away what's going on. And so, he starts to tell me and he's giving all of the credit to his coach, a volunteer who on Sunday nights takes his phone calls a person who walks the path with him. And he's telling me all about how coach Matt did everything. And as he's saying this, coach Matt comes out the other door. So, they start talking and I ask, can I please record this? And they're like, yeah, yeah, and keep going. So, this is about one minute of their conversation. Isaias is a young man who went to jail when he was 14 and he's about to share with you what it meant to him to experience this.

**ISAIAS:** I grew up institutionalized and me myself, now I have my priorities, which is my school, work being the best father that I can be. But there's these programs helping the youth I've been in through from juvenile hall to camps, county and prison. And if you put a 14-year-old, which I was and lock them up in a cell, that's not good. I mean there's consequences for your actions, but it's not good because their brain is not developed at that age. And if you teach them that you're going to be institutionalized, that's they're going to look forward to that. They're going to not look forward to it maybe, but that's all they're going to know. But if you put them on a suit and tell them just the time that you gave me, tell kids.

**COACH MATT:** Yeah, I mean I could see right away that I mean you were ready for this and success happens Isaias, as you know, I mean success happens when opportunity and preparedness come together. We found the opportunities, you were prepared, we were successful. So again, it was an absolute team effort and I appreciate the way you approached it. I really do.

**BONNI:** Coach Matt believed in Isaias. He took the time to show him the way and to believe in his dream. And Isaias is making it a reality because all of us are invested also in his success. Thank you for learning more about Working Wardrobes and how we prepare people for opportunity. They don't do it alone and neither do we. I have one last invitation for you and it is a personal one. A fellow elected official said to me late last year, "Bonni, I know you're celebrating a big year next year and you're going to need to be telling people this story over and over. Why not also invite them to be a part of it with me?" He said, "For every dollar any elected official donates, I will match it." So, if you are so inclined personally to give to Working Wardrobes, please know that I have a match for you and your \$1 will become two. Thank you.

And please stay in touch. Any of those things I mentioned that you want to engage with us, you can scan the code, but that top right one is my please, please sign up to become a guide for other people on their employment journeys. What questions may we answer for you?

**BARKE:** Board, any questions?

**SPARKS:** Thank you for the wonderful work that you're doing. You've come to Chapman University a few times. I think I've met you before there and just getting the word out about the great work in programs especially that you do because I think you're right. A lot of people have a misconception that it's the wardrobe only, but there's so much more to your organization and you're just helping our community so much. So, thank you.

**BONNI:** Thank you. I hope when you're done with that dress, you'll donate it.

**SPARKS:** Sure.

**VALDES:** So, I happen to have, yes, you did some suits that I don't wear anymore and some Where do I go to donate? What's the address?

**BONNI:** Thank you. MacArthur and McGaw is the cross streets. The address starts with 17 Daimler Street. I'm going to tell you what it is. Just give me a second. Don't have it memorized. I think it's 173912, something like that. Can I get it to you?

**VALDES:** Okay.

**BARKE:** Well thank you for coming. I've learned a lot today. You're doing amazing work. I love your energy. I love what you're doing and so thank you. So hopefully this will reap great benefits for you being here. We appreciate your time. And what you're doing.

**BONNI:** Thank you. And I'll get you that address.

**VALDES:** Do you accept donations all day long?

**BONNI:** Oh, great question. Tuesday through Saturday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and you can drop off any time within there.

**VALDES:** You said 9:00 to 3:00?

**BONNI:** Tuesday through Saturday. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you Bonni and Suzy, we appreciate you. All right. Next, I'm going to invite Mayu Iwatani.

**BEAN:** Yeah, if I can just introduce real quick, so we've talked about this as a board and I wanted to be able to have Mayu come up and share a little bit about the California Youth and Behavior Initiative, CYBHI, fee schedule and school linked partnership. One thing you need to know about Mayu is that she's well respected across the state in this particular topic. So, when other districts and other counties need some help and support, they actually reach out to us and

Mayu is considered a leader across the state, so she's going to share with us an update and how it impacts districts and I think you'll be interested in knowing what the whole program is about. Mayu.

**IWATANI:** Thank you. I think we have slides. Oh, I can hit it. Thank you. Well, good evening, Orange County Board of Education, Dr. Bean and cabinet members. My name is Mayu Iwatani and I'm the senior administrator of mental health and wellness at OCDE and the student services division. I'm excited to be here to share an important update as Dr. Bean mentioned, on the California Youth and Behavioral Health Initiative or CYBHI for short and I won't test on any acronyms. CYBHI is a \$4.7 billion statewide investment aimed at supporting the mental health and wellness of children and youth across California.

A major part of this initiative is something called the CYBHI fee schedule, which we're particularly excited about. The CYBHI fee schedule allows local educational agencies or LEAs to receive reimbursements for school-based mental health services. And these are services that have been provided in schools for decades, but now there's a system to submit claims for them and receive funding. The services are provided in the schools, then submitted as claims, and then reimbursements are processed through Medi-Cal and private insurance providers, which brings back funding back into the schools. This is significant for several reasons. It allows more services to be reimbursed and ensures the continuation of comprehensive mental health support. More students will have access to these essential services, which directly addresses the mental health needs and schools can use the funds to support staffing and service delivery. It enforces the focus on early identification, prevention and intervention, which we know can significantly reduce long-term impacts and associated costs. But most of all, it helps improve student academic performance by supporting their overall wellbeing.

While this may sound new, it's not entirely. Since 1994, schools have been able to bill for certain services. The fee schedule now expands the scope of what we can bill and who can benefit. In connection to the fee schedule, the Department of Healthcare Services, DHCS has allocated funding for each county and designated the county offices of education across the state to be technical assistance hubs for their local LEAs. This one-time funding is designed to help LEAs prepare for the fee schedule without burdening their local budgets. The funds can cover costs associated with planning, system setup, training and more. OCDE received the grant funds and distributed 80% of the funds directly to the 45 participating LEAs. This includes the 29 districts with the 29th being ACCESS and 16 charter schools. The 20% remaining will be with OCDE to support coordination, technical assistance, and professional development. With the 20% of OCDE is offering trainings, professional development, hosting network meetings for mental health leaders to collaborate and learn from each other, developing best practice resources and providing ongoing guidance and technical assistance to ensure and support successful implementation and grant compliance.

As mentioned earlier, ACCESS is also participating in benefiting from these efforts. They're currently using the capacity grants to prepare and will officially begin participating in the fee schedule in January 2026. This will bring in funding for the ACCESS school-based mental health professionals supporting our youth. In closing, this initiative and our collective participation in it strengthens the mental health systems across our schools and brings funding to support our students. I want to sincerely thank the Orange County Board of Education and Dr.

Bean for consistently prioritizing student needs and for your continued leadership and support. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**BEAN:** Did you guys have any questions for the program? Yeah.

**WILLIAMS:** Yes, I do. This is something that the board has had significant input and concern about for the last several years, so I want to thank Dr. Bean for taking the mantle on this and taking the bull by the horns. And thank you, Mayu, for what you've done in this. So, the money, if I may ask some general questions, the \$4.7 billion, that's a state investment, the funds come from the state?

**IWATANI:** Correct.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. And that's just for the '25-'26 budget?

**IWATANI:** That's the overall, there's about, there's various efforts and under that \$4.7 billion investment.

**WILLIAMS:** But it came from Sacramento, right?

**IWATANI:** It's from the state.

**WILLIAMS:** Right. And it's already been approved or is it pending the governor's signature?

**BEAN:** It's not been approved. That's the work we've been doing for, it's been approved.

**WILLIAMS:** So, this is probably the last year that the money was approved. And so, as a county, we take the funds and we distribute it to all the LEAs here in Orange County, including our ACCESS program?

**IWATANI:** Correct.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. So how much of that 4.7 billion do we actually get here in Orange County?

**IWATANI:** For OCDE, for the 20% it represents about \$5 million.

**WILLIAMS:** \$5 million, okay. And the fee schedule, what is the fee schedule based upon face-to-face interaction, a contract fee for service? How does that work for the individual provider and how does the student benefit from that encounter, that face-to-face time with the professional?

**IWATANI:** Yeah, that's a great question. There's actually various categories of services that are coded under this fee schedule. And so, it would be like psychoeducation, it could be just talking to the student like a school-based mental health professional would. And so those are times that could be captured on the fee schedule.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Are there managed care groups that are involved in these contracts or is it a contract with an individual? How does that work?

**IWATANI:** No, not necessarily. They're primarily provided by school-based mental health professionals, but the managed care plan will pay the claims.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. So, these are Medi-Cal approved fees, is that correct?

**IWATANI:** And private insurance.

**WILLIAMS:** And private insurance. So, there is a contract there that has already said you're going to get this much for 45 minutes face-to-face time.

**IWATANI:** Exactly.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Just a question, because we've had such a supporting role by Dr. Martin Eaton and his group, what's his involvement in this?

**IWATANI:** I'm sorry for?

**BEAN:** Dr. Eaton.

**WILLIAMS:** Dr. Martin Eaton.

**BEAN:** Yeah, I can answer that. He is not involved in this, but he's involved in this as a checkup screening that we do for ACCESS. Now the question is can we get reimbursed for that screening? That's something that we would probably need to research.

**IWATANI:** Yeah.

**WILLIAMS:** Right. And if we can, I'd love to get an update by Dr. Martin Eaton in the next few months.

**BEAN:** We plan to have him next month.

**WILLIAMS:** For the record, if we can all recall that he played such a role in finding all these high-risk kids who are depressed or suicidal and he did a marvelous job on that. So again, thank you so much.

**IWATANI:** You're welcome.

**WILLIAMS:** Both of you.

**BEAN:** Thank you.

**IWATANI:** Thank you.

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

**BEAN:** Good job, Mayu.

**BARKE:** May I have a motion to approve the consent calendar?

**WILLIAMS:** So moved.

**BARKE:** Second?

**SPARKS:** Second.

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

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

**BARKE:** Anyone opposed? All right, the motion passes 5-0. All right.

**WILLIAMS:** Going to go to facilities.

**BARKE:** We're going to recess. Yes. So now we're going to go to recess with a regular board meeting to a meeting at the Orange County Department of Education Facilities Corporation.

**GIORDANO:** All right, well thank you and good evening. President Barke, members of the board. I think the first order of business this evening is to appoint the officers for the corporation for the '25-'26 year. And I think if we look at the last year's Dr. Williams served as the president and Ms. Barke served as the secretary. And then so for '25-'26, if we follow that same line, Ms. Barke would serve as the president and Mr. Shaw would serve as the secretary.

**WILLIAMS:** Can I have a point of parliamentary order here, I think we have to adopt the agenda in the minutes before open.

**BARKE:** Do we have to call to order and adopt the agenda for that?

**WILLIAMS:** And roll call.

**BARKE:** Okay. So, I'm calling the meeting to order and roll call Darou.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Sparks?

**SPARKS:** Yes.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Valdes?

**VALDES:** Present.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Shaw?

**SHAW:** Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Barke?



**BARKE:** Here.

**SISAVATH:** Trustee Williams.

**WILLIAMS:** Present.

**BARKE:** Okay. And may I have a motion to accept the agenda?

**WILLIAMS:** Make the motion.

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** All right, all those in favor?

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

**BARKE:** Anyone opposed? All right, the motion passes 5-0 and then a motion to approve the minutes.

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

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** All right.

**HENDRICK:** We actually approved those last September, so it was just letting you know because you'll approve these in September also.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**HENDRICK:** Yeah, already it is just receiving them again.

**BARKE:** Okay just receiving.

**HENDRICK:** You'll approve them next [inaudible].

**BARKE:** Okay, great. Thank you. Okay, so now we can proceed.

**SHAW:** Do we have public comments?

**HENDRICK:** We have none.

**BARKE:** All right. I think we can proceed now, thank you.

**GIORDANO:** Okay, just looking now for to get the presentation up.

**HENDRICK:** We still need to appoint the officers. I'm sorry.

**GIORDANO:** Okay.

**VALDES:** Are we accepting motions?

**HENDRICK:** So, this would be to appoint a treasurer basically.

**WILLIAMS:** I'll make the motion for Trustee Jorge Valdes. He served and did very well valiantly last year.

**VALDES:** Did I? Okay.

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

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

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

**BARKE:** Anyone opposed? Motion passes 5-0, thank you.

**GIORDANO:** We're ready.

**VALDES:** Don't get me into any trouble.

**GIORDANO:** All right, well thank you and good evening, President Barke, members of the board. Tonight, we just want to give you a brief update on our Esplanade property. First, we'd like to share with you the results of operations for this past fiscal year. This is '24-'25, and then also just provide a look at the operating budget for the current year '25-'26. And so, here's how we closed out last fiscal year. This is '24-'25. You can see we closed out the year in really good financial position with an operating surplus of \$612,072. Our revenues actually exceeded projections totaling \$2,870,482 while our expenditures came in slightly above forecast at \$2,258,410. And that left us with the project with an ending fund balance of \$5,686,213. And this is as of June 30th, 2025. The interest rate on the loan for the property it set at 2.84% and that loan expires on June 1st of 2029, at which point the property will be completely paid off.

The current principal outstanding on the loan is \$5,130,000 and the properties occupancy rate averaged about 94% for the year, which was very good. When you're considering the fact that the commercial property market still remains pretty weak. We're also continuing to see a trend in the number of tenants that are shortening their leases and then downsizing to smaller spaces as well. And so that's something we are keeping an eye on. Overall for fiscal year '24-'25. It was a very good year for the project and unless there are any questions, I can move on and review with you the operating budget for the current year '25-'26.

**BARKE:** Any questions? Okay, go ahead.

**GIORDANO:** All right, so here's a look at the operating budget for the current year. And so, we are projecting a conservative occupancy rate of 85%, and this is in the event of a downturn in the commercial property market. We're not forecasting that, but we are forecasting conservatively. Total operating revenues for the year are projected at \$2,726,918. And then total operating expenditures are forecast at \$2,353,415 or 15% above the prior expenditures. Again, trying to budget conservatively, since we are planning a couple of large capital facility projects, capital

expenditures are projected at \$1,620,000 and the projects include the installation, the elevator in one of our buildings, and then we have to replace a couple of large HVAC units as well. Due to the plan, one-time spending on these large capital facility projects, we're projecting a deficit of \$1,246,457. That's for the current fiscal year, and that would leave the project with an estimated ending fund balance of \$4,439,756 as of June 30th of 2026. And of course, this still will leave us very well positioned as we head into next fiscal year '26-'27. So, if there are any questions about that.

**WILLIAMS:** Question, how much is the elevator costing in and of itself?

**GIORDANO:** The elevator, we went out to bid for that project and the elevator, it was just over 1.5 million, everything. The work on this elevator is going to be a much more extensive than the elevator that we had in this building. And so, it's one of the things that we're going to have to do is remove that staircase in building four where we're going to install this elevator. And so, it's much more extensive than what we're doing over here.

**WILLIAMS:** Wow.

**GIORDANO:** Yeah.

**BEAN:** I'll get to visit our work, our employees upstairs now.

**WILLIAMS:** Oh.

**HENDRICK:** Ken, the elevator isn't very expensive, it's just all of the construction that goes with unfortunately.

**WILLIAMS:** Right.

**GIORDANO:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**HENDRICK:** You'll need a motion to approve the budget.

**BARKE:** Okay, so I'll make a motion. Is there a motion to approve the budget?

**SPARKS:** Motion to approve.

**WILLIAMS:** Second.

**BARKE:** All those in favor?

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

**BARKE:** Anyone opposed? Motion passes 5-0.

**WILLIAMS:** There's no closed session on this item.

**BARKE:** Okay, so now we're going to go back to our regular meeting.

**HENDRICK:** So, you'll adjourn this meeting and go back to the regular meeting.

**BARKE:** Yes. All right, so this meeting is adjourned and now we're going back to our regular meeting. Welcome back everyone. Renee, are there any charter submissions?

**HENDRICK:** Actually, we have two.

**BARKE:** Oh, okay.

**HENDRICK:** And so, let me get my glasses on here. One is from Nova Academy Orange County, which is a countywide charter. The public hearing will be on September 3rd. The staff report will be posted on September 23rd and decision on October 8th. The second one is the California Public Leadership Academy of Orange County, which again would be a countywide charter. And that is the same timeframe public hearing on September 3rd. Staff report due on September 23rd and decision by October 8th. And so those binders will actually be sent home with you for the next meeting.

**BARKE:** I think I received mine already.

**HENDRICK:** Yeah, you did ask for yours early. Yes.

**BARKE:** I like them delivered. Thank you. Okay, great. All right, so next I'm going to invite Aracely for our public hearing.

**CHASTAIN:** All right. Good evening, President Barke, trustees, Superintendent Bean. Today the board will hold a hearing to consider public input regarding the countywide charter petition submitted by Orange County Prep, a Navigator School on June 9th. The charter school proposes to operate a classroom-based program serving students in transitional kindergarten through grade 12 for initial five-year charter term from 2026 to 2031. The charter operator notified four school districts of intent to open facilities, Orange Unified, La Habra City, Capistrano Unified, and Santa Ana Unified. Before public comments, Orange County Prep representatives are allotted 15 minutes to address the board. I now call representatives from Orange County Prep to the podium.

**CAPRICE:** Okay. How do I get it to go up there? Oh, there we go. Okay, great. Okay. Thank you. I want to start by just thanking you for your service. As a former elected official myself more than 25 years ago, I feel for you.

And I genuinely and deeply appreciate the work that you do on behalf of our community, I'd like to introduce a couple of the folks that are with me here today. My name is Caprice Young, Dr. Caprice Young, and I am the CEO and superintendent of Navigator Public Schools. I've asked these three individuals to come with me to the podium because they will be part of presenting, but you'll see Noel Russell-Unterburger in the, wave your hand. She's our chief financial and operating officer and is here to be able to answer financial questions. Crystal O'Rourke is our chief academic officer who was unable to attend due to a family emergency, but she's fine. And we have our founder and chief impact officer and former CAO James Dent here to help if needed. But with me at the podium are Justin Stiner, who is our Orange County director and

Kamille Geneva, who you won't see in the charter petition because she wasn't officially in the role as our primary school principal when we submitted and Mariah Butron, who is our secondary school principal.

So, they're here with me. I also have several members of our leadership council. You'll see their names here. They're also in the charter petition. We are thrilled and excited to be working with such a prestigious group of individuals who really have deep relationships and knowledge of the communities that we are planning to serve. Our mission is really pretty simple. You can read it, but I'll read it because I'm proud of it. "Navigator's mission is to equip students to be learners and leaders in high school, college and beyond. We develop top tier teams of educators who continuously improve and innovate schools that deliver phenomenal outcomes for all students regardless of their circumstances." An important thing that I want to point out here is that our educators are a critical part of our mission. It's in our DNA, it's what we're all about because we know that the best educators are going to create the strongest students.

We're proposing to open three clusters of schools, all of them being TK through 12, maybe on single sites or on multiple sites in each cluster, depending on the availability of facilities, which is why we're not specific there. I will also point out that our top three priorities are Orange, La Habra, Anaheim, and SJC, San Clemente. We have Santa Ana on here because there are some facilities opportunities there, but it is very much our fourth choice. So, we plan to bring you high quality education for 3,300 students, and our enrollment will be phased in over the course of seven years. Our experience has been when you open a few grades and then add a grade at a time, you have a consistent culture and excellence. So, we're not going to rush. We're going to make sure that everything that we do is the highest quality. We have a proven K-8 model and we are partnering with Santiago Canyon College to create a state-of-the-art, dual enrollment early college and career pathways program. Even very likely co-locating on the Santiago Canyon College campus itself.

And then we have deep community partnerships that we've begun to develop. Our current schools are awesome, and we've grown from just two schools six years ago to now having four schools. We've had more than 800 graduates, one of whom is with us here today, and we serve about 2,000 students. Our schools are located in the excerpts of the Silicon Valley area, so we serve the agricultural belt of Watsonville, Hollister, and Gilroy, as well as the very urban center of Hayward. And our students are predominantly from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and still outperform academically. So, these are our most recent test scores. And so, as you can see, the yellow is us. The dark blue is the state and the lighter blue is disadvantaged students in the state of California. We consistently outperform state averages. More important in some ways though, is we also consistently outperform the students, the schools that are in the same neighborhoods that we serve.

So, when you look apples to apples, our students are significantly outperforming. Now, I don't want to give you the impression that the only thing we care about is test scores. Test scores are merely one indicator. We also are working every day to make sure that every single student with us is becoming a continual improver, an academic scholar, a creative problem solver, courageous change makers and collaborative teammates. That's really important to us because those are the things that are going to help them develop the resilience to be able to be successful. And as we create our new high school, we're also not just looking at test scores. All of our students are

going to graduate with complete A through G completion for college, but they'll also be graduating in partnership with Santiago Canyon College and Arizona State University with an AA and AS and or a certification in a particular pathway.

We will also work with all of our students so that they're graduating with a professional portfolio. So, they're not just going to be going off to college or into the career workforce saying, I graduated and here's my transcript. They're also going to say, here are work samples of the things that I've done. Because more and more that's what businesses are looking for and what employers are looking for. We're also working with America Succeeds on a durable skills program so that our students are developing their durable skills throughout. And ultimately what our hope is, is that every single kid will be expanding their capacity to, as adults and frankly even as students, make a real difference in their community. Unlike most of the pathway programs that are in Orange County right now, we're focused on public service related fields so that our students can become engineers for Caltrans and be great project managers to fix the infrastructure that we have, to become teachers in our schools to become health science, health science experts to be able to develop new things for healthcare industry. Sorry, now as I'm getting tongue tied, I am going to turn this over to our instructional team.

**MARIAH:** Good evening, esteemed board members. It is such a pleasure to speak with you today and share a little bit about what makes Navigator Schools in Orange County Prep so special. And so first and foremost, our program, Orange County Prep is based on a proven Navigator Schools' model. And it has five design principles that each one of our schools ensures just the highest quality education. And so, the first one at the top of our compass is our culture of excellence. And so, we understand that and put that there intentionally because we understand that student progress really begins and ends with a strong academic culture. We made sure that when you walk into every single one of our Navigator schools, as they currently are and when we will be opening Orange County, you'll immediately be struck with just the amount of student discourse that they're engaged in. When you look on our walls, you'll see academic data and celebrations of every student and ensuring that they are writing their own goals and setting them and taking ownership, and that starts as early transitional kindergarten. Now, one of the things that we really believe in is the endless potential of every one of our students and we use our graduate aims, which Dr. Young alluded to slightly earlier as our core heart of our culture and that guides our students to be learners and leaders in high school, college and beyond.

Our second design principle is our data-driven instruction, and what this encompasses is each of our instructional staff members are trained on how to leverage data in real time with students. That starts early on when in their practice with intellectual prep, where they go in and identify what are the key pieces of information we need to make sure we're addressing when it comes to California state standards, NGSS standards, ELD standards. And then once they identify the criteria for success, they use a technique called tracking not watching where they go in and they observe in real time student information and student work in order to really leverage what they're seeing to desegregate data, look at the various trends and provide intervention accommodations and even challenges in the moment. And they don't have to wait or guess where students are coming from they know exactly because they're trained to study the student work. Now my colleague Kamille will go into how we do this through coaching.

**KAMILLE:** Good evening everyone. All right. At Navigator we believe in the endless potential of not only our wonderful students but also our staff. We are committed to continuous improvement, which is the third point of our compass points, which means that all of our instructional staff receives weekly coaching. This weekend coaching includes live coaching, which is accompanied with follow-up support during weekly feedback meetings. Our instructional leadership team conducts weekly walkthroughs to ensure high quality instruction is consistently happening in every classroom. New instructional leaders also attend the relay graduate college of coaching intensive program to make sure that we are maintaining strong and consistent coaching practices across all of our campuses. In addition, grade level teams collaborate monthly across all sites to plan, reflect and grow each other's practices. Our investment in our staff's development has resulted in a 90% plus retention rate, something we are extremely proud of.

We also take equity very seriously with our multi-tiered layers of support, which is another point on our compass. We implement a full inclusion model, which means that regardless of circumstance, students receive what they need and in the general education classroom, whenever possible, about 90% of their services are right there in the classroom. At least half of the day, classrooms are supported by two educators, excuse me. At least half of the day, classrooms are supported by two educators to ensure individualized and high-quality instruction. For students who need additional help to thrive, we offer wraparound services such as counseling, support from our community schools coordinators, and our full inclusion instructors who help meet students' needs in a personalized way. Technology is an integral part of all of our lives and our students' future. Every scholar has access to one-to-one devices, which they use to build essential skills in math and reading daily. Teachers use this data to identify areas where students need additional support and opportunities for mastery. To stay ahead of the curve, with AI and artificial intelligence, our AI fellow in network AI fellow is working tirelessly to streamline teachers' workload to give our teachers more time in things that matter, engaging with their scholars. And I'll hand it back to Justin.

**JUSTIN:** Justin Stiner, former school leader and will be the OC regional director and I get to share about our secondary schools. I'm sorry, I want to make sure I'm in the mic. Our secondary schools, our middle schools are unique in the sense our students lead their instruction and the teacher serves as a coach in the classroom. What we've realized is our secondary kids don't like to sit quietly for very long, and so by using their ability to talk, we have them work in what are called squads. The engagement, the academic outcomes for our secondary students have gone through the roof with this program. Not only have we implemented at our schools, we've been recognized nationally in over 50 papers for the work that we do in squads, but I also coach other schools around the state of California to implement this model with much success. And with that, we were one of two schools selected by our peers at the California or CCSA, the California Charter School Conference this year for the Heart Vision Equity and Innovation Award. It's a mouthful, but I think most importantly we were recognized by peer schools and peer school leaders around the state for the exceptional work that we do and partnering with schools. So, I will throw it back to Dr. Young to go ahead and close us out.

**CAPRICE:** That's it. Thank you very much for allowing us to make this presentation to you. For us, this is our joy. Getting to do this work is an honor every minute and we are so pleased to be

able to bring this to Orange County with your support. My father graduated from Santa Ana High. My husband graduated from Villa Park, so this is home. Thank you. And we're here if you have any questions at whatever point that's appropriate.

**BARKE:** Do we have questions? We'll start at the far end.

**CHASTAIN:** One second. One second.

**BARKE:** Oh, sorry.

**CHASTAIN:** That's okay. You can go ahead. The hearing's now open for 15 minutes of public comments. Trustee Shaw, please call for the first speaker.

**SHAW:** Very good. I think we got seven. Do we want to do three minutes or two minutes or what's the pleasure?

**ROLEN:** Whatever the will of the board.

**BARKE:** I'm fine.

**HENDRICK:** Your policy says 15 minutes for total.

**SHAW:** So, 15 minutes divided by seven, so we'll do two minutes.

**BARKE:** Two minutes. Okay.

**SHAW:** See I studied math once upon time. All right, and just because you get two minutes doesn't mean you have to take all two minutes. That's another rule. Okay, so we'll have Nora and on deck Janelle.

**BARKE:** Over there. Yeah.

**NORA:** I've been told my whole life I talk fast so hopefully we'll be under two minutes. My name's Nora Crivello. I'm the current chairman of the board for Navigator Schools. It's my honor to be here to support our team and to support our mission and thank you for allowing us this time to speak. As a board member and speaking for the board, we are fully dedicated to the mission of Navigator to support all scholars and lifelong learners and we're completely dedicated to this team and this endeavor. We have an incredibly high capacity, high powered board, brilliant people and that was the reason that I decided to return to the board when called to service after serving six years as a parent rep is really my honor to do so. And speaking of being a parent, my daughter graduated from Navigator about a little over a year ago as an eighth grader and I can't say enough about the dedication of the team that supported her.

We say every student by name and by need and that's very personal to me because my daughter is legally blind. So, braille, O and M, orientation, mobility, the cane work, all of it. She did it and she thrived at Navigator to the point where last year as a freshman in high school she won the best freshman English student and now as a sophomore she's going into AP pre-calculus and that's because of the foundation that she received through Navigator. When we say full inclusion,



we mean it. It's not just a poster on the wall. I never once had to fight as a parent for what she needed and I can't say how much that means to me as a parent. I work in the private sector as a CEO and I'm on multiple industry organizations and I can say with certainty that there is no organization I've worked with that has as mission driven of a team as this organization. They're phenomenal. We believe in our core from the board of directors to every janitor and front office person that every student should have the opportunity to have a high-quality education regardless of where they grew up, regardless of their parents' circumstances. So that's what we're all about. Thank you so much for your time.

**SHAW:** Thank you. Janelle will be followed by Noel.

**JANELLE:** We planned the rhyme. Good evening board members and Superintendent Bean. My name is Janelle Ruley. I'm an attorney representing the school and honestly, I'm so thrilled to be here tonight in support of Navigator. I've worked with this team for a long time. We've logged a lot of hours together in the trenches up in Northern California and I'm really glad that you are going to also get the opportunity to get to know them and that you have been having the opportunity to get to know them. So, Navigator, as you know is seeking a countywide charter petition. As you're very familiar, we have to have a countywide justification for this countywide benefit charter. The charter proposes many in it, so I just wanted to kind of highlight those to again focus on why we couldn't serve these students as well through a charter authorized by one school district. So, first reason number one would be efficiencies that are gained from consistent and centralized oversight.

So, if Navigator were to operate a number of different charter schools authorized by a number of different school districts, you can understand how the content of the charter petition might get watered down or changed in certain ways. And a lot of authorizers ask for specific changes and the Navigator model is one that really has been time tested and pressure tested, and so we just don't want to have to change that model. The second reason would be around ensuring countywide equity and access. So, the idea of OC Prep is to serve a cross section of the entire county and to not concentrate enrollment based on students who reside in any one particular school district. As a countywide charter, they can give and have to give admission preference to anyone who resides in the county, not just in a particular school district. The third reason is supporting families' mobility within Orange County. So, if a family were to move within the county and they attend OC Prep, they wouldn't have to dis-enroll and then re-enroll. They could just continue on in the same school. And last but not least, the ability to launch campuses quickly to serve students who need them when they need them. Thank you so much.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**SHAW:** Thank you. Noel will be followed by Victoria.

**NOEL:** Good evening, President Barke, Superintendent Bean and esteemed board members. Thank you so much for welcoming Navigator Schools here. I'm Noel Russell-Unterburger. I'm the chief financial and operating officer and I am thankful for the opportunity to share with you why we are ready to serve more families across Orange County. Navigator has four successful schools and I'm here to tell you three significant things about our readiness to join Orange County. First. We're financially strong. We've spent the last three years strengthening our

organization, investing in talent, improving our systems and building capacity. We're financially ready to welcome more families into our Navi community. This isn't wishful thinking at all. It's careful preparation and we didn't just plan for growth, but we prepared for it. Secondly, we've partnered with the right people. We added Charter Impact as our back office provider and it is truly a game changer. They handle the complex financial and compliance work, which frees our educators and leaders to dedicate their time and energy to student success across the network.

It's operational excellence that scales as we grow responsibly and sustainably. Third, we have financial backing. The federal government has awarded us a replication and expansion grant because they believe our model works and should reach more students. I'm going to repeat that because they believe our model works and should reach more families. Additionally, our longtime foundation partners keep supporting us because they have also watched our students grow and succeed year after year. It's not just funding, it's a relationship and it's validating that we're doing something worth expanding. So, here's where we stand. We're financially healthy, we're operationally ready thanks to Charter Impact and we have funding to make it happen. Thank you.

**SHAW:** Thank you. Okay. Victoria will be followed by, forgive me if I mess this one up Arpinder.

**VICTORIA:** Good evening. My name is Victoria McDougald and it's my honor to speak with you this evening as part of Navigator's Orange County Prep leadership council. As both a charter parent and someone who's chosen education research and policy as my career, I strongly believe in the importance of choice. Public charter schools provide important options for families and educators and high-quality charter schools like the ones that Navigator provides, have proven to offer life-changing choices for hundreds of scholars and their families. While Orange County is very fortunate to have many incredible schools with phenomenal teachers and leaders, Navigator offers a unique educational model that as you heard this evening, focuses on rigorous academics and learning, student leadership, collaboration, student agency, and extensive professional development and continued coaching for staff. Those things are all not just jargon that look good on an application, but they are true elements of Navigator's, philosophy and academic programming.

Not only does Navigator have a proven track record of success, but its network leaders, as you heard tonight, are also genuinely committed to partnering with and supporting other educators and teachers in schools outside of their own network as well, which is pretty special. For these reasons, I'm thrilled that Navigator Schools has submitted a charter to become part of our Orange County education community. Having more high-quality public education options is always a win for students and families and it's certainly made the world of difference for my two kids. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this wonderful charter and also thank you for your ongoing and important work for all of our kids.

**SHAW:** Thank you. Arpinder will be followed by Jeff.

**ARPINDER:** Hi everyone. So that was Victoria. I'm Arpinder. My name is Arpinder Kaur and I'm currently a rising junior at UCLA planning to graduate in 2026, triple majoring in global studies, public affairs and political science. I attended the Dr. TJ Owens Gilroy Early College

Academy and graduated with two associate's degrees and most importantly, I'm a proud alumni of Gilroy Prep School, which was the first of many Navigator schools. I'm speaking from the heart here because I tried looking at a script and I didn't feel right, but everything I've done in the person that I am today is because of Navigator. All these educators they talk about having invested in those are real, they're very real human beings who have impacted my life and all of my peers' life. This model that we've gone around to 50 different schools teaching and pushing that model has changed my life.

That model is fully founded on communication, problem solving, teamwork. From there, shortly after graduating from Gilroy Prep at 14, I founded a 501c3 nonprofit and became the first youth board member to sit on the YMCA board of managers that then progressed to be the model for nationwide YMCA boards. I wouldn't have been able to do that if I didn't learn in middle school that I had a voice. It's as easy as that. The squad's model, the way that it works, especially as someone with ADHD, it was nice not having to sit there and listen to Ms. B lecture, who is my not middle school but fifth grade teacher. And eighth grade, there you go. And eighth grade we did squads in her classroom and it truly was life changing. Now in college where a lot of it is you carry your own weight and you work with your friends to do so. I learned that when I was 12 and 13 when my brain was malleable and skills were the easiest to learn. Bringing, being a Navigator was a privilege. Bring it to OC and students will be great.

**SHAW:** Thank you. Okay, Jeff followed by Oswaldo.

**JEFF:** Good evening all. That's a hard one to follow. Navigator didn't exist when I was in elementary and middle school, but I'm here to represent my daughter who hopefully will be able to attend. Since the moment my daughter was born our lives have revolved around her, what she likes to eat, what's her favorite toy, what books make her happy. All these things seem to matter so much more now that I'm a father. And with that of course comes what is her future going to be like and where is she going to go to school and what is that going to look like? She'll be starting transitional kindergarten next year and like many other parents we're reviewing our options and that's why I'm here is really that word options. As a parent, we want and believe our children deserve choices and choices to go to school as well. I mean, what school to go to? So, I'm thinking would it be a project-based education, bilingual school, something that's technology focused, but regardless of these routes, I know that something, a charter like Orange County Prep is a potential option for me and something I would choose from my child. I think they're an important part of the education system and I want Nova to have an option to go to one and hopefully when and open.

And so that's why I'm here and that's really all I have to say. I appreciate the responsibility you guys have to ensure that our students have these options as well. And I hope that you see OC Prep as a potential like I do. Thank you very much.

**SHAW:** Thank you. Okay. Oswaldo followed by Arleen.

**OSWALDO:** Good afternoon esteemed members of the orange county board of education. My name is Oswaldo Diaz and I am a member of the Navigator School Orange County Prep leadership council. Thank you for your time and attention to this petition. My background includes working on various senior roles in school finance that include chief financial officer,

chief business officer, and also director of financial planning and reporting. And I am here today to assure you that Navigator is in a sound financial position with the ability to deliver on the promises they have made in this petition. As you read the supporting documents, Navigator has strong procedures and internal controls in place to ensure fiscal responsibility and long-term viability. They partner with Charter Impact, a comprehensive business management service organization for additional support and background. This extra layer of oversight illustrates their commitment to fiduciary responsibility. Finally, since its inception in 2011, Navigator Schools have been a strong partner with each of its authorizers providing a strong educational choice for all students. This history of success and collaboration will continue as Navigator works to become a crucial partner of the Orange County educational community. Thank you for your time and I hope this is the beginning of a long-term relationship with you. Thank you.

**SHAW:** Thank you. And last but not least, Arleen.

**ARLEEN:** Hello, esteem board members. Good evening. And my name is Dr. Arlene Satele and I'm the vice president of administrative services in Santiago Canyon College. And I work well with Caprice. So, Santiago Canyon College proudly supports Navigator Schools and establishing our for us early college pathways for students. We've had the opportunity to engage with the Navigator team and have been truly impressed by their thoughtful planning inspired by the enthusiasm for this work. Our president, Dr. Jeannie Kim, serves on the Orange County Prep leadership council. Underscoring SEC's deep commitment to the success of this partnership. Developing early college pathways is a priority for us and we know it's equally important to the Navigator and OC Prep teams. We are honored to be part of this important effort and look forward to welcoming the board to our campus to celebrate this exciting collaboration. Thank you.

**SHAW:** Thank you. That concludes our public comments. Madam President.

**BARKE:** Thank you.

**CHASTAIN:** Public hearing is now concluded the Orange County Board of Education staff recommendations, including recommended findings be published by August 19th. At the September 3rd board meeting, the board will conduct a public hearing and take action to grant or deny the charter petition. President Barke, I now close the public hearing and return the meeting to you.

**BARKE:** Thank you so much. All right, I'll start to my right. Any questions you want to bring them back up?

**SPARKS:** Sure. I would like to bring up the financial folks.

**BARKE:** Yeah, either up or up here. This is, why don't you come up here? That's public comment, but we want you close.

**SPARKS:** Yeah, we want you close. Yeah. No, I'm so impressed with the team you put together, the board you put together, the connection with Santiago. I mean you guys obviously know your stuff and you've done your homework. I just want to hear how does the rubber meet the road

financially in terms of the first three-year projection? How do we know that you're financially viable as much as you're educationally viable?

**NOEL:** Thank you for that question. I appreciate that. What I'll start by saying is giving kudos to our charter impact partners. They're the ones that were able to put together all the financials. So, as you review those, that information is put together. I can't own it, so I won't. It's all charter impact who actually put all that together. And so, when we think about the financials of Orange County Prep, we're looking at sustainability by year five, as is anticipated with all of the funding. So, we have federal funding, we have state funding. Our budget was put together very conservatively to align with the current funding that is provided at the state level and the federal level. Also considering what's on the horizon currently in terms of revenue and budget cuts as well. And so, our financials are very conservative. We're looking at actually at the end of year one, it'll be the fund balances are going to exceed the CDE projections and they'll increase year over year and I think they'll get to about 20 or 30% by year five as well.

**SPARKS:** And remind me of the numbers of projected numbers of students.

**NOEL:** Okay. So, by year five we will have 2,970 students. We're going to start year one with 420.

**SPARKS:** Okay. That's the number I was looking for. How you're anticipating to start and what gives you the confidence in that number.

**NOEL:** As you mentioned, we have so much support here in Orange County. Our leadership council are truly partners of ours. We have a phenomenal engagement team that is out there in the community providing and bolstering support for our enrollments, getting the stakeholders, the community stakeholders and all of that in place. All of the areas that we have contemplated, there has been some support there from the communities. And so, we're really confident. Our existing models, we've never had an issue with enrollment and so just coming to a friendly educational area, we also know that we'll have that support as well.

**SPARKS:** Okay. Thank you. That's all I have for now. Okay. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Jorge.

**VALDES:** Could I have the four of you guys come back up? First of all, I want to commend everyone who has spoken on behalf of the school and the four of you, you spoke very eloquently, competently, and that is very important to me. I've said that many times up here. This is sort of starting a partnership with our Department and it's very important, at least to me, that my partner, our partner knows what they're doing, has a track record of success. So, I commend all of you for that and presenting very well. You have 2,000 students up in the middle of California right now. You want to come to Orange County, you want to service 3,300 students. So, it's a very aggressive goal. Who is going to be the Orange County person who's going to be on?

**CAPRICE:** All three?

**VALDES:** So that's Justin?

**CAPRICE:** All three.

**JUSTIN:** So, I am the regional director and then...

**KAMILLE:** I will be the primary school principal.

**MARIAH:** And I'm the secondary for the high school.

**CAPRICE:** And I'll be splitting...

**VALDES:** Aren't you guys, so you guys are moving from middle of California?

**KAMILLE:** And I'm moving. Yes. I'm relocating.

**JUSTIN:** Same. Moving.

**CAPRICE:** And that's a really important part of replicating high quality charter schools is you got to take a little bit of the dough for anybody who did sourdough during COVID. You got to have that little piece of starter dough. And so, we wouldn't be here if we didn't have outstanding leaders who are already steeped in our program. And these are three of our best.

**VALDES:** Okay. Well, like I said, I'm really impressed that you're about to take part of your management team and relocate them here or it sounds like some of them are already here. Right. Okay.

**CAPRICE:** And I split my time between Orange County and up North and my husband lives in Los Angeles and occasionally he sees me.

**VALDES:** Okay. That was my primary question was who's going to be based in Orange County leading the ship here? I was very impressed with your presentation. You are on very warm and fertile ground with this trustee. I will say that.

**SHAW:** Well, I agree with Trustee Valdes. I thought the comments this evening were very, very strong, particularly one to commend Arpinder and Nora, your personal stories were very memorable. I'm going to definitely remember that. But everyone did a great job. And I did want to ask where you came up with the locations. Full disclosure, you mentioned my little hometown of La Habra and that kind of intrigued me. So how did La Habra come up in your plan?

**CAPRICE:** Well, so it was actually a fairly complex process. The first thing that we did was look at all of the schools in Orange County and look at where there were clusters of schools where there was student need. And we defined student need, not by individual schools with low test scores, but by individual schools with high achievement gaps. Because Orange County as a whole, as you know, is a relatively strongly performing area for education. But when you look at individual schools, it's not uncommon to see students with low socioeconomic backgrounds not doing so well and the higher socioeconomic students doing very well. This is particularly the case in SJC and San Clemente, for example. It's somewhat true in La Habra as well. And so that was how we zeroed in on those areas. Another part of our analysis was where are there already charter schools? We want to get ourselves away from the clusters of charter schools that already

exist because those are areas that have choice, which is why I mentioned that Santa Ana has really gone down on our priority list because there already is such a high concentration of charter schools in Santa Ana.

And so that's basically it. We had to also, we notified all of the school districts adjacent to any of the ones that we identified here, because with the craziness around facilities, which as you know, that is probably the toughest piece of doing charter schools in Orange County. It wouldn't be unusual for us to not find a place in the La Habra, for example, and need to go just over the border into Fullerton or Anaheim in order to be able to find a facility that's going to work. There's probably more than you wanted to know, but.

**SHAW:** Actually, facilities was my next question. I know that's such a tough nut to crack is not just campuses sitting around always ready to go, but you did a great job.

**CAPRICE:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** Ken.

**WILLIAMS:** Just as my other colleagues were extremely positive and kind with their words, I also expressed the same sentiments. I was very impressive. This is probably in my 30 years of being here on the board, it was the most impressive public presentation. Your organization, your enthusiasm, your energy or how you presented yourselves, even you four beautiful people smiling. It just really impacts how we feel about the possibilities that you can implement something. The real, as my colleagues are talking about, the real issue is when the rubber hits the road, are you going to have those facilities? Because we've been burned and we are probably one of the most pro charter boards in California because we want it to succeed because we see it as a viable option for parental choice. And we see and we look at your history here, especially Arpinder. What an impressive human being. You came from the school, your origins were there. If they come out like you, every single one of them, I have great hope for our country.

**CAPRICE:** Me too.

**WILLIAMS:** As well as the partners that you have. Very impressive. I would like to hear your relationship with Santiago Canyon. Is that secured by a contract? You're the VP. Is that secured by a contract? You can come up please.

**ARLEEN:** Thank you. Yes. So, we're in the process of a facility joint use facility to be able to house them on our campus. So, we have some other land that we're trying to decommission of trailers. And so, we've been talking about either utilizing them while they're working on a permanent structure on our campus. And so, we're trying to do a joint use agreement right now. We're in the middle of the works of that.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Is that with the board?

**ARLEEN:** With our board. With our district.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. And that's with what campus?

**ARLEEN:** So, ours is the Santiago Canyon campus, which is in the city of Orange and we're part of Rancho Santiago Community College District.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Is that off of Chapman there in Newport in that area?

**ARLEEN:** Yes. Next to Irvine Park.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah. Well that'll be a real kudo if you get that. Okay. So, the other part of my comments was this track record that you have with the four schools there, those four schools are currently working and educating and you've been successful with that and you've been a part of that personally?

**CAPRICE:** I have. This is my second year as the superintendent and CEO. We've been able to keep James Dent, who was our founder in 2011, engaged. So, we have a very experienced leadership team ready to do this.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. Big question. What is your end reserves for your organization? What did you have in the bank?

**CAPRICE:** What were we on June 30th at about \$5 million. Yeah.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. So, you had for the four schools, about 5 million, \$4 or \$5 million?

**CAPRICE:** And that's before you count in the \$12 million in the federal grant that we've been approved for.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay, so you've already been secured for a \$12 million grant?

**CAPRICE:** Yeah, we were one of eight schools in the country that received a replication grant and the only school in California this year.

**WILLIAMS:** When did you receive that?

**CAPRICE:** March.

**WILLIAMS:** March of this year?

**CAPRICE:** March of this year.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. So that was a new administration that gave you that money?

**CAPRICE:** It was.

**WILLIAMS:** Good for President Trump. I had to throw that in there. Okay. I voted for President Trump all three times.

**BARKE:** What a surprise.



**WILLIAMS:** Okay, so in ending my comments, I'm very impressed. I'm very hopeful. We do need more charter schools and more parental choices and we hope that you lead Orange County with greater scores. The dashboard, we want to be wonderful and pretty and with what I see so far, I'm very impressed.

**CAPRICE:** Get you lots of blues and greens.

**WILLIAMS:** Excellent. That's all for me.

**BARKE:** Well, it's hard to say anything more after listening to all my colleagues, but I was absolutely equally impressed when I just opened, well actually my biggest complaint probably was the size of the binder. So, I actually did, I made my own binder, see Navigator Schools and I put in what I wanted because I needed a dolly for the other binder. But that really was my only complaint was the size of the binder. But it's amazing when I look at your leadership team, I mean everybody who's here, I read the leadership council, it's like the who's who's list of Orange County. I know several of those people. It started with Tim Adams, who really was one of the first people I met when I entered my journey to join the county board of education back in 2018. So, I think you guys are amazing. I'm really excited to bring that kind of quality here to Orange County.

**CAPRICE:** Thank you. We're very pleased and honored to have such really high-quality advice.

**BARKE:** Yeah, I mean everything your board of directors, everyone that's just very, very impressive. The team you've put together. I don't think too much can go wrong with that team.

**CAPRICE:** Your lips to God's ears.

**BARKE:** Very excited as we continue the process. Thank you for your time tonight. Thank you for the professional presentation you put together. Very, very impressive. And I look forward to learning more and getting to know you better.

**CAPRICE:** Thank you. We look forward to that as well.

**BARKE:** All right, we good? All right, well thank you.

**SPARKS:** Thank you.

**BARKE:** All right, next, what do we have going next.

**WILLIAMS:** Is Stembbridge here?

**HENDRICK:** We have, we'll let Aracely [several inaudible words].

**WILLIAMS:** Okay.

**CHASTAIN:** The board will now hold a public hearing to consider input the countywide charter petition submitted by Stembbridge Academy on June 24th. Stembbridge Academy proposes to operate a TK through grade eight charter school for initial five-year term from 2026 to 2031. The

charter operator indicated an intent to locate facilities within the boundaries of Anaheim Elementary School District and Garden Grove Unified School District. Prior to public comments, the petitioners were allotted 15 minutes to present to the board. However, we've not had further communication from Stembridge Academy since an email on July 14th, 2025. At that time, the lead petitioner, Dr. Edwards indicated they were not prepared to proceed with the public hearing and that they had identified errors in their submitted petition. The petitioner also shared that they plan to ask their governing board to withdraw the petition and resubmit it a later date. That meeting was scheduled to occur on August 5th. As of today, we have not received any updates regarding the outcome of that meeting and we were unable to verify it since the school does not maintain a public website. Therefore, staff will proceed with the review process as the petition was certified as complete upon submission. We will now open the hearing for public comments. A total of 15 minutes is allotted. Trustee Shaw, please call for the first speaker.

**SHAW:** Thank you. I have one card from Sukhi.

**SUKHI:** Good afternoon board members. I'm afraid I'm going to bring down this mood after this presentation by this last charter. So, I'm actually here on behalf of three school districts. I'm here on behalf of Lennox School District, Anaheim Elementary School District and Garden Grove School District. This particular charter petition that you're considering was revoked by the Lennox School District in 2000, and then that revocation was upheld by the Los Angeles County Office of Education in October of that year. We have submitted the resolution that was passed by the Lennox School Board in June to your staff for their consideration and review. And we've also submitted the information, excuse me, the resolution that was passed by LACO in October, upholding that revocation for your staff for their consideration and review. In working with this board and your staff as well as counsel for this particular charter school, I've been doing charter school work for 30 years, an attorney for 40 years.

I've been involved with very few revocations. I would say probably five to eight over the course of that timeline. And 30 years is a long time. So, when I come to you and I tell you that this is a charter that should not be considered by this board should be denied by this board. I do so with a great deal of just integrity I think in this particular statement. This charter petition was revoked because two of the board members that are proposed to be on the board of the Stembridge charter were involved in fiscal mismanagement and involved in financial improprieties. Namely their spouses, their children, and various other family members were involved with the, excuse me, the vendors that provided various services to the school. For example, the individual who is going to be the board president of this particular school, Dr. Edwards, her spouse, Bertrand Edwards, was involved with a vendor that was owned by her, excuse me, her children.

So, all three of them, excuse me, the two children as well as the spouse, were all receiving payments from the charter school. One of the board members sold a vehicle to the school and then after we found out about it, they withdrew that transaction. One of the primary reasons for the closure of the school was that they did not complete an audit for the 2018-2019 school year, nor did they complete an audit for the final 2019-2020 school year in which they were revoked. I strongly urge you, even if the petitioners do seek that you take action on this to deny this petition. This is not a high-quality petition. This is not something that will be good for the students that are proposed to go there will be not good for the charter community to have a school like this operating under your authorization. Thank you.

**SHAW:** Thank you, Sukhi.

**CHASTAIN:** The public hearing is now concluded the Orange County Department of Education staff recommendations, including recommended findings, will be published on September 23rd and the board will hold a second public hearing and take action to either grant or deny the charter petition on October 8th. President Barke, I now close a public hearing and return the meeting to you.

**BARKE:** Thank you very much. Does anybody have any comments or discussion? It doesn't sound like we have a lot to work with so.

**VALDES:** My question is for Aracely.

**BARKE:** Oh, all right, please.

**VALDES:** So, the charter school's not here, so they didn't even present. They asked to withdraw. On your end, do you have to go through with a staff review and recommendations? Is that because of the ed code?

**CHASTAIN:** Correct. So, when I spoke to Dr. Edwards, she indicated that she had read through her petition and realized that there were a lot of mistakes in it and she wanted to know what her options were at that point. She wanted to extend the public hearing and the decision date, but I let her know that we had already pushed that as far out as we could according to ed code, so that we couldn't do that. And we advised her that. She said, "Well, what if we just don't up?" And I said, well, we don't advise that. We would say, pull your petition instead and submit, make corrections and resubmit it and that will reset your clock. So, she indicated that she couldn't do that without approval of her board obviously, and so that she would have a board meeting on August 5th to let us know. Since that time, we've tried sending her a couple of different emails.

We've tried a phone call, we've not received any information back, and since they don't have a website, we weren't able to find out when the board meeting was, listen to it, do anything like that so that we can get that information ourselves. So, we've not heard from them because when they submitted their charter petition, they did certify it as being complete. We are required by law to start the clock and start the review. And so, the board is required to hold a public hearing, we're required to produce a staff report. And you're required then to take action on the petition. We do have a clarification meeting scheduled for August 28th. At this point, I did want to let the board know that we probably will be canceling that since we don't anticipate that we will hear from them. There's only so much communication we can try to initiate back and forth, but I believe it's in your policies that we hold a clarification meeting. So, I just wanted to just let you know that that may not occur in this process, which would be unfortunate because we do use that meeting to get a lot of questions answered of things that are in the charter petition. And so, this might end up being quite an extensive report since we're not able to clear up any misconceptions or anything that may not be clear in the petition. So that is where we stand. It'll actually be quite a bit of work.

**BARKE:** Aracely, it just seems like if they're not cooperating that do we have to stick to these legal, I mean, why waste their resources when we have other things to do? Could we just shelf it?

**ROLEN:** We're hoping to get some more clarification in the future, some communication at all. But Aracely is just taking care of you because we're required to hold the hearing, but there's nothing in ed code saying they're required to show up. It's not a tactic I would employ if I was trying to get a charter petition granted but...

**SHAW:** That's just your free advice.

**ROLEN:** That's the road they've chosen. So, we're just going to stay tuned and we'll keep you informed if we hear anything from them.

**BARKE:** I just feel bad to put your Department through so much work when you're not getting a response. And it would seem like if you're not getting a response and getting the information you need that you could just...

**VALDES:** Shelf it. Yeah.

**ROLEN:** Holding this hearing and the timeline code is required.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**CHASTAIN:** If we have an update on that, we will definitely let you know.

**BARKE:** Thank you and appreciate it. Go ahead, please.

**WILLIAMS:** So, Greg, if they do not contact us immediately, but they do, let's say before the next meeting when we're supposed to hold another public hearing and they say they want to formally withdraw and they submit it in writing, does that mean we have to hold that public meeting?

**ROLEN:** No, we can withdraw at that point.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. So, we're doing this automatically by default just to make sure we're covering all of our bases?

**ROLEN:** That's correct.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay.

**HENDRICK:** I did just want to share with the board. Aracely was a little generous. I mean, they have called and emailed that charter more than a few times to try and get some response from them. And so, they're very service oriented and so to have no communication with us since July is very disappointing.

**WILLIAMS:** Very.

**BARKE:** Well. I guess we'll all keep that in mind as the process goes on and we'll keep Greg's thoughts in mind as well. All right. So, are we moving on? Are we good with this? All right.

**SPARKS:** Moving on.

**BARKE:** More to come. All right. Next, I'd like to invite Dr. Poulin to the podium to conduct the public hearing for the textbooks and instructional materials.

**MARTINEZ-POULIN:** Thank you for that. Good evening, President Barke, members of the board, Dr. Bean. I would like to open the public hearing for the sufficiency of textbooks and instructional materials in accordance with education code 60605 and 33126. Mrs. Hendricks, do we have any public comments?

**HENDRICK:** I have none.

**MARTINEZ-POULIN:** Thank you for that. Seeing no comment, I now close the public hearing and turn the meeting back over to you.

**BARKE:** Thank you. Okay, no comments on that. We're all good. All good. All right, moving on to number 14, adopt resolution 22-25 stating that each pupil of the county office has available textbooks and instructional.

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

**BARKE:** A motion and...

**SPARKS:** Second.

**BARKE:** And a second. All those in favor?

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

**BARKE:** Any opposed? Passes 5-0. All right. We are now at board recommendations. Board action on the proposed charter school MOU and Jorge you're up.

**VALDES:** Well, to my colleagues, as you know, I'm a big fan of charter schools in general, but sometimes, especially as the number of charters that we oversee grows, we're going to have some charters that slightly, I'm going to try and say it nicely, slightly run astray. And we've had that situation a few times over the past, I'd say year, two years. We had a charter, as you know, that we didn't feel was properly protecting their Jewish students. Earlier this year, I had some parents contacting me, really, really upset that their student was being taught CRT, which I absolutely confirmed based on my review of some paperwork that was provided to me. And I found out that from the charter school leadership, that they did not even know that that was going on. They did not review those instructional materials at all. So that really got me thinking because it's been a topic or I've been thinking about it for a while, do we need to put some guardrails on what some of our charters are doing?

And the answer to that I came to was, yes, we can't have a charter, for example, doing gender transition plans behind parents' backs. I really tried to create a paragraph for the MOU, the standard MOU that the charter signed that I considered sort of the third rail. Things that I just simply cannot support. I cannot support a charter school that's going to actively teach CRT, I just

can't do that. And so, what I've crafted is a paragraph that I think puts the charters on notice that they have obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to protect our Jewish students.

We're not a big fan of DEI curriculum ideas. That we're not going to be okay with gender transition plans behind parents' backs. So, I tried to be thorough in my review of this, but also sort of putting the far reaches of what is just not acceptable to me. And in an effort to put the charters on notice, this is what we expect. So, I think this is necessary based on the complaints that I have personally dealt with over the last couple of years. It's not just trying to find a problem and creating a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. This problem exists. And my fear is that the problem exists more than we know right now. I fear that what has been communicated to us is sort of the tip of the iceberg. And so, I think I really do think that this amendment to our standard MOU is very necessary at this point. I think in the future we may want to add to it. I already have some other ideas of what I may want to add to it in the future, but for now, this is what I want to propose to the board as something for our consideration tonight.

**BARKE:** All right, why don't I start here with you, Ken, your comments?

**WILLIAMS:** Sure. So just for parliamentary perspective, for our board policy, I'll make the motion to, well, actually Jorge, you should make the motion.

**VALDES:** I make the motion to approve.

**WILLIAMS:** Okay. And I'll second it and I'll go on with my comments with your permission.

**BARKE:** Thank you. Yes.

**WILLIAMS:** So, I know there might be some people who disagree with the concept, the general concept of telling people what to do in education. Everybody believes in free moral agency and the ability of academic institutions to practice and to teach what they want to do. But I have to validate what Trustee Valdes has created here because this is K through 12 education and we have so many thousands of education codes that already tell us what to do. Unfortunately, some of the controversial aspects to those education codes have come back to bite us, to hurt our parents, to divide our community. A lot of these issues such as critical race theory, DEI, these are all critical theories that come from the academic university level. And I think at the academic university level, whether it's 13 plus or whatever postgraduate or doctorate level, you can do whatever you want to do because nothing is mandated. So, to support the language of this MOU, we have already, from what I see here in these points that Trustee Valdes has created, we've already approved resolutions opposing these basic concepts. We've already, over the past boy seven years now with Trustees Barke and Sparks being on the board. We've had special community meetings, at least five of them over the past several years, dealing with these issues. And we've created white papers that have opposed these issues. So, we've already done and approved most of these principles that I think Trustee Valdes has put into this paragraph here.

We all support academic freedom, but in K through 12, we really don't have academic freedom. There's a lot of guidelines and mandates. And so, what we're talking about here, whether it's DEI, CRT, these are part of a larger global discriminatory paradigm by people who don't believe in

some of the basic freedoms, I think, and some of the basic constitutional ideas of who we are as parents to direct the upbringing of our children to direct and be involved in their education. In fact, if anything, we have a very Marxist socialist direction from Sacramento and Sacramento politicians who want to take away the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children. They want to remove the innocence of children. We see these attacks just this year in this last 12 months in Sacramento. We look at, and I think it was four years ago that I presented what happened in the Newport Mesa Unified School District when we found all these emails where there was several of these kids who are socially transitioned without the knowledge or consent or even talking to the parents about these kids. And then we know from Santa Ana Unified School District through Brenda Lebsack, I think it was over 200 students that were socially transitioned there. And who knows what's happened as far as more advanced medical medicinal transition and even surgical. So, I'm very strong proponent of this language. I wish I would've thought of it myself, Mr. Valdes. So, I will support in a vote on this. Those are my comments.

**BARKE:** All right. How about if we go this way, Mr. Shaw? No comments, Dr. Sparks.

**SPARKS:** Yeah, well, I appreciate the careful thought that's gone into this revised version. I can tell that you guys have spent a lot of time on this. The other part I really appreciate is the part the without parental consent part, because that's the distinguishing difference between K-12 and higher ed and graduate school as well. Where I get uncomfortable is I don't believe it's our role to tell teachers what to teach, but I do believe that parental consent on these issues is paramount in K-12. And as such, I will support the statement.

**BARKE:** So, I'm mixed in a couple of ways. And one is I totally support in total alignment with you, Jorge and Ken and everyone that I don't believe this should be taught. But I also know that charter schools are schools of choice and that parents can elect whether to go or not. And if they're not happy with the education being provided, they can walk away. And I don't believe it's in our purview to tell them what to teach, that it's under us to not approve a charter that perhaps isn't aligned. I mean, honestly, I would totally be willing to approve the first statement. Charter schools shall maintain courses of study curriculum and teaching methods that fully compliant with in federal law because that's the law. So, I'm totally comfortable with that. But going into depth about what they can and can't teach, I'm just not sure. And maybe Mr. Rolan, you can tell me, is that something that we can do? I know that Charter School Association frowns on this doing it, but what is the legal piece of that?

**ROLEN:** I'm going to echo the sentiments of all my clients here that agree with Trustee Valdes and agree with his intent and the spirit behind this.

**BARKE:** Okay.

**ROLEN:** The other thing that everybody should know is that Trustee Valdes asked Dr. Bean and I who made the decision about what an unsound educational program was from the inception during the petition process. And I told him the board, the board makes that decision. There's no clear parameters on what an unsound educational program is and what it isn't. The problem that we are seeing is that as much as everybody agrees with the language that we are constrained by the Charter School Act, and the Charter School Act originally was to grant charter schools academic independence from their authorizers and the ability to teach in the way they thought

was best and the best serve their communities. The board as the authorizer is granted certain discretion, certain oversight responsibilities, but that's generally with regard to outcomes, testing, how students are doing, and of course the financial piece and the mismanagement piece as well. So, where this charter school, MOU language is novel is that certainly it's never been tried before. Also, at the staff level, we're seeing some kind of practical difficulties to the extent that sometimes we approve a charter school before they even offer a curriculum or they negotiate the MOU.

We don't know exactly how one would enforce this language because we don't usually enforce curriculum. We know that if a charter school is performing poorly at the renewal revocation stage, we can take everything into account about what they do. But up until that point, there has been no precedent for the board exercising or charter school authorizer, I should say, exercising curricular authority over what is taught. So, the vagory is that during the charter petition process, you are almost the last word on what is an unsound educational program. And there's some very loose guidelines on what that is. But once that gets approved, the board's oversight responsibility is somewhat limited to outcomes. We see outcomes, data, testing, not how they got there or what they taught. So that's the gray area. Half the language is completely compliant with the law. And even some of the language that addresses anti-discrimination is supported by California law in certain respects. And recent pronouncements from the administration support that idea on anti-discrimination that Trustee Valdes offered. The problem is how do we police that? How do we tell a teacher we don't like your teaching within the confines of the Charter School Act. Now, where that becomes even more tricky is that we don't end up making that decision. Once we take any sort of action, there's appeals before the state board of education and they will make the decision about whether our action is compliant with the Charter School Act. So, we are not necessarily the last word on whether a revocation or non-renewal of a charter is within the confines of the Charter School Act. Does that make sense?

**VALDES:** If I could just make a comment on that, at no point, and I did have that discussion with Dr. Bean and Greg, when would a decision on a school be made? And as far as I'm concerned, as far as this paragraph goes, I never said anything about that. The only time that we would be able to make a decision on what is an unsound education is when a charter school comes back for renewal. So, I haven't touched on that issue at all. So, I don't view this as novel. I'm just telling the school this is what we expect. I haven't said anything about when we're going to take any action on it. It doesn't say anything about sending out a notice of concern. It doesn't say anything about that, the procedural aspects of it. I fully expect that if we were going to make a decision on what is an unsound education, it would be at the time of a renewal.

**SPARKS:** It seems to me that even with this, we still don't have the authority to tell people what to teach or what not to teach, but we can, I don't know, implement or have knowledge of the parental consent piece. What's your interpretation of that from a legal perspective?

**ROLEN:** Well, like I've said many times to this Department, I'm not entitled to an opinion because I'm a happily married man and I tend to stay that way. But the parental, we can do it to the extent that we are setting expectations. That's the idea behind this. Setting expectations, it may be difficult to enforce, but setting expectations on parental consent within our charter schools is, there's nothing wrong with that. The board does this as a matter of course by way of policy and resolution. They say what we stand for and what we don't and what we're expecting.



The way it's novel is it's put into a contract. An MOU is a contract and I can see our charter school saying, well what happens if we violate your contract board? Is that going to be a grounds for revocation? And that determination, the validity of that decision would be made if appealed to the state board of education.

**BARKE:** So, bottom line, are you comfortable, as our board counsel and I know that, or the general counsel, are you comfortable? I know it's your job to keep us out of litigation, and is this something that you are comfortable with?

**WILLIAMS:** He wants to be happily married.

**ROLEN:** [inaudible words] question for sure.

**BARKE:** How's that for putting you on the spot?

**ROLEN:** That's well done. That's nicely done.

**WILLIAMS:** Do you want to stay happily married? That's the bottom line.

**ROLEN:** Oh yeah. I'll do the dishes if you'd like, but from a legality and lawfulness perspective, this board of education has done nothing illegal or unlawful since 2018 as far as I know. And I am not concerned about lawsuits, legal repercussions or anything of that nature. I'm more concerned about trying to set a standard that will be rejected by the state board of education and what that entails. Now, if this board is unconcerned with that, nobody's going to take your money, nobody's, it's not going to be a point of litigation is what I'm saying. It's going to be Aracely and I are going to the state board next week. It's going to be something of that nature and the fallout that may or may not occur from that. You're not going to get sued. I don't think you're going to get sued, but I do think that this will be a point of consternation if we are saying as a charter school advocacy organization or a pro charter school board, that we are now going to you what to teach. That is a policy and political assessment on my point, not a legal one.

**SPARKS:** And that's the piece that I've been uncomfortable with from day one.

**BARKE:** Me as well.

**SPARKS:** I'm all about parental consent, but I'm not about telling teachers. I mean, I'm an educator myself. No one's going to tell me how to teach my classroom, but I'm in higher ed. Okay.

**BARKE:** Well, no, but I do believe that charters do operate with some autonomy and that it's our job when they come before us to assess whether we're comfortable, what their curriculum will be, and maybe if they're not coming to us with their curriculum, we say, well, we need that, something of that nature.

**SPARKS:** But to Jorge's point, we have approved charter schools that have performed very well academically, but then there were some rogue teachers that kind of started putting up posters in their classroom that parents were uncomfortable with. They came to us and that's how we learned about a lot of this curriculum being taught where we didn't have prior knowledge of that.

So, we're not going to know that when we approve a charter school. We're not going to know if there's some rogue teachers doing that. But if they embed parental consent, if the leaders of those schools say, look, you teach your classroom how you see fit, but we need parental consent for some of these things because some parents might be okay with it and others aren't.

**VALDES:** I think a lot of this for me was, I was really surprised when I spoke with that charter school earlier this year with the teacher teaching CRT, and they actually told me they did not know they had not reviewed those materials at all. I view that as a problem.

**BARKE:** Do you think this will force them to be more hands-on with what's going on in the classroom?

**VALDES:** It's put in there that they're not going to have instructional materials that aren't approved by the school itself. So, this is kind of geared towards that rogue teacher that is out there that just wants to do whatever he or she wants, and they are out there. And my concern is not only have I already seen that, but we're about to, in my view, it's very likely we're about to approve another charter school for 3,000 kids. I mean, I think we're pushing probably 30,000 right now. Maybe 25.

**BEAN:** 25.

**VALDES:** Okay. So, I mean that's going to be 30,000, it's going to be 35, it's going to be 40,000. This is going to be a larger issue over time. And I think this paragraph needs to put the charter schools somewhat on notice. Hey, this is what we think, this is what we're comfortable with. I don't view any of this as being, as telling the charter what to teach or with the exception of CRT, what not to teach. When I, for example, toured Samueli a couple years back, I was really surprised that there was not one textbook in that school. I mean, for me, when I was growing up, that's all I remember was five textbooks and a binder that was 20 pounds and this little kid walking home and yeah, I used to walk home from elementary school and now they teach everything is on a laptop computer.

Absolutely everything is on a laptop computer. And I'm like, wow. And I asked Anthony, who's the executive director there, and he explained his reasoning to me. And so, I don't want to tell educators how to teach. If a parent likes and is comfortable with that, I'm good with that. I've only put one real guardrail here on something that I think is just so unacceptable to me that I'll just put it right out there. That is an issue. I will not say yes in a revocation to a school that I know is teaching that I just won't do it. The state board of education can do whatever they want. I really don't care. I decide my vote, what is a sound or unsound education comes at the time of revocation and I will decide that that is not sound. So, I'm not concerned about what the state board of ed does. I'm not concerned about lawsuits. We are here. I'm here to protect parents and kids. And I believe that this paragraph does that and that's why I put it out there.

**WILLIAMS:** Yeah, I think that what we're having is excellent public dialogue and communications. I think it's very healthy, even though we may not agree on everything. I think when Greg said that we're setting expectations, I think that's exactly what this is. There's nothing wrong with it. I am writing per quote. That's what you said, Greg. And by setting these expectations, I don't think we're telling teachers what to teach. We're just telling and having these

boundaries that the board of directors, that the executive director of the school has to follow. And that this is a troubling aspect that we have seen in three other instances. Santa Ana School of the Arts, Oxford Prep, and the Irvine International Academy over the last five years. So, we have always led, and I'll end with this point, so this board has always been different. And for those who are, most of the audience has gone, but this board has always led based upon certain guiding principles of governance.

And those governing principles are that we're for the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of children and that we're guarding the innocence of these kids and that we're primary concern with academic inculcation of facts and knowledge and critical thinking skills. Now, I want to thank everybody for the dialogue and the conversation. I think it's very healthy, but I don't think this is violating anybody's core principles of governance on this board. We're still letting teachers teach, but if they go into certain areas that may be controversial, this is just stopping and setting those expectations for the school board and for those parents that go there. And I think parents who come to Orange County to go to the charter schools, they know that we are the one who are granting and approving these charter schools. They like it that we guard and set these expectations. So, I think this is a positive thing for us. So, I'd like to see a 5-0 vote on this that we are unanimous in this. And I want to thank Trustee Valdes for taking the time and the leadership to do this. Thank you.

**BARKE:** Yes. I do appreciate all the time and the spirit behind it. I absolutely agree. Are we ready for a vote? Do we want more discussion? Do you have more comments?

**ROLEN:** Not really. The two comments than one may consider is the rogue teacher, that is the charge of the charter school to discipline their teacher, and they have that authority and they have exercised it with some incentive or not. So that's one thing to consider about how to address and how we have been addressing the rogue teacher who's teaching inappropriate things. The second thing is know whatever your vote may be that the charter school unit will support you and do whatever it takes to enforce this and make the practice.

**BARKE:** Any other comments? All right, we'll call vote. All those in favor?

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

**BARKE:** Anyone opposed? Motion passes 5-0. I had to play the devil's advocate and just really feel better about it.

**SPARKS:** So, I wasn't the only devil?

**BARKE:** Yeah, no, no. Well, I always say you have to listen to your attorney too, so I always want the input from Greg.

**ROLEN:** [several inaudible words]

**BARKE:** All right, moving right along. Let's see if we can get to a lighter subject. Lighter subject is communications information and discussion. Announcements, do we want to start with you Dr Bean?

**BEAN:** Sure, yeah. I'd love to share with you some of the things that have been going on. There we go. So, this is our board report and it's going to of course center around our 5-3-1. And the next sessions that we're going to talk about specifically have to be with our five initiatives. And so, you see here that we were able to support our DHH adult transition program by shipping them a container into a tiny home for family in need, which is really, really great through the partnership of nonprofit Cargo2Casa.

**BARKE:** That's awesome. I love that.

**BEAN:** Yeah. Also, this was the model curriculum that formerly Senator Nguyen had enacted several years ago. We are now for the past year and this year coming up showcasing the curriculum on her behalf. And these are really well attended events. We had over 220 educators in Irvine in July to really be able to understand this OCDE created curriculum around Cambodian American studies and Hmong history in cultural studies as well as Vietnamese American experiences. I'll be speaking at the one I believe in Long Beach in October, along with Supervisor Janet Nguyen. This is really great. Had the opportunity to attend this last week and make some comments to over 90 students who are participating as through the OC Pathways as what we call ambassadors. And our career education team do a wonderful job of helping our students across our county understand the different industry sectors as well as pathways.

So, there's 15 industry sectors, and of those 15 sectors, there's 58 pathways that students can take through their high school years in addition to college or not. So, the students got together and they got an all day kind of professional development around apprenticeships, AI, LinkedIn, a great opportunity. I love that picture with all the students there. Also, their parents were invited and so many of the parents came and also got to listen to what their students are experiencing. In terms of the three support objectives. This one has to do with how we support our LEAs. So, we delivered nearly 2,000 backpacks and school supply kits this past week of July to support students experienced on homelessness across the county through OCDE hopes, collaborative donations were provided by school's first set credit union as well as supply bank. So, what a wonderful giving opportunity. And then of course we have to end it with our big audacious goal and ACCESS.

So, if I give you an update last week, last Friday, an opportunity to open up this amazing event that has been going on for 34 years and next year we would love for this board to attend Summer at the Center. What it is that our students from probations, ACCESS get together for two weeks. 22 students get together for two weeks to perform song, dance, choreography, et cetera, et cetera. And I think they had two or three performances at the Samueli Center. This is called Summer at the Center. And this is deeply embedded in the Orange County culture because there's lots of different philanthropists and leaders that attend this as well as we had Judge Arthur there, probation officers there. It's an amazing opportunity. I wanted to show you just a glimpse of the performance and I think I just pressed click is all right. Oh, there we go.

**VIDEO:** [music playing]

**BEAN:** So, which is so inspiring as participants that we watch this to see the transformation of these students. Many who, one said that he didn't have any friends through his high school and being a part of this last two weeks, he gained many friends, which then increases confidence.

Hearing stories like that, the transformational change just inspired all of us in that these students have a bright future. Thank you. That's my report.

**BARKE:** Wonderful, Renee.

**HENDRICK:** So, our next meeting is Wednesday, September 3rd. Submission deadline is August 20th and board packet delivery is August 29th. And you will have two, three public hearings, I think, two public hearings next month.

**BEAN:** And now we're going to bring up for the liaison report, right?

**HENDRICK:** Yes.

**BARKE:** Brandon, can you introduce yourself? I don't know if our audience knows.

**GUEVARA:** Yes, president. For everyone, the extensive crowd's still remaining.

**BARKE:** Well they're watching. Thousands are watching.

**GUEVARA:** Hi grandma, my name is Brandon. I'm the newly hired board liaison as of last July 15th. If I recall correctly, it has been an honor so far through the last three weeks to serve for the board and Dr. Bean and working alongside great Chief of Staff Dennis over there. Before I begin on the record, I just want to say that when I was brought on, Ken had mentioned that you said like a family, you want us to be like a family. And I just want to say on the record that the staff here at the department of education and our trustees and the board president, I spent some time with you in Sacramento, have been absolutely phenomenal. I remember telling Dennis, I kind of came here with my guard up just knowing employment everywhere else. Why are you so nice to me? What are you playing at Dennis? So, I would just like to say on the record that you should highlight your staff whenever you get the chance that they have done an absolutely phenomenal job making me feel like a team. And that extends to the board as well. So real quick, how do I, do I just press space or how does this work?

**BEAN:** Is this no, he said just press the, press the button.

**GUEVARA:** Okay, awesome. All right, so good evening everyone. My name is Brandon Guevara. Again, I'm the board liaison for the Orange County Board of Education. Thank you to the board and our trustees and the superintendent for allowing me to speak tonight. And I am very excited to present our very first month in review for the board liaison position at asterisk around month. It's only been about two and a half weeks. So just from July 15th, August 6th, next month it'll be more complete. And these reviews will be presented on a monthly basis at each board meeting with the purpose of promoting transparency and accountability by updating the board, the public, and our superintendent on the position's activities. First slide, I would like to start out with the what of the position. Liaison is kind of a weird word. It's not as clear cut as doctor like Dr. Ken Williams or lawyer like Greg and Trustee Valdes.

So, I would just like to first establish the definitions. And just from the Oxford language, the first one is it's a liaison. What they do is they foster communication or cooperation, which facilitates a close working relationship between people or organizations. That's the boring one. The one I like

more is the binding or thickening of an agent of a sauce, often based on egg yolks. And I think that perfectly encapsulates what we anticipate for this position to be because if you think of the students' education as the cake you put in the oven, the board, the superintendent, the charter schools, the nonprofits, all those organizations, myself, we're the recipes that are put into that bowl to make that cake. And so, the task at hand for us really is how do we more effectively combine those ingredients? That's the big question. So, I would like to move on to the why.

I would like to point your attention to a study conducted by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation in 2024. So, it's pretty relevant and really quick, just some key findings. They felt that they found that just 25% of Americans feel very confident explaining how the US government works or that only 40 believe, 46% believe the country is succeeding at teaching civic knowledge. And so, what we found, the key takeaway is that there's a knowledge gap that is really present between Americans and their government and how their government works. And this percentage is increasingly so with local government, especially board of education and superintendents and local school districts and such. So, we find that this knowledge gap leads to a decrease in trust and engagement with their local boards and local government while also increasing frustration. So how was the position going to address this issue? And our goal with the introduction of this position is to the "CEEE" approach. CEEE three Es one C.

This is really the how. First and foremost, the board liaison is going to connect. It's going to bridge schools, families, board members, the superintendent, charter schools, like the OC Prep we just saw, they gave a fantastic presentation. It's going to bind all those entities together so we can better serve the whole student. Second, the liaison's going to educate. It's going to educate by simplifying and sharing school board decisions or a board of education decisions with the public. And on that note, I'd like to add that we're actually working on getting out a Orange County Board of Education newsletter. We're very excited about. Trustee Valdes came to me with the idea and so far, I think it has a lot of potential. Just like Dr. Bean's month in review he gave, it's going to be somewhat similar to that and I think it's going to be very good at informing the public on what their board is doing.

Third, the board liaison's going to engage on behalf of the board. He's going, or I am going to engage with student and community understanding or engage, sorry, my bad. Engage with nonprofits, educators, school districts, charter schools and so on to foster collaboration, to build student and community understanding of community governance. And then last but not least, through these collaborative efforts, the board liaison is going to empower our constituents to become more active in their civic participation. And then just to give you guys a kind of a preview of how it's going to look going forward for further months, it's going to give us, similar to Dr. Bean here, Superintendent Bean, it's going to give a kind of breakdown of our activities through the month. And if you guys weren't here for the last board meeting, I kind of was thrown into the fire a little bit on my second day of employment, I flew up to Sacramento with President Barke where we testified against SB 249 and we really fought to keep autonomy in Orange County and not in Sacramento.

And if you can go to the next slide, please. And then fast forward a week, I had the honor of attending the 2025 California MTSS Professional Learning Institute Convention to really just expand my knowledge of what we're doing statewide and what we're doing even in some seminars in different states and how we can use that to better improve our education here in

Orange County. And really that concludes my review of the board liaison activities for the month of July. Thank you for bearing with me. I promise it'll get more smooth and it won't always be that short. Thank you so much.

**BARKE:** Great job.

**WILLIAMS:** If I can provide some feedback, Brandon, don't make it too long. We don't like it too long. And just to encourage you, as you're defining this novel role, to make sure you go to the LA Unified School District to see how their board liaison works as well as LA County, we're looking for some sort of formal documentation because you're not going to be here forever, and so there's going to be somebody that you're going to pass the torch to. So, it's nice to have all this created in the documented form. And if I can ask our good superintendent, if you can help get Ian Hanigan involved in this newsletter and the formal presentations and make no offense, we can spruce it up with some professional input. Ian Hanigan is amazing, his team and his skillset sets and what they do with social media presentations. If I can ask you to engage.

**BEAN:** We've already connected Brandon.

**WILLIAMS:** You did, awesome. Awesome.

**BARKE:** All right. Oh, you have questions? Go ahead. Do you want to...

**VALDES:** No, no. Just a comment for the audience that wasn't aware about this newsletter. So, I did contact Brandon and I said, Hey, we should do a monthly newsletter to all our constituents about what the board is doing. I mean, honestly, I don't think a lot of our constituents realize that we approve, every month, we approve kids graduating and we also send them a congratulatory handwritten letter, hand signed letter to each and every one. That's something that I think would be appropriate for the newsletter. I guess my question is, can we add to our website, do you want to sign up for our newsletter tab and then have people sign up and put their email address and can we do that or does that have to be an agenda item for us to do that?

**ROLEN:** It's always better to have it be an agenda item.

**VALDES:** Can we add that to the agenda for next month?

**ROLEN:** I'm sorry. It's always better to have it as an agenda item, but I haven't considered the technological aspects of that. I'm sure we're fully capable of that. If we can read some consensus here, perhaps we can start working on it and report back at the next meeting.

**SHAW:** I think that's brilliant Jorge.

**BARKE:** Why don't we add it to the agenda for next month to do that.

**WILLIAMS:** Well, let's get started on it and then officially approve it next month. How about that? Let's even better. We seek consensus here.

**VALDES:** So, when Trustee Barke does 10 events a month, I only probably do maybe on average one or two. But I know Trustee Barke is really out there. I mean, I think you're going to

have a lot of content from just all of her appearances everywhere. But I like to go to school openings, particularly when they're in my district. I like to do that. So, the newsletter is really intended to be the things that we're doing, the things that we're passing, the policies that we have, that's the content for the newsletter. So, you ladies in the crowd, who are some of our biggest fans? You may want to sign up for our newsletter.

**SHAW:** Can I give Brandon some feedback? Of course. When I was a kid, one of my favorite movies was Clue it's about the board game Clue. But there's a scene where they asked the butler, "Well what do you do?" "I'm the butler." "Well what does that mean?" "I buttle." Your slide reminded me of that.

**BARKE:** I love that.

**SPARKS:** No, but I like the idea of highlighting of you repackaging the highlighting some of the highlights of our meetings because most people don't have the time or patience to sit and watch the entire YouTube of all of our meetings.

**BARKE:** Oh, come on.

**SPARKS:** So that would be I think a really useful part of the newsletter.

**GUEVARA:** I would like to add that if any intents that I attend on behalf of a board trustee would also make the newsletter as the board liaison attended this so-and-so on behalf of Trustee Valdes or on behalf of Trustee Williams too. So, I would like to add that to the purview of the role. So.

**SPARKS:** Yeah, maybe a short paragraph, giving context to what the highlights of attending that. Right.

**BARKE:** Yep.

**WILLIAMS:** Awesome. Good job.

**GUEVARA:** Thank you so much.

**BARKE:** Thank you. Appreciate it. All right, anything else, Renee? No. All right. So, moving...

**HENDRICK:** Actually, under legislative updates, we have the clip if you'd like to show that?

**BARKE:** Yes, yes.

**HENDRICK:** Okay. So, we do have a clip of President Barke and Brandon doing his first...

**BARKE:** Giving us the time to speak today. I'm the president of the Orange County Board of Education. This is not new. I have been concerned. This is the third time that I've been here before committees regarding this issue. It started back with Senator Min with SB 286, I believe. Then last year it was Newman with SB 907, and then this year it is 249 with Senator Umberg. And it just concerns me that we have so many pressing issues here in California. We have crime



and we have homelessness, we have fire recovery efforts, water issues, soaring gas prices. And so, it just disheartens me that this continues to be a priority here at the legislator. Moving our elections to the general election. People talk a lot about voter fatigue and I agree. We wind up at the bottom of the ballot and there is fatigue.

By the time they get down to these nonpartisan elections, it's tiring. But more than that, I think it's confusing to them. In my 10 cities, each city, they have their own education elections. They have their own districts with elections. So, they've got Susie or Sam or Diana running and then well, who's Mari Barke? Where'd she come from? By having us in the primary, we can really get out and differentiate ourselves, tell them how the county board of education differs from the local districts. The county board is an appeals board, much different than the district. So, it really gives us a time to differentiate who we are, which we appreciate. And considering the budget issues that we have here in California, this is a very expensive bill, especially now that it's gone from just the county board of education in Orange County to adding four other boards throughout the state.

It's a very expensive bill, and that concerns me that for perpetuity, that is going to be an expense to the state. I don't believe it should be a priority. Last year, Governor Newsom vetoed the bill based on local control. That was one of his big issues and that's still an issue. We do believe in local control and it is disappointing that with the three times we've seen this similar bill, we've never had anyone talk to us about it. We've never had a senator come say, "Hey, these are our concerns. What do you guys think?" Nobody's come to us. Not only that, but we had our legal counsel and department go through almost three decades of agenda records, and no one has ever brought the issue to the dais, to our boardroom. Nobody's ever been concerned, whether it be constituents or anyone about this issue. And so, we're just concerned why it's such a priority and we just hope that you guys will take other priorities that are really concerning here in California. I mean, we're a mess in California. And again, I really appreciate you listening to me today, so thank you so much.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you very much.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Great job Mari.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Are you also presenting?

**GUEVARA:** Yes.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Please go ahead.

**GUEVARA:** Hello, my name is Brandon Guevara and I'm the board liaison for the Orange County Department of Education. I'm respectfully urging a no vote on SB 249, not simply because of its infringement on local control or its fiscal imprudence, but because it represents a deeper misunderstanding of how democratic engagement actually works, supporters of SB 249 argue that consolidating county board of education elections with the statewide general election will actually improve voter turnout. However, the argument that more voters means better representation does not hold up when voter attention is diluted. These elections, which are nonpartisan and educational and focus are already overshadowed in the crowded November

cycle. This bill will bury them even further placing critical decisions about educational leadership behind pages of higher profile state and federal races directly impacting parents and students. We already know from studies and past elections that voting drops off sharply in down ballot races.

This drop off will disproportionately affect county board of education seats, which are the exact races that SB 249 targets. In other words, we are likely to see fewer voters meaningfully participate in these contests, not more. Moreover, SB 249 ignores that there are local mechanisms to make these changes if necessary. This one size fits all mandate ignores the diversities of county needs and local electoral conditions. This is not electoral modernization. Rather, it is performative policymaking that will not only cost millions, but weaken voter engagement in educational governance and override local autonomy without any evidence of benefit whatsoever. Again, I urge you to vote no.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** Excellent. Good job, Brandon.

**SHAW:** Looking sharp out there too.

**BARKE:** And you were much more respectful than me.

**WILLIAMS:** Oh, Mari, you had that spark and that energy in you. I just loved it.

**BARKE:** But I respectfully asked them for a no vote and I did have fun with them.

**WILLIAMS:** You did.

**BARKE:** I did. All right, so where are we here? Legislative updates. Anything else you want to share, Tim? As far as legislative updates, I think that's the big thing going on really.

**SHAW:** Well, I think we're in recess right now, right? So yeah, I mean there's the talk of a special election. The state might call to rewrite the constitution to eliminate the independent redistricting commission. So, I believe the cost of a special election I was reading could be in the hundreds of millions of dollars a statewide special election. Obviously...

**BARKE:** We got no other priorities here in California though come on.

**SHAW:** That would be fun. Obviously, the states has a tough budget, but there's always room for something like that.

**BARKE:** All right, thank you. Any other board member comments? Anybody have anything to share? Want to share?

**WILLIAMS:** I do have a comment and something for our good general counsel. So, we had earlier under public comments the issue of Mahmoud versus Taylor and some of the local school districts were having some problems in implementing that. I've been asked by a certain board member to request from our general counsel some documentation that could be sent, whether it's

from the superintendent or the board to the specific 28 school districts, how to implement Mahmoud versus Taylor.

**ROLEN:** Thank you for the question Trustee Williams. And I really do thank you for the question because as early as January 11th of this year, we sent out three, four-page memo to every superintendent in the county giving recommendations on implementation.

**BEAN:** In July.

**ROLEN:** Did I say August?

**BARKE:** You said January. But...

**ROLEN:** No, we were ahead of the game. We knew what was coming. No, it was July. It was just after the CSBA guidance and we did not suggest that we wait for CSBA to monitor to change their policies, which is what most county officers are doing. We gave specifics for implementation. We have drafted some language with regard to opt-out. We're trying to make it more specific to the language. We've drafted language that the districts can implement in their annual notifications so the parents know that they have this opt-out possibility. And we have also followed up at the direction of Dr. Bean with a second directory memo from our communications and media staff. So, I'm glad you brought that to my attention. I appreciate you giving me assignments, but I've already completed them, so thank you.

**WILLIAMS:** You sent this document to all of the superintendents?

**ROLEN:** Yes. And we've been receiving calls from various districts asking implementation questions. Everything is technical as library readouts.

**WILLIAMS:** Apparently in Santa Ana unified school district that superintendent then did not send it to the trustees because the particular trustee that asked me to get involved in this doesn't know anything how to implement this.

**ROLEN:** I am sorry that she didn't get that, but we did send it to the superintendents and yeah, we were expecting the superintendents to disseminate it throughout.

**BEAN:** And there's a variety of potential reasons that some superintendents didn't get that because it's summer. Many districts actually close. That particular district you're referring to had transition.

**BARKE:** He's retiring.

**BEAN:** What's that?

**BARKE:** He's retiring.

**BEAN:** Well, he retired and a new superintendent is there. And so, she came on board and it may not have been sent to her directly and it may have been sent to the previous superintendent. So, there are things that we're still working those pieces out, but yes.

**WILLIAMS:** So, we do have a document that you've already created.

**ROLEN:** Yes.

**WILLIAMS:** Can we put that on our website for public access then?

**ROLEN:** I will leave that up to the superintendent. I don't see any reason why not. It was a follow-up. This is our advice right here and right now because we're still seeking clarification on timelines and implementation strategies because of course the Supreme Court doesn't have to give us that. They just say, here's the rule, figure out how to implement it.

**WILLIAMS:** So, I guess what I'm asking for is a consensus by the board. If we can put it on our website that link to the document so we can, if I get questions from individual school board members, I can say, go to this link on our website and you'll have it downloaded.

**ROLEN:** Do you see any reason why not, Mr. Superintendent?

**BEAN:** No. We can ask Ian.

**VALDES:** Does it have to be an agenda item?

**ROLEN:** No.

**WILLIAMS:** Just a consensus for our website.

**BARKE:** That's good. Great idea.

**VALDES:** It's good by me.

**ROLEN:** Democracy in action.

**SHAW:** Okay, you done?

**WILLIAMS:** I'm done.

**BARKE:** Do you have board room comments?

**SHAW:** Yeah. Okay. I'll just make a comment. One of my kids attend school. The Lowell District. Our superintendent two days ago sent out an email announcing his retirement, Mr. Jim Coombs, and it won't be effective for a few more months, but it is been a wonderful superintendent for us. And I'm very sorry to see him go off into retirement. But other than that, the Shaw household is getting ready. We start school next week. So, Mrs. Shaw is getting her classroom organized and we're getting backpacks and I'm going broke buying shoes and school supplies. But we're excited to get going again in the school year, next year, next week.

**BARKE:** All right. And last but not least, I think we would like a closed session report out from our wonderful general counsel.

**ROLEN:** Thank you Madam President. We did not hold closed session item number one. There was no change in the real property negotiations. With closed session item number two, the board received information on a matter of anticipated and or potential litigation. No action was taken, but for the approval by a 5-0 vote of the invoice of Epstein Becker and Green dated July 31st, 2025. Invoice number 1206351, repeating 1206351. Jonathan Brenner was greatly missed. And that's the report out.

**BARKE:** All right. If nobody else has anything, we can officially adjourn at 7:52.