

BARKE: All right, so I want to announce that Vice President Shaw is participating remotely today. He'll be tuning in about an hour. Is that accurate? Or he'll be joining us at some point during the closed session, and Ken Williams will be joining us at 3:00 PM. So, for the benefit of the record, this is the regular meeting of the Orange County Board of Education. We're calling to order, Darou roll call, please.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Here.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

BARKE: Okay. Can I get a motion to approve the agenda?

SPARKS: So moved.

VALDES: Second.

BARKE: Wonderful. All those in favor?

BARKE, VALDES, SPARKS: Aye.

BARKE: Passes 3-0 and also for approval of the meeting minutes from August.

SPARKS: So moved.

BARKE: Thank you.

VALDES: Second.

BARKE: All right, all in favor?

BARKE, VALDES, SPARKS: Aye.

BARKE: Any opposed? It passes 3-0. Okay. Are there any comment cards for closed session?

HENDRICK: None.

BARKE: Okay. All right, then we will go into closed session and reconvene about 5:00 PM.

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

BARKE: Sorry to keep you. And let's see. All right. I'd like to start by announcing that our Board Vice President, Tim Shaw, will be remote with us tonight. Unfortunately, he had to be at a work meeting, but I know he's happy to be here and feels bad that he's not here in person. Let's see what else I want to tell you. I think we are good to go. So we'll start with the invocation.

REVEREND YATES: My name is Reverend Lee Yates. I work for the Christian Church Disciples of Christ Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, running college prep undergraduate and graduate leader development programs across the country. I live in Orange. I'm a Chapman alum. I have kids who came through this school board's area, but I serve a church in LA, so don't tell anybody. For this gathering, the board members, community leaders, and concerned speakers, we lift a prayer of wisdom. For teachers who continue to do more with less. While wondering how long it will take for all of us to notice how much they do and back our affirmations with community investment. We lift a prayer of patience and grace for students navigating new routines, old insecurities, and complexities of the world that leave some scared to leave home and others scared to go back. For parents who are supporting students learning beside their children or scared of what school is for their children, we lift up prayers of comfort in the face of very real fears of our world today. For a community and society that claim that children come first, yet continue to prioritize so many excesses of the moment over our leaders of the future, we lift a prayer for all of us.

For at some point each of us is called to be the voice of a silenced child, each of us to be the mentor to a brave, brilliant teen, for each of us to offer the care and support to educators, parents, and staff that we might be the answer to our own prayers. We lift a prayer for ourselves that we might echo the best hopes of each of our spiritual traditions and the best hopes of our own hearts. May it be so. Amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

BARKE: Thank you. Next, we are going to do the Pledge of Allegiance and I would like to invite our new liaison to the board, Brandon and up to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

GUEVARA: Place your right hands over your heart, please.

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: Thank you. Brandon didn't meet to catch you off guard.

GUEVARA: Just a little bit.

BARKE: I figured you know it. All right, moving along. I'd love to invite Dennis Cole.

HENDRICK: I am sorry, President Barke. I do have one introduction first.

BARKE: Oh, thank you.

HENDRICK: I just want to let you know that we have Amanda Chen here. She is a senior at Arnold O. Beckman, and she is using your school board meeting for her government class.

BARKE: Wonderful. Where are you?

HENDRICK: If you can wave your hand, there she is, right there. So she's right, yeah.

BARKE: Well, welcome. Had I known that, I would've invited you for the Pledge of Allegiance.

SHAW: Mari, maybe she could sit in my chair since I'm not using it tonight.

HENDRICK: I apologize. I have one more. Curtis. Am I saying that correctly? How do you say your name? Your first name? How do you say your name? Curtis. Okay. From Beckman also.

BARKE: Oh, wonderful. Well, welcome to both of you. I'm glad you could be here, and I hope you learn a lot, and if at the end, you have some questions, please feel free.

SPARKS: And we have a few public comments.

BARKE: Okay. So, oh, all right, how many public comments do we have?

SPARKS: Five.

BARKE: Okay, so sorry, Janice, we're going to do five public comments first.

SPARKS: Okay. So I'm going to call the first, and then the second will be on deck. So first we have Heidi Landgraf, and on deck is Ronna Yelin.

HEIDI: Good evening, esteemed board members and Superintendent Dr. Bean. I'm proud to report this school year marks Suncoast Prep Academy fourth year since all of you graciously decided to allow Suncoast Prep Academy to continue, so thank you for that. Not only have we grown in numbers, but the transformation that has transpired has exceeded all of our expectations. We recently had a week-long staff training, and it was remarkable and heartwarming to truly see the heart within our school. While staff shared how accepted and heard they felt. At the staff meeting, our core values were shared, which embody what our school truly is about. The acronym for SUNCOAST stands for S, which is service we offer to our families. U stands for unity within our school and how we work as a team. N stands for our nurturing energy. C for the commitment. O is for our optimism, which we constantly witness all the time.

A stands for accountability. S is for strength and resilience within our school and T is for trust we have within our community. Suncoast also embodies something unique as a charter school, many teachers walked away from charter schools entirely until Suncoast came along. Our staff returned to our charter because they believed in the vision. When Suncoast was at risk of closing, a powerful leadership stepped in to rebuild and protect it. Every decision since then has been about preserving what matters most, which is building community while allowing families to drive the education of their children. Suncoast is proof this model works. We see evidence of that all the time, and you're going to see more of that this year, I'm hoping. And we are looking forward to an incredible school year. I'm speaking on behalf of all of our families and staff. We are so grateful for your continued support of our school and the model our families choose to educate their students. Parental choice for education is so important. We truly appreciate your support and opposition of AB 84, which truly is a threat to our families and community. We have to stop AB 84, as you know, and also, Dr. Bean, you have my support.

SPARKS: Thank you. We have Ronna Yelin followed by Rachel Trask.

BARKE: Just a moment. Heidi, thank you again. We really appreciate your monthly updates. It's so nice to hear from you every month. Thank you.

RONNA: Hi, my name is Ronna Yelin, and I'm on the school support leadership team at Suncoast Prep, one of your non-classroom based charter schools. My daughter graduated from a non-classroom based charter school as well, so I am a former charter school parent. I, along with several staff members are working on clearing our CTE credentials through the OCDE's amazing program. I just completed and passed CTE 101. Yay. We are so grateful for the support of Dr. Bean, Mari Barke, and the OCBE, as well as the OCDE, in their support of charters. We feel very grateful to be authorized by the OCDE. I also wanted to bring up our concerns with AB 84. Even with the latest amendments if passed, it will destroy the system that makes our school effective. The vendor credentialing and contract requirements create unnecessary barriers that will disrupt programs and limit opportunities for students.

This bill cannot be fixed and must be stopped. Our school provides high-quality instruction and services to students who cannot access services in a traditional setting. Destroying our educational model through this bill will cause these students to go without services. Families will not subject their children to a system that has previously failed them. We are also very concerned about the oversight and punitive funding requirements in the August amendments. Oversight is not overly complicated and punitive is now overly complicated and punitive with harsh consequences, no support, no due process, and no real ability to make corrections. These provisions were not shared with the public until over Labor Day weekend, and could not decimate a charter immediately, leaving students and families at risk. Please help us to continue to oppose AB 84 and protect the flexibility, quality, and stability of our charter schools for students and families, which you've already been graciously helping us do. Thank you again for your support. And Dr. Bean, you have mine. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. So we have Rachel Trask followed by Rudi Krause.

RACHEL: Hello, my name is Rachel Trask. I want to first thank Reverend Yates for his invocation. I found it really moving. My name is Rachel Trask. I'm an educator and currently a victim of character assassination. In the May 1st, 2024, OCBE public meeting. The following inaccurate and inflammatory comment was made by a member of the public regarding me, quote, "Rachel Trask, who openly supports any anti-Israel movements or propaganda on campus and displays Palestinian flag in her classroom." End quote. This comment falsely accuses me of supporting extremist causes. As an educator, I pride myself on developing positive relationships with students and valuing the cultural knowledge of any person who comes into my classroom. I've welcomed the expression of this cultural knowledge by allowing the student establishment of a miniature flag collection in my world history and global studies classroom. This collection includes flags from Ethiopia, Spain, Norway, Israel, Palestine, Mexico, the Pueblo people, Peru, South Korea, Ukraine, Zambia, and others. Hate crimes in our country are undeniably increasing. Our communities rely on the cooperation of diverse voices to create safe, inclusive, and informed environments for future generations. My mission as an educator is to nurture understanding, and honor the pursuit of knowledge and peaceful civic participation. Currently, the availability of this false and prejudicial comment on the internet is negatively impacting my search for employment. Last evening, an internet search found my name or rather last evening an internet search of my name showed this comment as one of the first search result.

I humbly request that the OC Board of Education put forth a motion to strike the comment including my name from the public record. Thank you for your consideration. My name is Rachel Trask. I'm an educator for all students. I have a copy of my comment here that I'd be happy to provide for reference. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Rudi Krause and on deck is Karen Jaffe.

RUDI: Hi, my name is Rudi Krause. I'm here to talk about the greatest crisis going on in the history of the world right now, which is the Muslim invasion of Western Europe and the destruction of Germany, France, England, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Muslim Pakistani gangs are raping all of the girls in Western Europe. Over a million rapes already. They call them Pakistani grooming gangs, but the media says that they're Asian. They're not Asian. They're Pakistanis, they're Muslims. This is here in the United States. This is what's part of the globalist 2030 agenda to Muslimize the United States and turn it into the US of Islam. You educators are at fault. 95% of the kids in the United States are getting Islam. They're down on rugs. This is a dangerous idea. There are two types of concepts. There are living concepts and there are killing concepts. You accept only living concepts and reject all killing concepts.

Islam is a killing concept. It is religion of hate, convert or die hate. So, what do we do about it? This is what we do. I'm setting up the US congressional hearings for the Muslim ideology trials in Congress where their beliefs will be discussed. In Congress, they'll bring in their Imans and their supporters and then they'll have to face questions from Congress. And then what we do for the first time in the history of the world is we use the diagnostic statistics manual for mental

disorders to identify their homicidal ideations to convert or die as being homicidal ideations. This will mark a point in time when Islam is now viewed for what it really is is a mental illness and they will not be allowed in positions of authority and government institution anywhere in the United States ever again. We eliminate the Mamdani effect in New York. DSM-III Muslim mental illness.

SPARKS: Thank you. Your time is up.

WILLIAMS: Thank you.

SPARKS: Karen Jaffe and on deck we have one more Patty Cobada.

KAREN: Good evening and thank you. You all have my support as well. First, I want to offer my apologies to Ms. Trask in terms of what she's experienced and as bad as it is, most and many of the Jewish students as well as the Jewish teachers across our country are experiencing 10 times worse. And it's bad all around. And the hate has to stop. As the fall approaches, the Jewish calendar ushers in what are known as the High Holy Days, Rosh Hashanah or the new year and Yom Kipper the Day of Atonement. In between these holidays are 10 days of atonement meant to be for personal reflection and introspection of how we can make ourselves better people and the world a better place. These same values carry profound meaning for Christians, pointing us to the character of God and the work that you all do to honor your Lord Jesus Christ.

What better way to begin the school year now here at the Orange County Board of Education. Last year continued to be a painful one for many Jewish students as well as many Jewish parents and teachers. And this year, we hope for a year of continued learning and growth. Rosh Hashanah begins with the blowing of the shofar, the ram's horn, a trumpet blast that awakens the soul. In fact, starting on the first day of Elul we're meant to blow the shofar each day to remember the sovereignty of God. The sound reminds us that time is short, and repentance is urgent. In your scriptures, and I hope I get this right, so I apologize. This echoes Paul's words, "Awake, O sleeper and arise from the dead. Christ will shine upon you." 10 days later comes Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur, the most solemn and holy day of the year in Judaism.

It's a day of fasting, not even a glass of water. Confession and seeking atonement for our sins and the sins of our people. In the Old Testament, that is the Hebrew Bible, the high priest enter the holy of holies with sacrificial blood to cover the sins of the people. For Christians, this foreshadows Jesus the great high priest who entered once and for all to the heavenly sanctuary by his own blood. His sacrifice is the glory that Christians worship. I just want to end with a reflection prayer taken from our Yom Kippur service and it ends with us striking our hearts so that we may learn to do better. It closes with three sentiments during these days of awe where we're called to live daily in repentance and think about how we can do better. Our God and God of our fathers. Let our prayer come before you. Do not turn away from our supplication for we are not so arrogant and stiff-necked to say before you we are righteous and have not sinned. Indeed, we have sinned. Forgive us, pardon us, and grant us atonement. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you, Karen.

SPARKS: Thank you. Patty is our last speaker for the moment.

PATTY: Good morning, board. My name is Patricia Cobada. I'm asking that you please look into California Assembly Bill AB 495, also known as a Family Preparedness Plan Act of 2025. It protects children and families by establishing short-term joint guardianship to address parental and availability, expanding caregivers authorization affidavits, standardizing the recognition and creating new categories of eligible caregivers. The bill also requires schools and licensed childcare facilities to implement policies that protect family policies by preventing the collection of immigration status information and limiting assistance with immigration enforcement. Now, board, I'm asking that you please reach out to your colleagues. This bill was put in the suspense file and it was released. It's going to the Senate floor. It is a horrible bill with no guardrails. This bill, my understanding, was created to help immigrant families, but in reality it puts a big target on their back because they are a vulnerable community and the bill is written so bad that it actually affects every child in the state of California, where there is no identification and really required because there's four affidavits that anyone can go and print.

It bypasses a lot of family law simply because someone decided to create a law to help push an agenda, in my opinion, for immigration. Now I know that the state of California uses the Latino population. The Democrats use the Latino population to push nefarious agendas, but this agenda is extremely evil because it puts every child in the state of California at risk from being removed from their parents. It puts them at risk into human child trafficking. Most people, they read about the bill and it's worded in a way that it's meant for them to believe that it's helping them. But because the language is so poor, it actually will harm every community, especially the undocumented community, which is already a targeted and vulnerable community. And I think it's really disgusting on behalf of the Democratic party to do that. I continue to reach out to Democrat politicians. I point out the obvious. There are lots of lawyers in the state of California and organizations speaking out against this bill because it's so poorly written. I am asking this board to please reach out to your colleagues and ask them to please vote no on this bill when it hits the Senate floor. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you. I want to thank all of our public speakers tonight for taking time out of your busy evening and thank everyone for being here. It's a great full boardroom, which is so fun. Now, Dennis Cole, I think it's time for you to join us.

WILLIAMS: President Barke, may I just make one comment?

BARKE: No. Go ahead.

SPARKS: You said you weren't going to talk.

WILLIAMS: You're bad. So to our public members who come to public meetings, sometimes words are expressed and shared that is not shared by our board. Sometimes there are difficult words that are spoken by the public. We want to encourage the First Amendment, freedom of speech, but sometimes words kind of go beyond what we do here and there were some words that were spoken earlier that express that normally I don't. We just listen. We're not here to respond. But I do want to share with Karen wherever she is, your words were most gracious,

most unifying and restoring, and healing. Thank you once again, Karen, for your public words that give us support. That's it.

BARKE: Okay, go ahead.

COLE: All right. Well, Dr. Bean, President Barke, esteemed trustees, I want to thank you for tonight allowing us to be here to recognize Red Ribbon Week for 2025 and we want to recognize that Red Ribbon Week is a tribute to DEA agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, who tragically lost his life in February, 1985 while battling drug cartels to help the community to be a safer place. This week-long Red Ribbon event was initiated by students in Kiki's hometown of Calexico, California, where they wore red ribbons and pledged to remain drug-free in honor of Kiki and all those who've made sacrifices to make our communities healthier. We appreciate the leadership of Dr. Bean and our county superintendent of schools and the board here, and the commitment of law enforcement and countywide to support drug-free communities and substance use prevention efforts among our youth across Orange County. We're especially grateful for Sheriff Don Barnes work to support our schools by making Red Ribbon Week a priority every year and by providing training for parents, students, and staff on how to live a healthy drug-free life. Tonight we welcome Commander Jared Dahl, representing the Orange County Sheriff's Department to the podium to say a few words on behalf of the sheriff.

COMMANDER JARED: Thank you, and good evening. First off, I want to thank the on behalf of Sheriff Don Barnes and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, the many men and women that work very hard to help our youth throughout Orange County. For this honor and for the resolution that you guys, Orange County Department of Education is providing with us, I also want to give my greatest appreciation on behalf of Sheriff Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff's Department for the Sheriff's Advisory Council and all the work that they do to help us in partnership with them. Red Ribbon Week began as a national movement to honor the sacrifice of DEA agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, those whose life, excuse me, was taken while fighting drug trafficking. What started as a grassroots effort has grown into the largest drug prevention campaign and here in Orange County has impacted, the impact has been profound.

Every year, Red Ribbon Week brings law enforcement, schools, families, and community partners together with one voice to inspire students to make healthy drug-free choices. That unity sends a powerful message across the county. We stand with our youth and our commitment to building a safer, stronger future for them. I've been with the department for 33 years, since 1993, and when I started just out of college, I started with our drug education unit and at that time we had Chuck the Truck and what I saw with the students in Orange County and what we did in partnership to drive the message and try to get kids from even looking at or being involved with drugs at the beginning stages of it was amazing and helped, inspired me through my career, my years. I've been heavily involved in juvenile services bureau on a multitude of levels. So again, for everything that you do as a board and the help and the Sheriff's advisory and all of you that have kids and relatives and stuff, drug-free is what we strive for. So thank you very much.

BARKE: Thank you.

COLE: We also have a special recognition that we want to give to the members of the Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council for their unwavering support in helping youth make healthy choices and highlighting substance abuse awareness by providing wristbands for all Orange County students during Red Ribbon Week. And tonight, we welcome Blake Berteau, the president of the Sheriff's Advisory Council. Along with several other members of the council, we have the Honorable Steve Mensinger, first vice president and also former mayor of Costa Mesa. We have Maribel Marroquin, who is the executive director for the Sheriff's Advisory Council and also Kiersten Oliver, who is the executive administrator. And so right now, I believe Steve Mensinger is going to come up and say a few words.

STEVE: Thank you. It's nice to be here. On behalf of the Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council, I want to thank the Orange County Board of Education for this recognition and more importantly, your partnership. The Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council is a nonprofit organization committed to supporting law enforcement through direct assistance, public outreach and community engagement. We honor those that serve and protect by funding critical initiatives, programs, and memorial efforts. Our mission is to stand by our sheriff's department and ensure its members and their families are supported, especially in times of need. Red Ribbon Week gives us a chance to join educators, families, and leaders across Orange County in a united effort to encourage our young people to live drug-free lives. Our goal is to make the lasting impact, helping shape a healthier, safer community where students know they are valued and supported. We are proud to stand alongside each of you in the shared mission, so thank you very much.

SPARKS: Thank you.

COLE: Well, thank you so much again to the Sheriff's Advisory Council and to the Sheriff's Department. Just a couple of other thank yous here and then we'll get to the resolution itself. So we do want to say thank you to you, our Orange County School Board for your continued support of Red Ribbon Week. And we also want to commend all of our school districts across Orange County and local community organizations for their dedication, supporting substance use prevention efforts in our schools, reflecting a shared commitment to a safer, healthier community. We are pleased to recognize a collaboration between local businesses and the Orange County Sheriff's Advisory Council to incentivize students to wear wristbands during Red Ribbon Week. Heightening community support for substance use awareness. Back when I was a principal, it was a free slushy day over at 7-Eleven. That was every day, every time. It was awesome. Lastly, we celebrate the efforts of our schools in offering vital substance use prevention programs and activities to students using Red Ribbon Week as a starting point for year-round substance and prevention initiatives. And so today we collectively honor agent "Kiki" Camerena's memory and the legacy of all those who've made sacrifices by participating wholeheartedly in Red Ribbon Week. So, I'll give it back to you, President Barke.

BARKE: Thank you so much Mr. Cole. I appreciate that. And I'd like to call for a motion to adopt resolution 23-25 in support of Red Ribbon Week.

SPARKS: So moved.

BARKE: Do I have a second?

VALDES: Second.

BARKE: All right. I guess we have to do a roll call vote since Tim is remote.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: And it passes 5-0, what a surprise. Thank you.

COLE: Wonderful. Thank you. At this time, we'd like to invite up Commander Dahl and the members of the Sheriff's Advisory Council to take pictures with our board. So come on down.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Okay. This side to kind of squeeze in a little bit. This way let's get you in there. Just getting on the side there to go and then like you look. All right. Okay, here we go. 1, 2, 3. 1, 2, 3. Someone wasn't smiling. 1, 2, 3. All right, very good.

BARKE: All right, next up we have to invite Dr. Poulin to the podium to facilitate the presentation.

MARTINEZ-POULIN: I thank you for this opportunity to address our community. I'd like to say thank you to President Barke, the board members, and Superintendent Bean. I'm delighted to share a little bit about our implementation and rollout of Heads Up Check Up. This is a screener that will allow us to assess our students as they enroll so that we can determine if they have any specific needs that we need to address while they are with us. It could be an academic need, it could be mental health, it could be a variety of different needs. And our goal is to make that determination early on and to build and establish a culture of care so we can support our students

and their families. A little bit about our implementation. It did start about four months ago and since then we've learned quite a few things.

We learned that we needed to be a little more specific in what we were doing because the way it was rolled out lacked a little bit of clarity. For that, we're bringing it back. We're being clear and we are also gathering active consent from parents. It's happening upon enrollment and so we're delighted that our principals, our office staff are a part of that. And we are also working on thoughtful implementation based on student population. Today I have with me two people that are practitioners, the folks that are rolling it out and implementing at the sites. We are also in the process of collaborating with National Guard and Probation so that we can support their existing screener and response systems. But please allow me to introduce two folks that I have with me today. I have Amy Smith, who is a mental health manager at ACCESS and one of our amazing principals from Area 10, Principal Erik Bagger. Let me go ahead and just move to our next slide. So again, these were the key takeaways. My apologies, I missed this slide, but I did summarize its content and I'm now moving on to Amy and Principal Bagger.

SMITH: Good evening. So, we've met with all of our community and juvenile hall principals to talk about and have a systematic plan of how we're going to adopt and implement the screener for all of our students in ACCESS. What we've talked about with the principals is the different ways that we can capture our students that are currently enrolled and our students that will be enrolling in the future. Because we have ongoing enrollment as you know, we never stop here in ACCESS, we keep going. Some principals are choosing to do it as we roll through September, which is suicide prevention and awareness month. So, really administering as we get through September and October. And then we are also looking at our opportunities to engage our parents to complete the screeners too. So, looking at times when parents are with us at back to school nights, parent events, and also when we have our student intervention team meetings, it's another way for us to get parent input is to have them complete the screener as well. We are working with our mental health teams across ACCESS to help our principals implement. So, we have mental health staff there to respond to student immediate needs as they complete the screener, as well as being a part of the intervention plan to be able to provide what interventions are needed based on student responses.

BAGGER: Good evening, trustees and Superintendent Dr. Bean. My name is Erik Bagger. I'm the principal for Area 10. What does that mean? I oversee three schools in Anaheim West, Ball and Beach Boulevard, our La Habra site, which is our larger site and one of our older sites in ACCESS off of Harbor and Imperial. And then it's kind of all of North Orange County all the way over to our Placentia site off Lakeview and La Palma. We see about 200 to 300 students during our year. As Amy said, we go year round. So, we're constantly enrolling students as well as graduating students and sending students back to district. It creates a non-traditional setting. Where I come from, I've been a sitting principal for 19 years. It's my first year with ACCESS. And so, we have these rhythms in traditional school and ACCESS. We need to create those rhythms and those systems.

So, in Area 10, we're implementing our MTSS system both on the academic side as well as on the behavioral or mental health side. We do universal screeners, and I'm going to share a slide here and then go back. For academics, we use our i-Ready exam for all students and that will tell

us their reading and math abilities so we can be proactive in supporting them. And so this is the concept of MTSS, where we do something for all students, but not all students need more specialized services. So, we do that for some students. And then some of our kids need very intensive supports. And so those are few students. What I found was that in our area, we were in need of a screening tool that we could give to all students to support mental health. That's where we came across or I learned from Amy and the team of the Heads Up Check Up screener.

Our plan in Area 10 is as students enroll with us, regardless of what that season is, one of the first things that they're going to do is take that mental health screener so that we can be proactive and not reactive weeks, months later when something arises. Plus our students come to us because of very serious situations that have happened and they can be various things. I won't get into what those things could be. So, it behooves us to know that information upfront. Then we can with our MTSS team, which includes myself, our mental health technician, our counselor, our RJ wellness specialists, our family community, we have lots of services as you could tell, to look through those results and support our students adequately. And then we have a routine where that group will meet monthly to monitor students and continue to make sure that they're getting those supports and that when they're doing well, we remove those supports so the next student can have those supports or continue those supports because they're working.

So that's upon enrollment, but we now have a base of students that are with us and events and things can happen in people's lives, whether it's surgeries or major losses or situations in the community. We want to constantly be going back and checking the pulses, checking how our students are doing with their mental health in area 10 at least we'll be administering this during the first and third quarter. The first quarter is between July 1 and the end of September, and then the third quarter is from, what is it, December or January to May. So that will be where we have our largest enrollment that have been referred to us from the districts and we can make sure we're capturing all of our student data. I'm going to turn it back to Dr. Maria.

SMITH: The Heads Up Check Up gives us the opportunity to screen all of our students. And as I alluded to before, it also helps us prepare for September, which is suicide prevention and awareness month. So in addition to really vamping up this initiative for the screener, we are also doing suicide risk assessment, refreshment protocols for our clinical staff, our school-based mental health staff, as well as then our clinicians are going out to our principal teams at their staff meetings to review the protocol with the staff so that we are prepared to meet the needs of all of our students, whether they're high risk and whatever type of intervention that they need along the continuum.

MARTINEZ-POULIN: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Cloke who was instrumental in helping with the organization, the rollout, our principals, our teachers, and our staff at ACCESS, who are highly committed to the idea that it takes all of us taking care of our students specifically are most vulnerable. Thank you, Dr. Bean, for your leadership and board members, for your support in this very important area. And to again reiterate that our goal is to make sure that our students have what they need. And it starts with making sure that we can apply that screener, find out and implement the supports they need in order for them to be successful and participate in the instructional learning that happens every single day. With that, we thank you for this opportunity and wish you a great evening.

BARKE: Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Great presentation. Okay, next we have the consent calendar. May I entertain the motion for the consent calendar?

SPARKS: So moved.

BARKE: Second?

VALDES: Tim is going to want to recuse himself from 12.

BARKE: That's fine. You can still second it and then we can discuss it and he can recuse.

VALDES: I second.

BARKE: Okay. Tim, is that appropriate? Would you like to recuse yourself?

SHAW: Sure. On number 12 we're talking about?

BARKE: Yep. Yes. Yes. For the consent calendar.

SHAW: I'll register an abstention on item number 12.

BARKE: Okay. Any discussion? Hearing...

SPARKS: I may join him in that class, but I don't know yet.

BARKE: Okay. Well it'll just come up on the next agenda.

SPARKS: Perfect.

BARKE: If you choose to join. Okay. All right. Hearing no discussion, please roll call vote.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes. Noting an abstention on item number 12.

BARKE: All right. Next, we are going to recess our regular board meeting to a meeting of the Orange County Department of Education Facilities Corporation to take action on the minutes of the August 6th, 2025, meeting.

HENDRICK: You need a motion to [inaudible].

BARKE: May I entertain a motion for that?

WILLIAMS: I'll make a motion.

SPARKS: Second it.

BARKE: And a second. Okay. So, we are now recessing and do we need a motion to approve the minutes? Okay. May I entertain a motion to approve?

SPARKS: So moved.

WILLIAMS: Second.

SPARKS: And a second.

BARKE: Okay. All those in favor of roll call vote, I suppose again.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: Passes 5-0. And now may I go back to the regular meeting?

WILLIAMS: Motion to adjourn.

BARKE: Motion to adjourn this meeting.

WILLIAMS: Motion.

SPARKS: Second.

BARKE: Motion. Second. Okay. Ken and Lisa, I believe.

SPARKS: Yeah.

BARKE: And now does that need a vote to adjourn? Okay, we'll wait for the roll call.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: Okay. We are now back. Renee, do we have any charter submissions?

HENDRICK: We do not, but I do have a couple updates for you. Stembridge Charter has withdrawn their petition, so they will not be at the next meeting.

BARKE: Okay, thank you.

HENDRICK: And then also, just to let you know too, we received notification that Sycamore Creek had a school closure as of June 30th. Remember they have two schools. And so, one was the one denied by the district and the other is the countywide. The countywide is still open, but

they closed the other one. You may see a notice. I just wanted to give you a heads up about that. With that, that's all I have.

BARKE: Thank you. Okay, great.

VALDES: Did they do that voluntarily?

HENDRICK: Yes, they did.

BARKE: Yes. Yes, it was to facilitate the opening of the new, yes. Okay. All right. Next, I'm going to invite Aracely.

CHASTAIN: Good evening, President Barke, Trustees and Superintendent Bean. Today the board will a hearing to grant or deny the countywide charter school 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. And for an initial 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. The board held a public hearing on August 6th to consider the level of support for the charter school. The petition has been reviewed according to California Education Code as legally required. You've been provided the Orange County Department of Education staff report that summarizes the findings from that review and offers recommendations for consideration by this board. Based on information gathered throughout the review process, including a clarification meeting held with petitioners on August 5th, staff recommends approval of the petition. Prior to board action Orange County Prep representatives or allotted equal time and opportunity or 10 minutes, whichever is longer to present evidence and testimony responsive to the staff recommendations and findings published on August 19th. I now call representatives from Orange County Prep to the podium.

CAPRICE: Hi, my name is Dr. Caprice Young. I'm the superintendent and CEO of Navigator Schools and Orange County Prep. And rather than take up your time today, I would just like to say that everything that we said in the hearing still stands and that we have continued to answer questions along the way. And my team is here should any questions arise. Thank you very much.

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

SPARKS: Yes, we have Javier Orduno.

JAVIER: Good evening, President Barke, trustees, and Superintendent Bean, my name is Javier Orduno. I'm the Orange County local representative for the California Charter School Association, CCSA. CCSA is a membership and professional organization serving member schools and advocating for fair charter policies for 1,250 public charter schools in California. Our mission is to meet the needs of parents, educators, and communities for excellent public school options by supporting and advocating for high-quality nonprofit charter schools and sharing their successes throughout California public schools. I represent the association in

recommended the approval of the new countywide petition for the Orange County Prep a Navigator School as an Orange County Board of Education authorizer charter schools. Navigator is a member in a good standing of our association and in our opinion, it meets the legal standard for a new countywide petition under California Education Code 47605. CCSA has worked with the leadership at Navigator. It knows they're providing programs for students throughout the community that families want. An approval of this new petition will allow the school to ensure that continuing expanding services are available to students under their care. CCSA supports this school and respectfully urges the, you to approve this petition. We have reviewed the Orange County Department of Education staff report for Orange County Prep a Navigator School and believe the charter petition meets the standards outlined in education code 47605.6 and there's no legal barriers to the board approving this petition. For this reason, we encourage you to approve this petition and let us know if you have any questions. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you, Javier. And that's all we have.

BARKE: Okay, great. Thank you.

CHASTAIN: Hearing is now concluded. The board has three options for action regarding charter school petitions submitted. Option one, approve the charter petition as written. Option two, approve the charter petition with conditions. And option three, deny the charter petition. President Barke, I now close the public hearing and return the meeting to you.

BARKE: Thank you very much Aracely. Do we have any discussion, any board members want to discuss?

WILLIAMS: Can I first make the motion and you may go to discussion?

BARKE: Sure, of course.

WILLIAMS: Yeah, with great enthusiasm. Caprice, you were way too short. You need to highlight your team here, your leadership team. Very positive, but I will make the motion to support option one.

SPARKS: I'll second...

VALDES: I Second.

SPARKS: Oh, go ahead, Jorge. Go ahead. Go ahead, Jorge. Jorge has it.

BARKE: All right, well, and Caprice, I want to say I loved your comments because we were so impressed last time. I don't feel like I need to hear it again. I think if the board members have questions as a result, but you did a fabulous presentation last time, and I was very impressed and I'm very supportive. So, I appreciate that that we didn't just kind of redo everything. But if anybody wants any questions or wants her to, any of the team?

VALDES: I don't have any questions, Madam President.

BARKE: Wonderful.

VALDES: I echo your comments. I was really, really impressed with the presentation. They brought all the right people right here to answer the questions. High level of competence. It's obvious and I'm really excited that there was an inclination towards opening up a school in Anaheim, which is in my area. I think that area really could use a school like this and I'm really excited to cast my vote whenever that happens soon.

BARKE: Awesome. Anyone else have any questions or comments?

SPARKS: I would just say you guys just killed it. Hit it out of the park with your presentation last time. Really one of the best prepared teams that I've experienced in my almost eight years on the board. So, congratulations. And I'm in full support.

BARKE: Wonderful. Tim, any comments or questions?

SHAW: I first want to apologize for not being there. I work, unfortunately, have work in the way sometimes, but I would echo what my colleagues said. I thought your presentation last time was spectacular and I don't have 1% doubt that you're going to be extremely successful.

BARKE: All right, thank you, Dr. Williams.

WILLIAMS: I said I would be brief, didn't I?

SPARKS: I think you said more than that.

WILLIAMS: So yes. This is one of the more exciting charters that we get to approve here. And just for those individuals who are out there who do not understand what a charter school is, it is a public school. It is a public institution that anybody can go to, just like any public school at the corner where you live. Our public schools are the cornerstone of our society. We get to approve unique institutions that are different because these are all parent-driven. This is about parental rights, it's about parental choice. I just need to highlight because this is important for the documentation for the record, this is a charter school that has help me out here. Is it \$8 million you got from the federal government?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 12.

WILLIAMS: Oh, okay. Okay. So, one of the big optimistic and prognostic factors here is that money that's going to help you go. The second prognostic factor is the fact you have classroom space that is facilities that are all ready to go and you just got to start the program. You're going to start this next year or when is it the exact date that you're going to be opening?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Next summer.

WILLIAMS: Next summer. Okay. And you have a history of success. Because this board is so successful in promoting and advancing charter schools, I am just so excited to be a part of this.

We love to see you grow your team that brought, they're all beautiful, they have beautiful smiles. I love the one student that graduated from your Gilroy campus. She was so articulate and just everything you bring is class and just keep it up. Don't stop.

BARKE: All right, well, it sounds like we're probably ready to take a roll call vote.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes. With enthusiasm.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Likewise.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

VALDES: Congratulations.

BARKE: Congratulations. We are looking forward to working with you and I know our team is so best of luck.

CHASTAIN: The board will now hold a hearing to consider public input regarding the countywide charter petition submitted by California Republic Leadership Academy, Orange County on July 17th. The charter school proposes to operate a classroom-based program serving students in transitional kindergarten through grade 12 for an initial five-year charter term from 2026 to 2031. The charter operator notified six school districts of intent to open facilities Fullerton, Huntington Beach City, Irvine Unified, Orange Unified, Saddleback Valley Unified, and Tustin Unified. Before public comments, charter representatives are allotted 15 minutes to address the board. I now call representatives from the charter school to the podium.

BARKE: Thank you.

GARY: Good evening.

BARKE: Good evening.

GARY: Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent, Dr. Bean. It's a pleasure to be with you tonight. I think this is my third time coming in front of you in so many years, so it's a pleasure to be here. I'm Gary Davis, executive director and founder of the California Republic Leadership Academy. And I'm going to introduce our team here. Well, we'll start with Helen, our Helen Suhr, our Capistrano campus school principal and Roy Kim from ICON school management. Janelle Ruley. You all know Janelle, infamous council?

BARKE: We love Janelle.

GARY: And Dr. Sagui Doering, who is our director of compliance outreach and charter school growth. And I know Erin Bartaluzzi is here as well, our assistant principal at CRLA Capistrano. And I know we have a number of families here as well. So, we kind of brought our A team and we're excited to be in front of you tonight. Just as a reminder, our mission and vision, our vision is to inspire and empower the next generation of Californians and to make them proud Californians, proud Americans, I suppose to make California great again, if you will. But our mission is to bring a virtuous leadership, classical education to every family in Orange County who desires it. And that's within our mission are three key components. We teach servant leadership, which is about serving the community. So, leadership that's not just about having others serve you as you lead them but about serving other people as you display leadership in real time. Our second tenet of our mission is the pursuit of truth, truth, not opinions.

Classical education is about vigorously pursuing truth, beauty and goodness. And truth is a major part of that. And of course, developing virtue and wisdom within our students. Our desire is to develop the whole child. There's a lot of talk about whole child, but for us that means raising up virtuous leaders and helping, working in partnership with our parents to help develop just good human beings that will exist in our community and be members of society and over time lead our community. What is a CRLA virtuous leadership, classical education? Other than a mouthful. I mean if I throw in the name of our organization, California Republic Leadership Academy of Virtuous Leadership Classical Education certainly sets the stage for a lot of acronyms. But we use the classical education model of teaching, and that's based upon, there's three phases in the classical education model, grammar, logic and rhetoric, grammar being elementary, school logic being at middle school level and rhetoric being at the high school level.

And so far, we have two schools that only hit two of those because they're TK through eight. And this next school, if approved, would enable us to get to the next level as a TK through 12 school. Classical education uses classical text uses source documents. Our students don't just read textbooks that summarize important documents. They read the documents, and they discuss them. And we do that with a Socratic method of teaching, which is a way of teaching generally used more at college level sometimes in high school. But it's a way to really bring out the curiosity in students, but also frankly, if they know they got to answer questions any given time, they also got to be ready for class. So, it's a great teaching tool that really enables our students to learn. We also, and there are classical education schools all across the country. What makes us different is that we also use the FranklinCovey Leader in Me curriculum, which is it's a leadership curriculum developed by the FranklinCovey organization.

The Franklin Covey organization got its start with *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Those seven habits then turned FranklinCovey into an organization that teaches leadership all across the country, around the world, rather through organizations of all kinds. And they've developed a curriculum for K through 12 and we use it and it's really awesome. It's a great program and it really compliments classical education well. We also teach hands-on servant leadership. Our goal is to not just be in a community, but to be part of the community. Every one of our classes does an age-appropriate service project. Every year we've done, whether it be volunteering at the food bank, writing letters to first responders, doing a park cleanup. Across the board, I mean they're always age-appropriate service projects, but it's a really important part of what we do. In our petition, is a senior is a new senior capstone service project.

So, think about like an Eagle Scout project, if you're familiar with that. We are developing something similar to that. But our high school seniors in order to graduate will complete a senior capstone service project as well. We teach virtuous leadership. What you're looking at is our virtue tree and our virtues are respect, responsibility, perseverance, humility, courage, courtesy, friendship, temperance, kindness, wisdom, all the virtues that make a person a good human being. And those are not just pillars that are on a wall or words at the base of a root, in this case. We heavily focus on all of those in our school. We do one a month and there's a lot of education that goes on around it. We do virtue recognition events and that sort of thing. And we are also standards aligned. So, when I came before, before we hadn't yet put the time into ensuring that our standards align at every grade level. Well, with the development of this petition, we did that. And most classical education schools, they're mostly standards aligned, but they change a little bit. So, things are covered in different years than they generally do with California standards, but we've taken the time to align it to make sure that we hit everything at the right time every year.

So how are our academics? These are the 2023 CASPP scores, which are the only results out at this point to compared to other schools. But blue, so just to show you what's on there, the left-hand bars are our school, CRLA Capistrano and blue is math, red is ELA. And it's the number of percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards. The one to the right is the state of California's average. And then all the other ones are the other classical education charter schools in California. We've compared ourselves to the state and all the other public classical education schools in California. That's how many there are in California. There aren't any more than that. You kind of get a sense of how we're doing academically. Where do our students come from? This chart, I know it's kind hard to see, but the blue is the percentage of students, a number of students that came from a traditional public school into our program. As you could see, about 33% at Capistrano, 29% at Yorba Linda came from either private school or homeschool. And then the other as a percentage that came from charter school, mostly those other, the ones coming from charter schools were independent study. So really if you look at this, over 55% plus are not in just a traditional public school. The other way to look at this data is that we are literally bringing kids back into the public education system and that's part of our mission and something we think is pretty cool.

So, what's our growth trajectory look like? What's our wait list look like? There's a lot of data on here. This is just broken down by grade and by school. But what I'll say is that the CRLA Capistrano wait list is 265 students. The Yorba Linda wait list is 67 students, a wait list in every class except for one. Some odd reason. There's one grade at Yorba Linda where we don't have a

wait list, but every other one does. But the total of that is 332 students. Our petition, if you approve it would open in year one, a little less than a year from now with 182 students. We're here in front of you because we want to get these students off the wait list and into a CRLA school and we could literally, we could almost open two of them next year based upon our wait list.

And some students, I'm sorry, some schools wave a flag and like to brag about their wait list. For us, it's what drives us to try to meet the needs of more students. I don't like wait list because if that means there's a family that can't get into our school and I wake up every day trying to figure out the answer to that problem. And so again, that's partially why we're here tonight. It's a little bit more about where our students are coming from. On the left-hand side, what you're looking at is, this is all the students that applied or are on the wait list. This is combined. I couldn't separate them with our software program, but it's everyone that applied or was on the wait list for both of our schools combined this year. And then what's on the right is a charter school desert map, I call it.

But basically, it's sort of a concentration map of you see throughout Orange County, they're not exactly scaled side to side. This is the map that we had. The green means there's one or less charter schools there. The yellow means there's two, orange means there's three, red means there's four or more. You'll see the majority of the, so a lot of the ones in South Orange County, they applied, but they're in our school now. As you go up north towards Mission Viejo, that's where the majority of our wait list lives. And so that's why our proposal is to build a campus in Mission Viejo next. If you go up further north, of course Placentia-Yorba Linda, that's where our school is now. But our wait list is really growing in the Fullerton, Brea area. And so that's where we would probably anticipate the next one going after that. I wanted to point this out too, because I know there's conversations sometimes about oversaturating charter schools in certain areas, and I wanted you to see that we're specifically targeting areas where there's literally one or less charter schools already.

Why countywide benefit? We laid a lot of detail out in the petition and there's a lot of words right there, but I'll just kind of summarize it. One, as you all know, and why did we identify so many districts when our intention is to build three schools? Facilities are hard to come by. They're a challenge. And so, by as a countywide benefit charter petition with multiple communities as options, we're able to be nimble and be flexible and locate where we can find facilities. We know our parents will drive within a certain radius to get to our schools, but county wide benefit will give us that flexibility in the petition, I'm sorry, with the facilities, that space that we need. Secondly, as I mentioned before, our desire is to grow as demand grows. We're looking at two years worth of data right now, but the demand just keeps growing for our program.

And so as that demand grows and as it shifts, countywide benefit school would give us the ability to meet the needs of that as it grows and sort of putting those two things together. Where can we find facilities? Where's the demand growing? That's what our goal is, is to find that sweet spot and open up schools in those places. And just look, we believe a virtuous leadership, classical education, available countywide would benefit all families at Orange County who desire it, and that's our goal. Our goal desire is to serve the needs of those families who desire it. What are we seeking approval for? CRLA Orange County would be as opposed to the other two, which are

TK through eight, this would be a TK through 12 school and authorization for up to three sites. What we anticipate at this point is that, well, we know the Mission Viejo, we could open up today and be full, so that's what we anticipate opening next year, next fall if you approve us.

Secondly, again, I think I mentioned we see the demand growing in the Fullerton, Brea area. That could change. I mean as we're going, we know that two years from now that could look very different, but that's sort of our current trajectory, what we're looking at, and then our K through eight schools need a place to transition into a high school, so we were able to bring on a consultant that has expertise working with classical education high schools across the country and help us develop our classical education high school program. Within the petition in front of you has the ability for us to open up a high school program that our K through eight could feed into. Ultimately, like I mentioned before, we desire to meet the needs of Orange County families who desire a virtuous leadership, classical education, and as families find out about it, they want it.

Our goal is to serve as many of those families as we can. We want to make you proud. We think that we have so far, we want to continue to make the board proud and the Orange County Department of Education and ultimately we want to help craft a better future for the state of California and we appreciate that you all have been a great partner with us and we've allowed us to be a partner with you with that endeavor, and so we look forward to the hearing in October and we have our team here to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

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

SPARKS: Yes, we have Erin Wozneak and on deck is Katherine Wonket. Erin Wozneak up first. Calling on Erin. Another one is Katherine Wonket. There you are, Katherine. Okay.

KATHERINE: Hi, I'm here. I wasn't really planning to speak, but I just wanted to come and let everyone know that my daughter has been at CRLA Capistrano for the last two years. She's starting her third year right now in first grade, and our family has been just so immensely impressed with CRLA. We're hoping to keep sending all of our children there through eighth grade and we're anticipating the high school opening and very excited about that. There you go.

SPARKS: Thank you. Thank you for sharing. And last call for Erin then? Nope, Erin had to dash out. Okay. That's all I have. Great.

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

BARKE: Thank you, Aracely. All right, would you like to, I'll start with you, Lisa. Any questions?

SPARKS: I'll just make a couple of comments. I appreciate so much what you all have put together. You can tell you've really done your homework. You're a well-oiled machine. I think what you bring to Orange County is something super amazing and I think with all these wonderful charter schools coming in here, our population's going to increase while the rest of the state might be going down, they're all going to move here. All the parents and kids are going to move here because of our wonderful, wonderful schools. So, congratulations on putting such a wonderful curriculum together.

VALDES: Gary Davis. I have a few questions for you. So, you're the executive director right now at two schools, right? If we grant you a third, are you just going to be driving all around Orange County all day long? Is that your plan?

GARY: I hope so. This is a beautiful county, a lot of good food and things to do, so 100%, yeah, I would love that.

VALDES: You don't feel like you might be spread out with the job that significant or that's multiple campuses like that. You're okay with that?

GARY: Yeah, I appreciate your question. When we first launched the school, the home office team was me and we hired an amazing principal to help us start our school. The beautiful thing about being in a place where enrollment is increasing is you have increased resources to go along with it, and so we've been sort of developing a plan. We now have an assistant principal, we now have a dean of students at Capistrano. Our Yorba Linda campus opened with a principal now has, they have a TOSA in year two, which is great. Next year they'll have an assistant principal, so one, our principals are in charge of their school campuses, and I get to lead them. Our model works well that way. I believe strongly that the principal of the school site should be laser focused on two things, the academic program and school culture, and then the home office team supports them in the work that they do, and Dr. Doering is now the second member of the home office team, but we also have an organizational structure chart that will grow as we grow and so we'll soon hopefully have a chief academic officer as we're able to as enrollment increases and we're able to bring on additional team members and so our home office team is going to keep growing as well.

We've gotten both charter school, we've gotten both startup grants and that's helped a lot for Capistrano. It helped a ton. We're at the finish line in Yorba Linda that will help a lot, but we're also in the final stages with another organization about a larger grant that also, will provide additional resources to help us scale up as well. We're optimistic that that will come through, but even if it doesn't, we're able to fund those additional positions and infrastructure and support staff by increased enrollment.

VALDES: I've said this many times before, but seeing how this is your hearing, I'll say it again. As people come to partner with us, it's comforting, at least for me to have partners that I feel know what they're doing. They're on campus, they're not somewhere in another state trying to lead a school. That's really the most important thing for me. No offense to Janelle who does a great job, but petitions, that's just paperwork. I'm a lawyer. I deal with paperwork all the time.

The heart of the school is the leadership and I'm very comfortable with the leadership you've provided so far, so I'm very comfortable in expanding that.

GARY: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: May I talk?

BARKE: Please.

WILLIAMS: Very good. Sometimes she's like my wife or mother. Gary, you have been an excellent leader.

GARY: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: You have a proven track record. The biggest obstacle and challenge to our charter schools is school sites. The sites that you have mentioned in Mission Viejo, have you actually identified them, and if so, could you give us a little bit more?

GARY: Yeah, so our Capistrano school is in a Prop 39 facility, so we sort of start off with a couple of classrooms, and we've been growing and growing, and we're working with the school district and we're optimistic that in Capistrano will have a knock on wood, a good long-term site there. Our Yorba Linda site, we are renting space from a church and that used to be run a private school, and it looks like we have the opportunity to grow with them for a little while. That's the thing about the charter school world is it's not like a traditional school district where you just exist and you get a school facility. We have to go out and find it, and it's hard. Our intention in the Saddleback Valley, Mission Viejo area, is to go Prop 39, and I do know that that school district has recently shut down a couple of schools, and we're anxious to occupy those, but we're going to have to go through the Prop 39 process in order to earn that space. But that's our intention is Prop 39.

WILLIAMS: Okay. What about the Fullerton, Brea community? Have you identified a site?

GARY: That one's probably at least two, three years off, so no, not at this point, but I will tell you this. When we were looking for a site in Placentia-Yorba Linda, there were Fullerton sites that we found that were available, but we just couldn't move into them because we weren't approved in that district. Assuming they would still be there when we're ready, I think we have the opportunity to lease some space from a private facility.

WILLIAMS: The first school would be in Mission Viejo, is that what I'm hearing from?

GARY: That would be our intention. Yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay. And then the high school, where do you think that would go?

GARY: My sense is that, so our ultimate vision is that we do have pods of, I call it pods of schools, so TK through eight that feed into a high school, and there would be down the line, we'll

come probably and ask for permission in the future for a high school on in the north part of the county. Our desire in this petition is to be in the south part of the county, and so I would say that we would base that on where our student population is at the time and who's feeding into it. But I would say we've looked at the Tustin, Irvine area, we've looked at again, Saddleback, Mission Viejo could be an area, or just sort of on the northern end of Capistrano.

WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you, Gary.

BARKE: Tim?

SHAW: Well, Ken took my line of questioning. I was going to ask about the facilities and that was, I know that's often the big hill to climb, and other than that, I just would comment CRLA is a fantastic school and having been to the events there, I've seen so many of the parents engaged and it's just real exciting to see how well you're doing in such a short period of time.

GARY: Thank you.

BARKE: Well, and I would absolutely echo all of my colleagues' remarks. I'm very excited to see CRLA grow through Orange County. I think it's a fabulous institution. Tim and I were there at an event just a few months ago, met many of your families, and they're just, I know that a lot of them are here tonight as well, and just really proud of what you've done and couldn't be happier to see that classical education spread out through Orange County. We need more of it.

GARY: Thank you so much. And I didn't realize our board president walked in the door.

BARKE: Yeah, how can you miss him? I mean, he barely fits in the door.

GARY: But anyway, that's Kevin Pratt, our board president.

BARKE: Yes, I did recognize him. He barely fits under that door, so I did notice and his lovely wife with him. But yes, thank you for everyone coming out tonight. We appreciate everything you're doing and look forward to our next meeting. Anyone has any other questions? No. Okay. Well, thank you.

GARY: Thank you. We are as well.

CHASTAIN: All right, last one. The board will now hold a hearing to consider public input regarding the countywide charter petition submitted by NOVA Academy Orange County on July 11th. The charter school proposes to operate a class room based program serving students in grades six through 12 for initial five-year charter term from 2026 to 2031. The charter operator notified Santa Ana Unified School District of intent to operate facilities. Before public comments, charter representatives are allotted 15 minutes to address the board. I now call the representatives from NOVA Academy, Orange County to the podium.

LISA: Thank you. Thank you so much. My name is Lisa Hernandez. I'm the executive director of NOVA Academy OC. We are going to start our presentation. Let's see. Sorry, this was

supposed to play. There was a short video to play. Apologies. So there was a video attached to it of my apologies. I will make sure to share it with you. Had some highlights in regards to our organization, our school, and the history of NOVA Academy. As I shared, my name is Lisa Hernandez. I am the executive director of NOVA Academy OC. With over 16 years of leadership experience, it is my honor to be here this evening as we present our charter petition to the Orange County Department of Education. NOVA Academy has proudly served Orange County community for over 20 years with a deep commitment to ensuring every student has access to college and career success. Tonight, we are excited to share not only our proven track record, but also our vision for the future, the launch of an early college middle school. Grounded in our successful high school model. This new program will open doors even earlier, helping students build a college-going identity starting in the sixth grade.

Together with teachers, staff, and families, we bring forward an innovative early college model for grades sixth through 12th, strong partnerships with colleges, businesses and community organizations, and a school culture that closes achievement gaps through data-driven instruction and high expectations. What you'll see at NOVA Academy OC is a leadership team and a board with deep charter experience, faculty dedicated to academic excellence and a mission-centered focus on serving over 92% socioeconomically disadvantaged students, foster youth, and English learners. We also bring a strong record of fiscal responsibility with clean audits, healthy reserves, and a commitment to sustainable growth. At our core of the work we do is an unwavering focus on student wellbeing. We are deeply grateful for the foundation's, donors and community partners, many of whom are with us this evening, who have helped shape NOVA Academy from its very beginnings. Their investments have not only provided us a state-of-the-art facilities in an expanded athletic program, but they also have given their time through events like senior exit interviews, career day, and parent universities. Our partners are truly incredible. I would like now to invite three of our board members to the podium to share some of NOVA Academy's accomplishments.

SUSAN: Good evening. I'm Dr. Susan Garrett, vice chair of NOVA Academy's board of directors. I have a PhD in counseling and educational psychology and extensive experience as a college professor, a special education teacher in this county, and also as former director of education for Olive Crest.

OLGA: Good evening. I'm Olga Duarte, secretary of NOVA's Academy board of directors. As both a parent, leader, and mortgage professional with over 20 years of experience, I bring strong organizational and community engagement skills to support NOVA's mission.

SANFORD: Good evening. I'm Dr. Sanford Otsuji, chairman of NOVA Academy board of directors. I bring a lot of years of leadership experience across education, ministry, international missions, and nonprofit organizations, and having a passion for serving disadvantaged youths and their families. In NOVA Academy's 20 years of service, we've been honored with recognitions that reflect our impact. In 2023, the Stanford Credo report named us as, Gap-busting school. I think that's good. In 2023, or sorry, 2019, we are recognized as a California distinguished school, and since 2015, the *U.S. News & World Report* has consistently named us as one of the top charter schools. NOVA Academy is also WASC, WASC, accredited, and these

acknowledgements show that the meaningful difference NOVA Academy continues to make and for the students and their families. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

LISA: Thank you so much, board members. NOVA Academy has a proven track record of academic success. Over the past five years, our students have consistently outperformed similar local schools on state assessments and have shown academic growth year after year on internal assessments. As you will see here, our graduation rate in 2024 exceeded the district by 7% and the state by 11%. And in that same year, our college and career indicator surpassed the district by 51% and the state by 27% demonstrating our commitment to preparing students for life beyond high school. This data displays the strength of our current high school program. Now, to share our expanding middle school program in its alignment to our rigorous high school program, I would like to introduce you to NOVA Academy OC's principal, Kimberly Beckstrom. Thank you.

KIMBERLY: Good evening, board members. My name is Kimberly Beckstrom and I will be the principal of NOVA Academy OC. I began with the organization in 2024, and I come to the organization with 16 years of experience in middle school, high school arenas. At NOVA Academy OC, we've reimaged what a 6 through 12 education can be. Our program is designed to accelerate academic growth starting in sixth grade, where students are introduced to rigorous coursework, critical thinking, and academic language. From day one, they're immersed in a collegegoing culture that builds confidence, motivation, and a strong academic identity. We're especially proud of how this model supports underserved students and by intervening early, we close achievement gaps and create a clear pipeline to dual enrollment and long-term success. Our students don't just dream about college; they begin living it, with mentorship, family classes, and social-emotional supports tailored to their developmental needs.

As students progress through our program, the foundation laid in middle school leads to a seamless and successful transition into high school. They entered fully prepared for dual credit, AP, and college-level courses, avoiding the academic shock that many students face in the ninth and 10th grade when they enter high school. Our integrated approach includes annual capstone projects that blend academics with career exploration and presentation skills, helping students build confidence and purpose. And we don't just hope for success, we measure it. Our teachers use visible learning, goal setting, and formative assessments to ensure every student subgroup is supported and challenged. The result, a smooth transition to high school, thousands saved in college tuition, and students who are truly ready for what is next. With that foundation in place, I'll now turn it over to my colleague, who will share more about what makes NOVA's early college program truly unique and the powerful outcomes our students are achieving through these programs. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

MELISSA: Good evening, board. My name is Melissa Mier, and I'm the director of counseling and student services at NOVA Academy OC. And I have had the privilege of serving at NOVA Academy for 16 years. Thank you, Principal Beckstrom, for laying the foundation of how our

students begin their college journey in middle school. NOVA Academy's OC's authentic early college model truly stands out. At NOVA Academy OC, early college isn't just a program; it's a philosophy rooted in equity, access, and academic integrity. Our students follow integrated pathways that align high school and college coursework, allowing them to earn transferable credit towards both high school graduation and a college degree. This isn't symbolic exposure. It is real college credit earned through rigorous courses taught by actual college professors. We're proud to serve historically underrepresented groups. Our formal college and career access pathways. The CCAP partnership agreement with Santa Ana College ensures that every student has equitable access to college-level instruction and the college campus online or both. It's not just about the academics, it's about the experience, the power of the site. Our students take classes on the college campus, interact with professors, use college resources. They're treated as college students because they are college students. This immersive model doesn't just prepare students for college; it propels them into it, and the results speak for themselves.

The 52 graduates of the class of 2025 collectively earned over 1,200 college units, which is approximately 400 college courses. Five of those students graduated with AA degrees, and two of them earned double AA degrees. When our students enter college, they do so with sophomore or even junior standing. That means they're not just ahead academically, but also financially. They have saved thousands in tuition and textbook costs. All college courses and materials are provided at no cost to NOVA students. One parent shared, "The model doesn't just change transcripts; it changes lives." These outcomes are possible because of a deeply intentional design that's academically sound, financially sustainable, and rooted in partnerships. To share more about how we ensure responsible stewardship of resources and long-term viability, I turn the presentation over to Alicia Lewis and Dustin Lester.

ALICIA: Good evening. I'm Alicia Lewis. I'm the business services manager at NOVA. With over 20 years of experience in financial management and compliance, I help lead a strong collaborative team of experts committed to fiscal oversight. As highlighted on this slide, our financials are reviewed at multiple levels, including our executive director, our board of directors, and our back-office provider Charter Impact, and our Board Treasurer, Dustin Lester. We maintain clean audits, conduct monthly financial reviews and enforce internal controls to ensure compliance and transparency. These practices support our strong financial reserves and long-term stability.

DUSTIN: And I'm Dustin Lester, our treasurer of NOVA Academy's board of directors. As a CPA and finance professional, I work closely with our team to uphold the principles shown here. From transparent reporting to board oversight, and foundation support. Together, we ensure NOVA Academy remains fiscally sound and accountable, reinforcing our commitment to students, family, and the broader community.

LISA: Thank you, Alicia and Dustin. At NOVA Academy OC, we believe every child deserves a future filled with possibilities. Our students don't just earn college credits. They gain confidence, purpose, and a sense of belonging and spaces they've often have been unrepresented. They walk across the stage not only with diplomas, but with degrees and with dreams that are finally within their reach. We are ready to begin even earlier with our early college middle school and to open lifelong changing opportunities for even more families across Orange

County. So, I thank you, board members, Dr. Bean, OCDE staff, and of course our NOVA Academy OC support team for your time on this platform and to share our vision and our hearts. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you, Lisa.

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

SPARKS: Okay. We have nine, so...

BARKE: 15 minutes, so we could give them almost two minutes each.

SPARKS: Minute and a half. Yeah, a minute and a half. 90 seconds.

WILLIAMS: 90 seconds.

SPARKS: Can you do that? Okay.

BARKE: So, because we have nine speakers in just 15 minutes, we'll give each speaker a minute and a half.

SPARKS: And you can always go less, too.

BARKE: Yeah, you can always just get up and say what she said or what he said.

HENDRICK: They were very kind and narrowed down their speakers. Just so you're aware, though they had a large list, and they did narrow it.

BARKE: Appreciate that.

SPARKS: Thank you. We'll get it set up. So, the first speaker we can get ready while they're setting it up is Dr. Vaniethia Hubbard, and on deck is Dr. Annebelle Nery.

VANIETHIA: Good evening.

SPARKS: Oh, just wait one second. We're not quite ready. I like that you're Johnny on the spot. That's just, that's awesome. I love that. Two minutes. Oh, Okay. Do two, less if you can. That would be amazing. Okay. Are we ready? Ready to go. Okay, go ahead.

VANIETHIA: Super. Good evening, Orange County Department of Education, distinguished trustees, and Superintendent Dr. Bean. Again, I'm Dr. Vaniethia Hubbard, vice president of student services at Santa Ana College. And it is my honor to speak on behalf of Santa Ana College and our longstanding partnership with NOVA Academy Early College High School. For many years we have worked together to expand access and opportunity for students, many of whom are the first in their families to pursue higher education, and we strongly support NOVA's

new charter petition and their vision to expand into an early college middle school. This expansion would give students earlier access to college-level learning, accelerate their readiness and establish a seamless pathway into high school and college coursework. NOVA Academy has demonstrated proven leadership, a commitment to equity and a model that works. At Santa Ana College, we are proud to stand with them and encourage the board to approve this petition. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Annebelle's up and on deck is Yareli Rebia.

ANNEBELLE: Good afternoon, board president, board members, and Superintendent Bean. I'm Dr. Annebelle Nery, the very, very proud president of Santa Ana College, and I'm here in support as a college president of NOVA Academy's expansion. We've had a long-standing relationship with them, but more importantly, I'd like to share a longer story of the success of NOVA Academy. In my previous role, I was the vice president at College of the Desert in the Coachella Valley. At NOVA Academy, we formed a partnership to build early college in an area where there was no educational access. Not only did we work well there with NOVA Academy. As a college, we were able to work with all educational institutions in the Coachella Valley and have great partnerships. So, when I came to Santa Ana College in January of 2022, I brought that vision with me and would you know it, NOVA Academy was here and my very own service area. We committed to grow again and expand their early college program. In addition to that, while serving all the charters, unified school districts, privates and all educational institutions, because at Santa Ana College we're very proud. I think we have the best admissions policy, which is we accept just like you, the top 100%. I'm here to support NOVA Academy.

SPARKS: So, Yareli's up and on deck is Jill Muckenthaler.

YARELI: Hello, my name is Yareli Rebia, a proud NOVA parent for four years in counting. I'm here today to express my support for NOVA Academy's expansion to serve students grade six through eighth. My son Michael, graduated from NOVA Academy Early College High School this last May. During his years at NOVA, he had the opportunity to take college courses in his business major. And I still have two children attending NOVA Academy. John is a senior this year, and Mary is a sophomore, and I have an eighth grader, which at another school and a sixth grader that I hope will make it to the NOVA Middle School. All of my children were fortunate to begin attending NOVA Academy as freshmen and reap the many benefits this school has to offer from the very beginning of their high school journeys. Seeing how my children have thrived, I can only imagine how they and others would have been that much further ahead and had they been given the opportunity to enroll at NOVA as early as sixth grade. Middle schoolers throughout Orange County would be lucky to attend a school that offers personalized learning and small class sizes, and their parents deserve to be just as proud of their children's accomplishments as I am of mine because of NOVA Academy.

And besides my children, I know many students from my neighborhood and from my job that also attended NOVA. And they all have many positive things to say about NOVA and have thanked NOVA for their success in life. So, thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. So, Jill is up and on deck is Alexander Wilson.

JILL: Good evening, distinguished trustees and Superintendent Dr. Bean. It's my honor to speak to you on the behalf of NOVA Academy OC. My name's Jill Muckenthaler, and I serve as the CFO for Wallace Air Cargo Group, as well as the NOVA Academy Children's Foundation. The foundation's mission is really simple. It's to support the programs and operations of NOVA Academy so that every student has the opportunity to succeed. One example that we have of how our community partners help out is the Carson Family Foundation is hosting a pickleball tournament this week where all the proceeds will go directly to the NOVA Academy students. And this came off of somebody coming to our senior exit interviews and loving how the students adapt to the programs. This is just one of the many ways our community and donors invest their time, talent, and treasure in NOVA's mission. The Children's Foundation is proud to support NOVA's new charter petition and the vision to expand into an early college middle school, creating even greater opportunities for families across Orange County. Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Alexander Wilson is up and on deck, is Rothney Panha.

ALEXANDER: Good evening, trustees. Dr. Bean. I am a science teacher at NOVA Academy. I've been at NOVA Academy for seven years, and I wanted to take a moment to look at some of the important things about NOVA from the perspective of an educator. And the thing that I would say is that what I think makes NOVA stand out and be different than many of our neighboring schools is the opportunity the students have to build a community and have a personal relationship with many of the people that they interact with. I know many of them have talked about other schools where teachers don't know their name second semester. And I think part of what really makes NOVA Academy unique and able to have the great success that I'll be able to talk about is having that personal relationship with our students. I often joke with my students who say they're going to be transferring out, that I'll see them in junior year when they come back, and most of the time they do when they realize they didn't like other schools. And I think that our students could only be more successful if they have the opportunity to start building those relationships and becoming better, more engaged learners in sixth grade instead of ninth. Thank you for your time.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. So Rothney Panha is up and on deck, is Renee Lancaster.

ROTHNEY: Good evening. My name is Rothney Panha, and I'm currently a junior attending NOVA Academy Early College High School. I share with pride and honor my support for NOVA Academy's Early College Middle School. I started at NOVA as a freshman two years ago. In that time, I gained valuable experiences, memories, and foundational knowledge supported by passionate and nurturing teachers and staff on campus. I've been given many opportunities here to grow as a person through NOVA's enrichment programs, workshops,

student at clubs, volunteering opportunities, and do the dual enrollment program. Frankly, it's quite difficult to describe my incredible journey here in just a minute and a half. Though I've been able to accomplish at NOVA Academy, I have no fear for what my future holds here. NOVA Academy's Middle School will open up many new possibilities to a wider range of students and youth like me, at a young age, giving them even more time to build positive academic foundations, grow as responsible scholars, and thrive as members of our beautiful community. I have young cousins who deserve the same opportunities that I've had here. I'm excited for these students and I'm absolutely confident they will enjoy and cherish their time at NOVA Academy as much as I have. Thank you very much.

SPARKS: Amazing. Thank you. Renee Lancaster is up, and Janelle Ruley is on deck.

RENEE: Good evening, esteemed board member, Superintendent Dr. Bean. A special thank you to our OCDE administrative team. I like your name. And those who have dedicated, the administrative team is definitely a dedicated and made this work possible for us charter schools to each and every day. My name is Renee Lancaster, and I am the founder of Emeritus of NOVA Academy. After 20 years of service and commitment, I've been passing on the baton is not easy. I admit it, I might have a small issue with high expectations, but I could not be more grateful for the months and months of preparation for my retirement. The cross training for many years. Lisa Hernandez with 16 years of experience in her leadership, the unwavering dedication of our leadership team and our board of directors that have made this a seamless transition. They don't even need to call me. A team of individuals with tremendous educational, financial, and charter school experience.

It has truly been an honor of a lifetime to serve our families, our students, and our dedicated faculty. Oh, my goodness and staff don't do that to me. This team under the leadership of our Executive Director Lisa Hernandez, is deeply committed to our mission of giving more families an early college experience across Orange County. They lead with integrity, a moral compass, a light that truly makes a difference, and with a steadfast commitment to keeping students at the center. I have 10 more seconds. Finally, thank you. Thank you for being courageous leaders, all of you, for standing up for principles at times that may not be popular. I've seen it. I've heard you. I've watched you for many years. I've walked in your Yorba Linda for the 25 years I've lived there for Dr. Williams. He doesn't even know that. And for living a legacy and leaving a legacy that will impact generations of students and families across Orange County, we are so very grateful.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Janelle is up, and Donald Verleur is on deck.

JANELLE: It's never fair to follow Renee in this kind of situation. Good evening, trustees and Dr. Bean. I'm so glad to be here tonight in strong support of NOVA Academy. I'm sorry, my name is Janelle Ruley. I'm an attorney representing the school. I'm so glad to be here tonight in strong support of NOVA Orange County. They certainly don't need any validation from me. I'm just the paperwork guy, right? But I'm going to offer the validation anyway. I really had the

pleasure of working with the NOVA team for almost all of my career. This is an organization that is thoughtful, it's careful in its growth.

It is very specific in the changes that it makes. In those 20 years they've opened two schools, they've built an incredible building. I'm sorry you didn't get to see it, but it really is incredible in downtown Santa Ana. And it's built a tremendous reputation along the way as well. So, as you've heard and obviously why we're here, NOVA now seeks to operate a countywide charter and to grow and serve students at the middle school level as well as at the high school level. And so, I think I'm here mostly to highlight some of the countywide justifications. So, in my remaining time, I would say that among the justifications are that early college readiness would start even earlier now for these students to be able to bring in students at the sixth grade level and get them started right away. Those college statistics were pretty amazing. To address equity and access countywide. As you're all familiar with countywide charters, the preference and admission is for all students in the county, not just in one particular district. And then I really want to respect the 90 seconds. So smoother academic and social transitions so that this countywide structure would be essential to delivering a more seamless experience for all students. Thank you all. We're certainly happy to answer any questions.

SPARKS: Thank you, Donald Verleur, and then Dr. Danny De Leon, Jr., is our last speaker. So go ahead.

DONALD: Good evening. Distinguished board of trustees and a special to Dr. Bean. Good choice you guys. My name is Donald Verleur. I'm a graduate of El Medina High School. My son is a senior at San Clemente High School and I'm also the CEO of Olive Crest and we've been in Orange County for over 50 years preventing child abuse, strengthening, equipping, and restoring children and families in crisis one life at a time. It is my true honor to stand before you tonight and support NOVA Academy's OC countywide charter petition. I have been in the senior interviews, and I've seen some of the kids, some of the kids from Olive Crest, and it's just given them the boost up and the opportunities that these kids needed, and I am so grateful. NOVA Academy gives students the powerful tools needed to break the cycle and transform lives through rigorous academics, individualized support, and early access to college. This is the kind of opportunity we want for every child. NOVA is more than a school. It is a trusted community partner. I have seen firsthand how they empower students, embrace families, and inspire hope. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to approve the countywide charter program. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. Dr. Danny.

DANNY: Good evening, everyone. I think it wise that given that I'm last, Renee gave me a minute only when she gave everybody else a minute and a half and two minutes. So, I'll follow the instruction and resist my gift of the gab. Good evening, distinguished trustees and Superintendent Dr. Bean. It's good to see you again, sir. My name is Dr. Danny De Leon, chief executive officer of Edward B. Cole Academy, a TK through fifth grade charter school located just down the street from NOVA Academy. For more than 20 years, we have had the privilege of serving the Santa Ana community while building a strong partnership with NOVA. Together we

have worked to expand access to rigorous educational opportunities, particularly for students who many are the first of their families to pursue higher education. It is in this spirit that I express our strong support for NOVA Academy's charter petition and their vision to expand into early college middle school. This expansion represents a critical investment in educational continuity, offering families another high-quality school of choice and creating a seamless pathway from elementary through high school and into college. Thank you very much for your time and commitment to not only the students of Santa Ana, but Orange County.

BARKE: Thank you.

SPARKS: Thank you. And that's all we have.

CHASTAIN: The public hearing is now concluded. The Orange County Board of Education staff report and recommendations will be published by September 23rd. At the October 8th meeting, the board will take conduct a public hearing and take action to approve or deny the charter school. President Barke, I now close the public hearing and return the meeting to you.

BARKE: Thank you, Aracely. I appreciate that. I will start with Tim.

SHAW: Thank you. My only comment, great presentation. I just was very impressed with the partnerships and loved hearing from the college and all the partnerships NOVA's working on and helping to shepherd kids up into college. I think that's terrific. So that was my only comment.

BARKE: Great. Thank you, Dr. Williams.

WILLIAMS: Yeah, tonight's very much like Dancing with the Stars. We have three incredible charter schools that presented tonight, and I'm just so impressed. I've already made comments about the two previous charter schools. For NOVA, I don't need to say very much. You guys are just absolutely incredible and you're going to continue to do incredible and I look forward to supporting your charter school at the vote next month.

BARKE: Jorge?

VALDES: Could Lizette Hernandez come up for a few minutes?

BARKE: Lisa?

VALDES: Lisa. Sorry. I got your name wrong. I was expecting Renee and now I know. Congratulations, Renee on your retirement. Lisa. So, have you gauged the interest in the community for six through eight?

LISA: So, we began having conversations with various families and community, faith-based organizations, which we have strong partnerships with. But our real first term focus is on the expansion, the sixth through 12th-grade model. As Janelle mentioned, we've successfully established two schools. 20 years here in Santa Ana and 15 years in Coachella. So, we understand the importance of replication, but we also want to do it very intentionally and very

mindfully. That's our focus first because we know the six through 12 model is really going to be what our success is. So, we want to ensure that first and then identify the unique needs within the community within Orange County.

VALDES: Are you going to add six through eight at the existing school site?

LISA: Yes.

VALDES: Oh, okay. So, the facility you already have.

LISA: We have the facility, yes, we have the space. We have all of that already in place.

VALDES: Okay. Well, that answers a lot of questions. I really like that you are serving 92% underprivileged youth. Did I get that right?

LISA: Yes, that's correct. Yeah.

VALDES: And I don't know if I saw you a couple years ago, but Renee invited me to be the keynote speaker at the graduation for NOVA. In, I think it was June.

LISA: That video had a picture of that too with all of our graduates.

VALDES: I want to see that video.

LISA: Right there. Actually, it's right there.

SPARKS: There you go.

BARKE: There you go, Jorge.

LISA: There he is. He was a keynote for us.

BARKE: Awesome.

VALDES: I had a great time with that. Thank you for inviting me, Renee.

LISA: Thank you.

VALDES: Very happy to support. This is a very strong charter school. It's been historically long, good partnership with the OCBE. I'm very satisfied with your presentation as well.

LISA: Thank you so much.

SPARKS: Well, we are truly dancing with the educational stars as Ken pointed out. I mean, tonight has just been amazing and just hearing again and all the stories, and thank you all so much for coming out because of all the work you guys do. You help our job to be so much

easier. We're so proud of everything you're doing for our community and it's just such a pleasure and I feel like I'm just a proud mama bear. So, thank you all.

LISA: Thank you so much.

BARKE: So, I want to congratulate you, Lisa, on your new role as ED. I've known you for years going to the exit interviews. I think I've done at least four exit interviews, if not more. So, a lot of these faces are familiar. I've sat with you at an exit interview. So, all of these faces and speakers, I recognize a lot and you guys do amazing work. So, congratulations, Renee, congratulations to what you created. You created just an amazing, amazing place for education, the partnerships you have, the people on your board, the people that just do so much work with you that come out to the exit interviews. It's really exciting. What else did I write down? Yeah, I guess that was it. And that you have amazing students having done all those exit interviews every year, I'm just amazed at the level of these students and where they started and where they've ended, that they're leaving with an AA, a free AA, and like you mentioned, the first in the family to get a college degree. So, it's just the work you do is so important. And yes, you're one of the amazing stars tonight, so it's been a great night and really looking forward to the future together.

LISA: Thank you. And we appreciate the partnership. We are super excited to expand and grow and have those young students and really help support them through this process and open up their eyes to things that they don't even know are possible for them.

BARKE: Absolutely.

LISA: We appreciate all the support, and we thank you guys so much. Thank you.

BARKE: Thank you. All right. One of my board members is requesting a short break, so we can take five minutes if that's all right with everyone. And we will be back in five.

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

BARKE: Enjoy the five minutes? All right. Let's see where we are now.

WILLIAMS: Number 18.

BARKE: Number 18. All right.

WILLIAMS: Can I make a motion?

BARKE: Yes. You may make a motion, please.

WILLIAMS: I'll make a motion to adopt resolution 24-25.

BARKE: Do we have a second? Anyone?

VALDES: Second.

BARKE: All right, hearing a first and a second. Is there any discussion or would you like to vote?

WILLIAMS: I'd like to vote.

BARKE: Okay. We are ready for a vote, Darou.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw? Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: I can't hear. I am voting yes if you're calling me.

BARKE: All right. Number 19.

WILLIAMS: I'll make a motion for number 19.

BARKE: Do we have a second?

VALDES: Second.

BARKE: All right. Hearing a first and a second. Any discussion? All right, let's move to the vote.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: All right. Number 20. Do I have a motion?

WILLIAMS: I'll make a motion for item number 20.

SPARKS: Second.

BARKE: All right. Hearing a motion, a second. Any discussion? All right, let's move to the vote.

SISAVATH: Oh, he's got my mic. Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: All right, moving on to number 21. Mr. Valdes, would you like to lead the discussion on that since I see your name next to it?

VALDES: So, I'm going to follow the parliamentary procedure, and I'm going to move the board to sign this resolution, and I will ask for a second so we can talk about it.

WILLIAMS: I'll make a second.

BARKE: All right.

VALDES: So, ladies and gentlemen, this month I went to an education presentation. I appreciate all the work Brenda Lebsack has done, not only on the Santa Ana School Board, but in her just really consistent opposition to some of the things, some of the things that Trevor Project is doing and the concerns that she has raised over the past few years related to that particular entity. And so, I was at a presentation, and I was really alarmed when I realized that there's AB 727 running through the California legislature at this point, which would require every public school in California to list The Trevor Project number on the back of every student ID. Now, again, I appreciate everything Brenda Lebsack has done on this particular point, but one of the things that was very moving for me, and I'm going to ask that the staff put up this letter from the Riverside Sheriff. Can it be done?

HENDRICK: Unfortunately, no, it's passed the [several inaudible words]. They do have it in their red folders, though.

VALDES: Okay, well. So, the Riverside County Sheriff's Office took a public position against AB 727. And to me, it's a very alarming letter. So, the Riverside Sheriff is Chad Bianco, and he wrote to the Senate Education Committee saying, "On behalf of the Riverside County Sheriff's Office, I respectfully oppose AB 727." He states, "It's creating an environment that is vulnerable to exploitation. To underscore this risk, a member of our department in his forties was able to register on Trevor Space simply by posing as a 13-year-old. Alarming, he was prevented from using his real name, not because it violated policy, but because the name was already taken. This forces both minors and adults to create false or obscured identities as a prerequisite to access, further reducing transparency and accountability. Once he logged in, he was able to initiate private chats with other users immediately without restriction or review. He also had access to profile photos and chat images posted by users."

"Many comments included flirtatious language and excessive flattery, which raised red flags. Given his understanding of predatory behavior. Many conversations on the platform had nothing to do with LGBTQ plus identity or suicide prevention. Instead, covering video games, random topics, or personal anecdotes. While seemingly benign, this unstructured engagement makes it easy for adults to build rapport with isolated or emotionally vulnerable youth. A classic setup for grooming or trafficking." Quite frankly, that's all I needed to read. I have every faith and belief that our Riverside County Sheriff's Office knows how to investigate crimes of this nature. And if they believe that this is a bad bill, particularly for those reasons, then I feel obligated as the trustee for area one, not only to oppose it, which I'm asking the board to do tonight with this resolution. But to get our lobbyist, who coincidentally is here tonight, up in Sacramento to make his best efforts to formally oppose this bill.

BARKE: Well, thank you, appreciate that. Any other comments for board members? And I have just a couple comments.

WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'll make a couple comments. So, I did likewise after Brenda, and let me digress. Let's give Brenda all of the applause and accolades for what she has done to research this. She has notified this way back in 2018 when we had the California Healthy Youth Act. She

brought this to our attention. So, this is not new. Actually, she did the same thing by registering. So, did I. And I found out how easy it is, how deceptive it is. This is the typical grooming of children. It's because of the political party in charge that has taken care of harming and putting our kids in danger. So, I strongly support this, Jorge, and thank you for putting this on.

BARKE: Lisa.

SPARKS: Yeah, I echo all those comments. I mean, Brenda has really been doing the homework on this and keeping us informed, and I so appreciate her and those of you who come to all our meetings and inform us of what's on the ground out there that we may not be aware of. So just keep up the great work.

BARKE: Tim.

SHAW: Brenda's a warrior. We love her.

BARKE: I'll agree. Brenda is my hero. If you've ever watched her at her meeting, she is quite the hero. I do appreciate everything she does. I believe it's Brenda's birthday today. So happy birthday, Brenda.

SPARKS: Happy birthday.

BARKE: If you haven't heard it from enough people yet, say happy birthday. As a board member, I don't believe the legislature should be picking winners and losers. They shouldn't be doing this. This is local control and they shouldn't decide who goes on the back of ID cards, whether it's Trevor Project or anybody else. I fully support this resolution and I would make a motion to take the vote.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Do we need a second?

BARKE: No, no. We...

SPARKS: Oh, we did. Okay. Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: All right. Passes 5-0. Thank you. All right, next up we have, ah, this is myself and Tim, board resolution 26-25 in support of AB 715. And do you want to start, Tim, or do you want me to?

SHAW: I'd be happy to.

BARKE: Okay. Go ahead.

SHAW: Well, thank you. Like everyone, I was quite appalled and shocked and saddened by what happened October 7th, 2023, with this horrible attack of Israelis murdering over a thousand of them Israeli people for no reason out there. And since then, the alarming rise of antisemitism we've seen even in this country. And I thought, what could be worse? And I'll just share briefly. I recently was in Washington, DC, with my oldest son when we were touring around and visiting all the sites. But I made a point to make sure to take him to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, and it's obviously very sobering and sad and painful to go through, but I thought it was important for my son to see what can happen, what human beings are sadly capable of. I want to always make a point to do anything we can to combat hate in that way, and make sure we don't ever let that antisemitism get a foothold anywhere where we can prevent it.

I was very interested and excited when I read in the *Orange County Register*. There was an article, it appeared August 19th, by a rabbi. Here urging the passage of Assembly Bill 715. That's a bill aimed at stopping antisemitism in schools. And my understanding, talking with the Sheehys, our lobbyist, that this bill AB 715 is a two-year bill. It won't, I don't believe, be passing this year, but as we all know, no bill dies in the first year of a legislative session. If a bill doesn't make it the first year, it can come back next year. I think it's entirely appropriate for our board to pass a resolution in support of Assembly Bill 715, and hopefully next year they can get a traction, and we'll get it passed next year. But we can be on the record right away in support of that, of this bill and making sure the Orange County Board of Education is firmly on record opposing antisemitism in schools. So those are my comments.

BARKE: Great, Tim. Thank you, Tim. I'll make a few comments too and then I'll open it up to the board. What I really love is those of you, I'm sure you've read a resolution is the final, whereas where it says, "The Orange County Board of Education recognizes that antisemitism is contrary to the district's values and undermines its mission to educate all students in an environment of dignity, respect, and equity." And I think that says it all. And as a Jewish American myself, I understand how toxic antisemitism can be and we as a board will make sure that it is not in our community, it is not in our schools. It is our primary purpose to protect all students. And this is part of it. So, we'll work hard to do that. And then I will open it up to Lisa. Any comments?

SPARKS: Oh, I just echo all of the comments that everyone's making. We have wonderful supporters in the community who come to all of our meetings, and thank you all for coming and

we're doing our little part however we can. And this is something that all of us have really been behind in terms of supporting not having, recognizing that antisemitism is contrary to the district's values, undermines its mission to educate all students and creating an environment of dignity, respect, and equity. It is just, there's no place for it in any of our schools.

BARKE: And Jorge, I know you have been a strong fighter because we've discussed many incidences, so I know you're firmly behind this, but do you have any comments?

VALDES: I'm fully in support of the resolution. I've certainly received some emails asking for some assistance on this front. And certainly, over the past year, I've done my best to help the families and the parents who have been dealing with this in the best way that I know how, which is to advocate for them. I'm fully in support of this bill, of this resolution.

BARKE: And Dr. Williams?

WILLIAMS: I'll be quick. I've always thought that this board, that we are one of the strongest pro-Israel school board in America. We will continue to be that way. We share in the pain of our brothers and sisters in the Jewish community and the antisemitism that they experience. And I want to thank you and Tim for bringing this to our attention and I will fully support this.

BARKE: Thank you. Appreciate that. Well, hearing no further discussion, we'll call the vote, Darou.

SISAVATH: We need a first and a second.

BARKE: Oh, I'm sorry. I'll make the first. Would you like to make the second, Tim?

SHAW: Yes, I would.

BARKE: Okay. We have a first and a second.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: All right. Next up on the agenda is board action resolution 27-25, opposition to Proposition 50 on the November ballot. And that again is Barke and Shaw. Would you like to start, Mr. Shaw?

SHAW: I'd be happy to. A quick civics lesson. The state of California has 52 congressional districts. We get to elect from our state 52 representatives to represent the state back in Washington, DC, and the House of Representatives. Each district has to be, the 52 districts have to be equally populated. The fun is in drawing the map of what constitutes a district. Every 10 years we have the census normally and we draw the districts based on that census data where people are living, how many people live in this city or that city. And you draw districts accordingly and to be equally populated. Well, our governor and legislature are holding a special election this November to in the middle of the decade with the idea of redrawing the congressional districts around California. And just looking at this from, I don't want to get into the politics, but what it's doing to Orange County, I find particularly disgraceful.

Currently, there are six members of Congress that either entirely or partially represent Orange County. In the maps that have been proposed, if the voters of the state were to approve this, Orange County would actually get eight districts touching Orange County. And the reason we get so many is because they are very clearly breaking apart the voters of Orange County into districts that are only partially touching Orange County. For example, congressional district 38 under the proposed map would be a district up in LA County, in El Monte, Montebello, Baldwin Park area. And believe it or not, it comes and grabs Yorba Linda. If you're a voter of Yorba Linda, you'd be sharing a congressional district with El Monte and Montebello. Congressional district 40 is kind of a district that's entirely out in Riverside County, but not entirely in Riverside County. It comes and grabs Anaheim Hills.

In that case, Anaheim Hills and Villa Park kind of become the population filler for a Riverside County district. You could go around my hometown of La Habra, Brea, and La Habra become population filler for a district that's largely in LA County. That's Downey, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, and that area. So, even down south, there's a district that's almost entirely San Diego County, but it comes up and grabs San Clemente to give them the population necessary to round out the needed population of that district. The population of Orange County largely becomes population filler for districts of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego counties, which really weakens our voice in Congress. Because this is something that the voters of the state are going to be voting on fairly soon, actually, here in November, I thought it was very important that our board go on record formally opposing Proposition 50.

It is rewriting the state's constitution. I mean the voters many years ago put in place an independent commission with the idea that this independent commission would draw districts that could be fair, they're not gerrymandered, they would be fair and keeping communities intact and keeping communities of interest intact. And this very openly violates that concept by getting rid of the independent commission for the purposes of redrawing congressional districts. And all

you have to do is look at the map, and I don't know, I had asked Greg if we would get maybe the ability to put some of these districts up on the screen. Did we figure that out, Greg?

ROLEN: No, you made the request too late for our tech folks. I'm sorry.

SHAW: Oh darn. Well, the picture speaks a thousand words. If you go online and look at the shape of these districts, they truly do look like the good old salamander of old when I teach my American government class. And we go back hundreds of years ago to the original gerrymander that the Governor Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts was drawing really funny-looking districts for the purposes of rigging the outcome. And that is obviously what's underway right now and very openly, I don't know that anyone denies it. They're trying to engineer the outcome of elections by drawing silly-looking districts all over the place. But from a good government perspective, it is a disgrace and would very much weaken Orange County. And that's why I thought it was very appropriate for our board to formally oppose this Proposition 50.

BARKE: Thank you, Tim. Now you can see why he's such a popular professor, because he really outlines it for us. That was a great, great presentation, Tim. I appreciate that. And he's right.

SHAW: Thank you.

BARKE: This bill really dilutes the voice of Orange County. I was elected by Orange County. I have no intention of diluting the voice here. I absolutely oppose the bill. And before I turn it over to my colleagues, I again will read just our very last whereas, because I think that summarizes it well, "The Orange County Board of Education believes that Proposition 50 undermines the voter-approved framework for fair redistricting in California." I absolutely oppose it. And I'm quite sure that my board is going to stand with me to protect Orange County from really just being chopped up. Lisa?

SPARKS: Yeah, I'll just say that people move to Orange County for a reason, right, because we are one of the very best, if not the best county in all of California, and people choose to come here because of the things that we fight for. For parental rights and the strong schools that we have, the safety and all the things we stand for in Orange County. This is definitely a power grab and we really need to make sure that the public understands the public voters of Orange County understand the stakes of this. I think it's just hugely important. If you just look at the maps, it's so obvious what's happening. It is a political power grab. It's political football and we need to stop it in its tracks.

BARKE: Absolutely. Jorge?

VALDES: I couldn't do any better than the comments already.

BARKE: All right, thank you. And anything from you, Dr. Williams?

WILLIAMS: Ditto.

BARKE: Okay, wonderful. I think we will call the vote.

WILLIAMS: Did we make a motion?

BARKE: Yes. Oh, sorry. I will make the motion to approve opposition to Prop 50, and I'm sure Tim would love to second that.

SHAW: Love to second that. Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Sparks?

SPARKS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Valdes?

VALDES: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Barke?

BARKE: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Williams?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

SISAVATH: Trustee Shaw?

SHAW: Yes.

BARKE: All right, next up is we have Mr. Valdes again to discussion on the charter school MOU complaint process.

VALDES: A couple months ago I was dealing, had some interaction with some parents from IIA and hopefully Aracely is still here. Yes, she is. And one of the things that they told me was, and I'm not sure that this is true, that they didn't think their school even had a complaint procedure. I think I determined to the contrary that they at least had a complaint procedure, but no one knew about it. So as everyone knows last month, we started this new paragraph in the MOU and it's basically just telling charters in a basic way. I just view it as common sense way. This is what this board expects when you operate a school. This amendment to the MOU really just says you're required to have a parent complaint procedure, and this board expects you to disseminate that complaint procedure to the parents of your school on an annual basis.

How you disseminate it is up to you. So that's essentially what this says. Again, I think this is common sense, but apparently, the parents at IIA had no idea that there was a complaint procedure at all. And it took them to come here and make very public comments about their school and get trustees involved for all that sort of, to come to light. I think as the number of kids under the charter school, I'll call it umbrella, increases. Right now, I think Dr. Bean told me it

was 25,000. But I mean just tonight, if those schools tonight do what they're supposed to do, that's another 5,000 kids. I think as the number of kids under the charter school umbrella increases, we're going to have more of these issues, and we need to have some language in our MOU telling the charters in a loose framework what we expect. And that's what this is intended to be.

BARKE: Thank you for that, Jorge. So that's a discussion item. There's no first or second needed. Does anybody want to discuss it?

SPARKS: No, I liked it. I agree. Yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Jorge, is it your intentions then to make this a official board action policy?

VALDES: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

VALDES: I think the only comment I have as far as what's written here, and I'll ask Greg because he wrote this language, I think I sent him some language, but he clearly added to it. Greg, in the second sentence, where it says, "Furthermore, Charter school shall adopt and maintain non-UCP policies...", I think what you're trying to say is shall adopt and maintain UCP policies? Not...

HENDRICK: I'll answer. All charters, a part of their petition, must have, that's the state law that they have to follow the UCP and they have to have a posted on their website. So that is in law already. And so normally we wouldn't put things that were law inside a MOU. Right. But what we are encouraging schools to do is to put things that are not related to the UCP. Because there's a lot of complaints parents have that aren't part of the UCP process. When they go there and look at the UCP, they're like, oh, it doesn't fit that. They don't know what to do. So that's why we're calling this kind of the non-UCP complaints. So, just a general complaint for parents to follow. So that's why it's kind of worded that way.

VALDES: Okay.

ROLEN: And that's exactly what you're speaking to at IIA, the complaint procedures fall outside the strict guidelines of the UCP. So that's why we use that language.

VALDES: Okay.

WILLIAMS: So, just so I want to be clear, these are non-UCP complaints that our LEA charter schools will be creating. Is that correct?

VALDES: What I'm asking the charters to have is a complaint procedure for parents and that it be disseminated. I think it's pretty clear where we stand on this, right? We want parents involved and I was told by parents they had no idea that they even had a complaint procedure or how to do it. So that's why I think the charter school needs to have a complaint procedure that parents can

follow. It needs to be disseminated; it needs to be put on the website so that it's readily available if something arises.

SPARKS: You mean standardized?

VALDES: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Do we know if all of our charters have this on their website currently?

HENDRICK: They're required to have the UCP procedures on their website. They're not required to have general complaints. And I would say not all of them do. Not many do is probably a better way to say that.

WILLIAMS: Okay. So maybe we should make that something of a priority for us that since it's law they should have it.

HENDRICK: Well, the UCP they do. The UCP they do and we do that as part of our oversight. We check to make sure that the UCP is on there. When we talk about the non-UCP, that's what they don't really have on their website or it's not clear. And so, normally, most schools will put it in their handbook for the beginning of the year for annual notifications also.

ROLEN: Or their petitions.

HENDRICK: Or their petition. Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Okay. I'm sorry, I was confused. Aracely, you're saying all of our charter schools have the UCP on their websites now?

CHASTAIN: They should all have a UCP procedure, whether it's legally required to be on the website, it might be a question for Greg, but I'm not sure.

ROLEN: I believe it is, but this, excuse me, Aracely. But this is over and above what is required by law. This is this board saying we want to make non-UCP complaints readily available to parents in our charter schools.

VALDES: Can you guys tell me what a UCP complaint is? Because I know what a non-UCP complaint is.

CHASTAIN: Go ahead.

HENDRICK: Do you want to do it?

ROLEN: Please, be my guest.

HENDRICK: It is specific to misclassification of teacher certificates, instructional materials, bullying...

ROLEN: Discrimination.

HENDRICK: Discrimination. That's about it, I think. It's very specific items that are called [inaudible words].

ROLEN: It's very specific of who the complaint is about. It's about teachers or staff. It doesn't necessarily involve students or parents. So, there are very strict guidelines in California law and regulations to whom they apply. So, this is bigger, this is more inclusive. This is allowing a student to complain about a teacher or allowing a parent to complain about a facilities person. It just does not specify or limit the nature of the complaints.

CHASTAIN: I can give a pretty specific example. So, one of the complaints that we hear quite often have to do with parent volunteers, and there's complaints from parents that they're not allowed to volunteer as much as they want. So, where does that complaint, we need to refer that complaint back to the school so that the school can talk to the parent about volunteering and what policies they have in place for that. It doesn't fall under UCP for a parent to complain. However, if a school only has a UCP complaint procedure, we basically, the guidance that we give is every complaint you get then is going to fall under this very restrictive UCP procedure that has very strict timelines, who it can be about what it's about. And a lot of them don't really fall under that. But that's the policy and procedure that they're going to have to use for every complaint out there. Whether it's the afterschool program they've decided to use that doesn't fall under UCP, but we would be pushing every complaint that way if that's the only policy they have. So, we do encourage schools to have an additional complaint policy and procedure that is non-UCP for all these other complaints that don't fall under that, but still need to be referred back to the school for them to look at and try to address.

BARKE: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: You're going to be creating something for us to go forward with board action?

ROLEN: There's language on page 81 of your board packet that is going to be added to our MOUs to underscore the necessity of the non-UCP complaints.

VALDES: It's highlighted in red.

WILLIAMS: Right.

SPARKS: I like it because it standardizes another, things that go outside of the UCP complaint process. It sort of standardizes it for the school to have the bucket where you could see the patterns of complaints, and you know if a school's kind of running down a path, like what happened with the...

VALDES: To me, this is kind of obvious, but apparently it's not so obvious. So, I think if you have a school, you have to have a complaint procedure, and you should disseminate it to parents at least on an annual basis. I don't think that's an undue burden. And to me, like I said, I think it's obvious, but it's just not obvious clearly.

WILLIAMS: Right. Okay. So, we're not going to change this language. It's going to come before us...

VALDES: No, it's going to come like that.

WILLIAMS: It's going to come like that.

VALDES: Greg explained what the UCP and the non-UCP now meant. So, I'm good with the language as it reads, and I'll be putting it on the board for a vote next month.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

BARKE: Any further discussion? Did you want to chime in, Tim? No. Okay. All right then. I think we can move on since it's just discussion. And we discussed, and I believe now we are on Dr. William's piece. We have been waiting for.

WILLIAMS: Yeah, number 25. Number 25, the Mahmoud versus Taylor, US Supreme Court decision that took place June 27th in a 6-3 decision by the US Supreme Court majority. They sided with parents and the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children. Very interesting how the vote came to, but it's been asked by a few of my colleagues in the community what we're going to be doing about this. And we've sort of talked about this with Greg and I think, Greg, are you working on something for our ACCESS program as well as our charter schools?

ROLEN: We're working on something for the ACCESS program. And I'd like to thank you for bringing this item to our attention, because since June 27th, we've been handling several questions from our district partners. How to implement, under what circumstances must we implement the form of the opt-out and the like. So that's why I wanted to take this opportunity and explain to the board the intricacies of the decision and where we are in that process.

WILLIAMS: So, the California School Board Association has put out some board policy guidelines and some templates. Have you looked at those?

ROLEN: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Is there one that seems to be better than the other, the language?

ROLEN: What I was going to address in this presentation is that's going to be a decision by our local districts, which school district likes the language better, which one reflects their local culture and values.

WILLIAMS: Right. So, we're just going to be creating one for our schools, and that's a goal. We're not going to be creating it for any of the other school districts.

ROLEN: No. But one of the services we provide in the county office under Dr. Bean's direction is we do respond all these inquiries, we do take questions from a director, an assistant

superintendent, a superintendent, somebody in educational services asking for direction on these things. And all their questions are very fact-intensive, much like the decision. We have to answer those questions, trying to be mindful of the limitations of the Mahmoud decision, which I'm fully willing to discuss, and the framework of California law. It's why people like me get paid. So.

Because let me do, because this presentation really did just write itself, because of all the questions we've been answering from our districts. In Mahmoud, a Maryland school district approved an LGBTQ plus inclusive storybook curriculum for kindergarten through fifth graders. They understood the problems, and they proactively notified parents and gave them an opportunity to opt out. After about a year, the board rescinded the opt-out policy largely because of the administrative burden of so many opt-outs. So, in 2023, the parents sued to have the opt-out policy reinstated. They went to federal district court, they went to the district court, and the district court denied their request for injunctive relief, i.e. reinstate the policy. So, they went to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal and, by a 2-1 decision, they again agreed with the district and denied the parents' injunction. So, then the parents went to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court granted cert, which is Latin for they decided to hear it, and they by a 6-3 decision, as Dr. Williams said, they granted injunctive relief in favor of the parents.

Now, several of us in this room understand the legalese, right, the difference between injunctive relief and a decision on the merits. But what the Supreme Court decided was the parents had a likelihood to prevail on their claim that exposure to these materials could substantially undermine the religious beliefs of families. And there's a chance that doing irreparable harm without injunctive relief. Stated differently, if they stayed with the rescission of the opt-out policy, kids could be harmed. You can't put the toothpaste back in the tube. So that does not mean that there's a decision on the merits that either the curriculum was unconstitutional or the policy, but that means we have to interpret Mahmoud while this litigation is pending, it's still ongoing in federal district court. We have to do this, being mindful of the holding and the direction the Supreme Court gave us. Now I'm going to get wordy because the holding is the rule that came from the court.

And I'm going to read verbatim. "The holding is that when a school or its board adopts policies or curriculum that the school has reason to know will substantially interfere with the religious development of parents' children, and or will pose a very real threat of undermining religious beliefs or practices the parents wish to instill in their children. The school must provide notice to parents of the policy or material and an opportunity for the parents to opt their children out of the policy or exposure to the material." What's more, the court said it's a fact-intensive analysis. They said, "It will depend on what specific religious beliefs and practices are asserted as well as the specific nature of the educational requirement or curricular feature at issue. Education requirements targeted towards very young children, for example, may be analyzed different from education requirements for high school students. A court must also consider the specific context in which the educational materials at issue are presented."

"Are they presented in a neutral manner or in a way that's hostile to religious viewpoints or designed to impose students a pressure to conform?" Until this is finally resolved, local districts are going to have to make decisions about these very specific holdings based on their local traditions, local values, local customs, local control, something that we have been advocating ever since I set foot in Orange County. Until these issues are resolved, we have to help our

districts, and we have to formulate a policy that not only is responsive to Mahmoud but is within the framework of existing California law. That's a difficult line to walk, but luckily, we have some guidance in California law and policy. California law already entitles parents to review curriculum. Education Code section 49091.10 requires instructional materials be made available promptly for inspection by a parent or guardian in a reasonable timeframe in accordance with procedures determined by the governing board.

FERPA contains similar entitlements for parents in federal law. Education Code section 49091.14 requires districts to create a course catalog and make it available upon request. As we know, California law already provides for opt-outs for comprehensive sexual health education, HIV prevention. This opt-out is codified in CSBA sample policy 6142.41. Education Code sections 51240 and 51938 permit parents to opt out of such instruction upon written request, including based on religious beliefs. Education Code section 51939 protects students from adverse actions or discipline for opting out. We have a sample board policy 6154. This is what you're referring to, Dr. Williams. "Recognizes that lessons or programs sometimes include instruction related to controversial issues that arouse strong reactions based on personal beliefs, political philosophy, cultural religion, or other influences." 6144 contains generic language when it's legally required for a parent to opt out a specific instruction. Now that's the very board policy that we ask districts to look at in our July 11th communication with the districts. We've seen some policy revisions already. I'm sure that's what you're referring to. And the recommended revision is to include religious beliefs in that language. CSBA sample policy AR 6142.2 provides for the recognition of religious beliefs and customs. This allows a local district to allow a parent or guardian to opt out of instruction based on religious beliefs and customs or practices based on criteria, not unlike that enunciated in the Mahmoud decision.

While at the same time, the California law contains, includes the Fair Act, California Healthy Youth Act, and several anti-discrimination provisions. So that's the line we have to walk. California law provides for inspection of curriculum, curricular catalogs, opt-outs. And remember, Mahmoud did not criticize the curriculum, only the decision to eliminate opt-outs.

VALDES: What was the book that prompted that Maryland district's opt-out policy? What was the name of the book?

ROLEN: I don't remember. It's written on my desk somewhere.

VALDES: What was the topic of the book?

ROLEN: It was about an LGBTQ couple who had an uncle and an uncle or something of that nature.

VALDES: I mean, generally speaking, I think we as a board, if we're going to start advising the districts, I have heard some arguments that Mahmoud could be taken to a very extreme level, such as a parent who wants to teach their child creationism, taking their kids out of science class. And I mean, I think that's extreme for all of us, even the five of us up here. So, I'm certainly willing to support Mahmoud with respect to the books like that and the issues raised like that. But I can also see the other side of that, where just letting parents opt out of science class is

problematic. So, I, for one, I'm not willing to go that far. So, I think we have to craft something that's sort of finely tailored to the ruling and the underlying facts, is I guess the way I would articulate it.

ROLEN: That's part of the problem with Mahmoud, right? There are specific facts we've written opt-out language specific to the decision, but Mahmoud raises the issue but doesn't address reactive opt-outs. If somebody doesn't like a curriculum and says, I want out of this curriculum. Luckily, we have these opt-out policies and laws that we already on the books and practically and historically, when a parent asked to be opted out of assembly or an activity or a particular piece of instruction, administrators tend to honor that by providing an alternative activity. But the interesting thing about Mahmoud is it requires us to proactively identify something that could be controversial and give them an opportunity to opt out. And the court didn't give us any direction on how to do that as far as timeframes or criteria or anything, but it is a pretty high bar. They have, the school board has to adopt a policy. They have reason to know will substantially interfere with religious development and or poses a very real threat. So that is the line we are walking. We are doing our best to advise districts. We've seen certain districts make some changes in policies that...

WILLIAMS: Greg, I have not seen any of those policies that you've sent out. Can you send them to the board?

ROLEN: I can send all the sample board policies to the board. I can send the districts that have changed their policies to the board.

WILLIAMS: Okay. Yeah, I take an interest in that. And I agree with Jorge, we're not talking about taking kids out of science classes. I think that's an extreme that some people would say. I think the issue is that there's inculcation and teaching of secular values and subject material that takes the tone in the rhetoric of religious instruction according to the a secular type of foundation or religion. One of the concepts that the CSBA says here is that the Education Code 51932 is going to be somewhat of a problem in how we're going to be interpreting Mahmoud. There's education code that is out there that mandates the sentiment that there is religious inculcation that has taken place in the form of secular ideas and values, and it goes against those who have traditional religious values. In the CSBA article that I pulled, you've probably read it, they talk about there's problems with that. And so, how are we going to navigate, and what are we going to do? I find it surprising, and maybe what causes my curiosity, as you're saying, this is not settled law, that this is still an ongoing legal...

ROLEN: The case isn't over.

WILLIAMS: The case isn't over. Help me understand this.

ROLEN: Its injunctive relief. Really, what they said is Supreme Court, District Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court make them give us our opt-out back because while we are litigating this, kids are getting exposed to this stuff, and they may suffer irreparable harm, and it's a different standard than a decision on the merits.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

ROLEN: We've gotten injunctive relief as a board with Mr. Brenner several times. The standard is irreparable harm, no other remedy. And that the irreparable harm is you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube, while it's going on, something bad could be happening.

WILLIAMS: Because it's an injunctive relief, again, I'm not an attorney, I don't entirely understand that it's now put down into a lower court to make the final decision policy?

ROLEN: Yes, the final decision on the merits. But what the Supreme Court said and what the lawyers on behalf of the parents are going to say is the Supreme Court said we're likely to win. That's what they're going to do. And it's a decision on the merits. It's really unlikely that the Supreme Court is going to change direction on this when they face a decision on the merits.

WILLIAMS: Okay, so where does it go?

ROLEN: Injunctive relief simply tells you to do something or not do something, but they don't give you money. Is that simple enough? They say start a practice. Stop a practice.

WILLIAMS: Okay, so it's going down to where the state court?

ROLEN: The federal district court.

WILLIAMS: The federal district court. Okay. So, injunctive relief sends this case down to the federal court, which is whatever district that is.

VALDES: It's like a temporary ruling, it's saying, it's essentially saying, no, you need to give them back the opt-out policy while this is being litigated, and we'll listen to your appeal in two years.

WILLIAMS: Okay? I did not know that.

ROLEN: Or the case will be resolved in two years.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

ROLEN: What some practitioners are saying, this is just injunctive relief. We don't have to do anything. We didn't take that approach. We gave practical advice to our districts a week after it came out. So that was the direction on high and that's what we followed.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

ROLEN: And another thing that should be kept in mind is CSBA policies. Their sample policies, their guidelines. A lot of people get in a room and write them. We don't have to follow them. Our local districts have to follow them. It just gives us a starting point.

WILLIAMS: So just to be clear, so you have direction, you're going to be creating something for our kids.

ROLEN: I have already started working with Dr. Poulin at ACCESS to try to find something that reflects the values of our Department for our ACCESS kids. Yes.

WILLIAMS: Okay. And could the same policy that we adopt for the ACCESS kids be applied to our charter schools, which are acting as LEAs?

ROLEN: They can do that. Yeah.

WILLIAMS: Okay.

BARKE: Okay, wonderful. All right, so we can move on now to communication information discussion. I'm going to invite Brandon to the microphone.

GUEVARA: Good evening, Madam President, superintendent, and board. I will keep this pretty brief. I know we're getting late in the night and thank you for those still in attendance and those watching. For the uninitiated, my name is Brandon Guevara. I am the OC Board of Education's first board liaison. As we're approaching our two-month anniversary now, I feel like I'm in high school, keeping track of the months. Before I start, real quick, I just want to briefly say what a blessing it's been to so frequently find myself as the least knowledgeable person in any of these rooms that I'm always in. And I'm not on a creek without oars here. I'm surrounded by people who are so willing to kind of lift me up and teach me. And from our charter school superintendents, our lovely board members, our superintendent, our lobbyists, we have our chief of staff.

Everyone's just been so kind and I'm learning a lot every day. If you've ever played a couple rounds of chess, do you know how exhausting it is after? That's what it feels like every day. But I'll get to business here. So, my focus on this month has primarily been on a relationship building and outreach with our charter schools, our local schools, and really our community partners. In this review, I'll briefly highlight some of our more noteworthy events. Not to say that everything else that's not listed is unnoteworthy, but just for the sake of time, I'll just go through some of the highlights and then at the end, I'll conclude with a roadmap just going forward to see what we're envisioning for the position in the short term, near term, and what's ongoing.

There we go. All right. First and foremost, on the beginning of the month on August 8th, I had the distinct honor to attend Oxford Preparatory Academy's ribbon-cutting for their middle school academy up in Laguna Hills. If you haven't been, it's a beautiful, beautiful campus. I was quite taken back going up in the public school system, but not a charter school system. How much college is pushed every hallway is labeled after university way and every teacher adopts a school to, I saw Navy there, Michigan USC, saw Tennessee one, which was really nice, go Vols. But it really was, for someone who grew up in a district in Los Angeles where college and post-secondary education was not the expectation. It was tremendously encouraging and I think it served as a stark reminder of how promising charter schools can be and the great they can do for their communities.

Next, on August 13th, I had the honor presenting the Freedom Committee of Orange County with a certificate of recognition on behalf of the board of education or the Orange County Board of Education. I spoke with committee members, their presidents, their board members, and volunteers. It's an entirely volunteer-funded program. It's a nonprofit, so everything they do is out of their own time. And I spoke there, and again, I spoke with all their members, and really, it was just there for the board to really highlight what they do for our schools and our students. And if you're not aware about what they do, they have veterans from, well, there's one left of World War II, I think he was on the Arizona, I believe the last surviving veteran of the USS Arizona before it sank. They go into classrooms and they supplement history, so they don't take the place of the teacher, but they enhance what the teacher's doing.

They bring a face to history. And I thought that was really cool. And I think that the Orange County Board of Education, it really speaks highly of you for partnering with community groups like that. So, it was really an honor for me coming from a veteran family, to present that award to them. So, thank you for giving me that opportunity. Next, on August 17th, the Board President, Mari Barke and I headed up back up to Sacramento. It was a bit warmer this time than it was last time. So, packed a little bit cooler clothes this time. We met with the Association of California County Boards of Education or the ACCBE, for that mouthful. Really, it was just an opportunity to connect, like I said, outreach and connection and relationship building. It was an opportunity to connect with county board members from across the state, from San Diego, Los Angeles County, Monterey, Sacramento, even.

And so that was a really great opportunity, really got to connect, and Mari Barke did a wonderful job there networking. We really did get a lot of great ideas there and maybe implementations in the future, but just educating ourselves. Again, I was the least knowledgeable person in that room. Youngest by far. Lastly, on August 23rd, I also attended with the president, Board President Mari Barke PACE Summit. First of its kind, really, we just connected with the educators and community partners from across Orange County. It was a really great experience. Board president spoke in a panel up there answering a bunch of hard legal questions that I would not be envious of, but that was a really very unique opportunity for me as well. And just to wrap it up, I just want to outline some goals going forward for us. I'll start with our ongoing. Currently, what we're doing right now is we're always kind of building on this relationship with our charter school leaders, our local school board leaders, our community partners, and whatnot.

So that's something that's never going to cease, really. It's going to be a part of the job until the day that it isn't. So, in the short term, we're looking at building on this ACCBE-type relationship of building connection with county boards of education members across California. I think there's a lot of value to be had in there, and I get the sentiment from the board that I think you guys share the same sentiments. In our near term, we want to formalize a concrete description of the board liaison responsibilities as the role evolves. It's changing every day, taking on new responsibilities every day. So, we are working on something more concrete that outlines all those responsibilities. And then in the midterm, probably six to nine months, we want to expand partnerships with community organizations and stakeholder groups. Again, that could be under, ongoing because that is something that is continually going to be happening. But other than that, that is about my month of August to September 3rd. Thank you for letting me speak today and thank you guys for hanging around.

BARKE: Thank you. Appreciate the report. Brandon, you're doing a wonderful job and appreciate you out in the community. I also saw you at Santa Ana USD.

GUEVARA: Oh, yes.

BARKE: You were there and so we appreciate what you're doing.

GUEVARA: Thanks so much. Appreciate it.

BARKE: Before we do our reports, do we want to get the legislative report? Is that okay if we go out of order? Does that bother anybody? Yeah, I'd love to bring up the Sheehys, Tom and Brena, our amazing lobbyists from Sacramento, to give an update. Thank you for traveling down to visit with us. I'm sorry that Ken talked so much tonight that it's been a long meeting.

TOM: There's never any apologies necessary. We're happy to be here. Thanks for the invitation to come down. I don't really know where to start. Some of the issues we've talked about here, this is the third time I've been here. It's the second time Brena has been here, excuse me, been here, have been the same. You've got a group of elected officials up in Sacramento that want to dictate how Orange County should be holding their elections and totally oblivious to what local sentiment might be down here. As far as I know, none of those elected officials have ever bothered to show up at a board meeting here, have ever put anything, asked for something to be put on a public agenda, have ever had any public discussions.

BARKE: Never spoken to us individually or as a group. Never.

TOM: As far as I know, no member of the public here at Orange County, whether with kids or without kids in the system, has ever filed a complaint or a request that you change your election procedures.

BARKE: No.

TOM: It's just very odd that folks up in Sacramento think they can dictate how we're going to dictate how your city council's going to be elected, how your county board of education's going to be elected. We're going to dictate how you elect your county board of supervisors. It's really not Sacramento's call. It's really a local issue. So, this year, Brena and I looked at each other, it was like it's Groundhog Day. Senator Tom Umberg in mid-January, introduced a bill, SB 249. That would once again dictate how this board holds its elections and how it elects its trustees without consulting you. Now, the one little twist that was different this year is Senator Umberg included four other counties. He included Sacramento County, San Joaquin County, Alameda County, and then Riverside County. And essentially, the bill said that any counties that elect their trustees like you do here in the primary, that they had to all fall in line and do it the way he wants you to do it, which is to have everything consolidated into November.

At your direction and working with you, working with Mr. Rolan, and working with the board leadership and working with all of the trustees on this board, we have developed over the last three and a half years, a number of different policy and fiscal arguments to push back on this

usurp of local control. And we didn't have new arguments to make this year other than it was going to be an even bigger fiscal problem because they were now dragging five counties into what was going to be a really no-brainer state mandate. The commission of state mandates would've proved the test claims and the state general fund would've ended up paying for the Orange County elections, and in Riverside, in Sacramento, and everywhere else.

BRENA: In perpetuity.

TOM: In perpetuity. Brena and I even attended a meeting that Trustee Barke was at the chair of the Assembly Education Committee, completely, I'm sorry, the chair of the Assembly Elections Committee. Let's not mention her name, but just that's who it was. That's who the person was. Completely dismissed all the fiscal issues and said, "Oh, I am a former registrar from my county and I can have all these changes done in five or 10 minutes." Your arguments here about costs are all, they don't hold any water. This despite the fact that the Senate Appropriations Committee staff, professional staffers and staff, the super majority in the Senate, they said in Orange County alone, it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now you multiply it by five because this bill bring five counties. And so, we're just kind of pulling our hair out, going, how do you deal with these people that just refuse to sort of accept what the reality of the situation is. So, we were successful this year in stopping that bill for the third time. A lot of the credit goes to the board leadership that made the effort to fly up to Sacramento. Brandon even flew up I think it was his first day. Was that your first day on the job?

BARKE: Second.

GUEVARA: Second.

TOM: His second day on the job. He was with Ms. Barke. And there's a funny little story there.

BRENA: He did great.

TOM: Go ahead. Do you want to tell him how he did?

BRENA: Well, he had his prepared remarks and told us he had no problem testifying on behalf of the board as their liaison. And well, there was a little story and we're very thankful that it turned out the way it did.

TOM: It was really a blessing. What happened is there was supposed to be a special rule of order. There was one very controversial bill that they were going to take up at the beginning of the hearing, and that was slated to go for a full hour and then our bill was going to be next up. And so, I said, in my great wisdom, I said to Ms. Barke and to Brandon and to Brena, I said, let's just sit here in our office in the nice air conditioning office and we can have some ice water and relax. And when it gets near, we'll just walk over there. So, when the chair of the education committee came in, Mr. Muratsuchi, he said, "Well, there's been a little change in plan here. The author of the bill has been caught up in another committee, and Mr. Umberg, would you like to come present?"

And poor Tom, poor me. I came running out of the office with my hair on fire. Like, pack up your stuff. We got to go. We got to go. Mari Barke walks really fast. We didn't break stride to actually jog, but we were as close to jogging as you could possibly be. Our office is across the street from the Capitol, but because of all the construction going on, the hearing room was a block on the other side of the Capitol. So, we had to walk two and a half blocks in 100-degree heat. And boy, we were just hauling, hauling our rear end off. And when we finally got there to the building, the whole time, I got to tell you, I was praying, please God, please, you got to hold them up. Hold them up. I thought if I got there and we missed, I was going to get fired.

Like, we flew all the way to Sacramento, and our lobbyist has us waiting in his office while the bill is being presented. Fortunately, when we got there, Mr. Umberg was just wrapping up, and I was smart enough not to talk loud and get everybody's attention. Everybody stared me down. But as when I walked in, I started waving. We're here, and fortunately, Mr. Muratsuchi said, "Oh, I think the opposition showed up." And I apologized and explained to him that we didn't know that you were going to change the order of your hearing, and that's why we weren't here right when you started. And he's like, "Oh, no problem, Mr. Sheehy. Please, you have a presentation."

BRENA: Well, it was a special order that they were hearing a bill. So, it was really uncommon, and it does happen, but it's just not as frequent that they would defer the special order of the hearing of the bill that was scheduled ahead of ours.

TOM: That they did. Well, the blessing, but there was a silver lining in all of this. So, Mr. Muratsuchi was very fair. He let us sort of catch our breath and Brandon was trailing behind me and Mari, along with Brena and Brandon and Mari sat down to deliver their testimony and I sat in the front row along with Brena and they delivered their comments. And one of the committee members from San Diego started to come at them about this fiscal estimate like they was going to try to say, this isn't going to cost anything. And the second she did that, the second this assembly member did that in the back of my head, I was like, thanks. Thank you, God, this is perfect. Because that opened the door for me as their lobbyist and as the chief deputy director of the department of finance and as the chairman of the state commission on state mandates. And actually, I've actually got some expertise in this area. I came up and sat down and introduced myself and she had served up this big softball. There's a reason why I'm telling you this, because what I said over the next two minutes was really devastating to the effect of this bill. And it was broadcast all over the Capitol and then into the record, you could tell she was really sorry she asked, you know. And so, it was a really great opportunity for us and in my role for me...

VALDES: So, what did you say?

TOM: I just proceeded to make all the arguments about how expensive this was going to be and how it was going to end up being a general fund, a state general fund liability. Because of the state mandate process. I chaired this obscure state commission that decides how local governments get reimbursed for mandates that are put out. I actually know how that process works. I explained all of that and there was really nothing they could come back with.

Well, this all really mattered because that bill got out of that committee that day on a partisan vote, but its next stop was the Assembly Appropriations Committee. And I had told Mr. Rolen, and I had told at that time, Mr. Williams, Dr. Williams, and later Mari Barke and Mr. Shaw, I

had said, if we're going to stop this bill in the legislature this year, we're going to stop it in the second house. So, this was in the Senate bill. The second house means it was in the assembly now, and it said, we're going to stop it in the appropriations committee. We're going to get it held on suspense, but we're not going to just rely on that. We're also going to engage my former colleagues, the California Department of Finance, which is a cabinet level entity, and we're going to have a meeting with them and we're going to go into very, very intricate detail on how this is going to work and how it's going to be a general fund problem for them, as Brena says, "In perpetuity." So, we did both those things. Brena and I met with the appropriations committee staff. Would you say that was a good meeting?

BRENA: It was a very good meeting.

TOM: We explained in great detail what the consequences were if they passed this bill. And on a parallel track, we set up a meeting that President Barke and Mr. Rolon on along with me and Brena, and we were on with the executive staff at the California Department of Finance. They are the fiscal advisors to the governor. And we just very methodically, in about a 15-minute meeting, walk them through every single element about the bad policy of the bill and the fiscal impact of the bill.

BARKE: And they were so supportive. That was a great phone call.

TOM: That's right. And for those of you that are wondering fiscal impact, well, the fiscal impact is there's an Orange County registrar's office, and if you're going to change how local officials are elected, there's all sorts of backend work that they have to do with their information technology systems, their ballot cards and all the things that go on to get the county ready for an election. That would be several hundreds of thousands of dollars here in Orange County. Well, now multiply that by five, which is what the effectiveness bill was. And because it's the state mandating that a local government entity do it, it then becomes reimbursable by the state general fund. So that meeting with the California Department of Finance was really important. Mr. Rolon and Ms. Barke played their roles perfectly. They were very attentive. And so, we really feel like we put the fix in on this.

And the icing on the cake was last week when the Assembly Appropriations Committee was holding their suspense hearing, which determines which bills are going to be killed, which bills are going to go to the floor, and then which handful of bills we're not going to let go to the floor. We're not going to kill them. We're going to just call them a two-year bill and we'll come back to the mixture. So with three possible outcomes. They could have passed SB 249 to the floor. They could have held it in committee or they could have said it's a two-year bill. Again, the distinction being if they hold it, they're saying they're killing it. And when they got to senator...

BRENA: Meaning it doesn't get a second chance as a two-year bill.

TOM: It should be dead. When they got to Senator Umberg's bill, they said, "Hold in committee." Which was the code for we're killing it.

WILLIAMS: Thank you.

TOM: And it was a really great outcome. So, we believe personally, and we know that all of you have, and we've been so proud to represent you, this local control issue matters.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

TOM: Orange County ought to be in charge of Orange County's elections. San Diego County should be in charge of San Diego County's elections. The citizens that live in Orange County, it should be their tax dollars to pay the Orange County Registrar to do what they do. It shouldn't be people living in Santa Barbara or San Francisco or Sacramento tax dollars being sent down here to pay for these elections. Orange County should be paying for their own elections. So, you can't have the state coming in and paying for what really should be a local responsibility. And that's what's been going on. We can't make any predictions about the future, but bad ideas seem to never die in Sacramento. We're hoping that the third time...

BRENA: We're hoping that the third time's a charm, truly.

VALDES: Can you do the same thing with AB 727?

TOM: What's that?

VALDES: Can you do the same thing with AB 727?

TOM: We will be delighted to work on any and all bills you ask us to work on. And Mr. Valdes, we will, when we get back to Sacramento tomorrow, we'll get to work on 727. I can assure you. Do you all have any questions, comments you'd like to make?

BRENA: I also just want to thank again, President Barke, Vice President Shaw, General Counsel Rolan, and, of course, having worked also with Trustee Sparks, Dr. Sparks, your efforts over the last three years. And of course, Dr. Williams has worked with us as well. And it's just been an honor and a privilege really, to represent the Orange County Board of Education. We really appreciate all the hard work that you do for your county and your constituents. Thank you.

ROLEN: And on behalf of the board and staff, I want to say that we appreciate what you do as well. Without your leadership, we couldn't have fought this off three times. And it just taught me that sometimes the right thing happens for the right reason if you do the work. So, thank you for everything you do. Thank you very much.

BARKE: What he said.

TOM: Oh, thank you.

SPARKS: Yeah. And I've learned so much from you all from day one. We kind of were thrown together on the first one, and I learned so much working with you guys, so thank you so much for teaching me how all these barriers work and how we can move through them to achieve success. I mean, really, you guys did all the heavy lifting, so thank you.

TOM: Dr. Sparks. You're so welcome. I'll never forget what you did when you flew up to Sacramento the first time last year, when it was then Senator Newman sending this ridiculous legislation through, and when it was all done, he turned to everybody and said, "This isn't political." And Dr. Sparks just looked at him right in the face and just laughed. She didn't say anything. She just laughed. I thought it was classic.

SPARKS: Thank you.

BRENA: You were very professional.

SPARKS: I try. It was funny.

BRENA: We all know what goes on in the state legislature, right?

SPARKS: Right. That was my first experience. So, I just had to laugh. I was just like, oh my God.

TOM: We will follow up with your board with this board here within the next two days to let you know what we're doing on 727.

BARKE: Thank you.

TOM: As well as on 715 as well.

BARKE: Thank you so much. Appreciate it.

WILLIAMS: Thank you, Tom and Brena.

BARKE: All right, now we will go back to announcements. Superintendent, please.

BEAN: All right, I'll be quick. I have family members trying to get in contact with me and I know we all want to try to get out of here. So, I'll be real quick. I got to turn this on first. Remember, my recap is always revolving around the 5-3-1, and I want to give you a couple of good news pieces. And then I wanted to add something different in this one to really invite the board members. And if you can't make it, then we invite Brandon as your liaison. We'll give you some dates. The first thing I want to share with you is that you ought to know that the work we do at Orange County Department of Education is highly respected across the state. So much so that just most recently, we contributed to what's called the California Attendance Guide that was unveiled by State Superintendent Tony Thurmond in a recent conference.

And it highlights strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism. In other words, people at the state level across the state listen very carefully to what OCDE and our amazing workers at OCDE have to say in this particular topic and matter, which is chronic absenteeism, which is still a problem. And so that's Dr. Parsons in the middle there. She leads that, and it's great to be recognized at a state level. The other celebration is that I had the privilege and honor to launch our school-based mental health summit this past couple of weeks. And we had over 100, I think

about 300 counselor psychologists, professionals to come together to really talk about wellness for our students. And then, as a part of our ACCESS 2030 vision, we had a great idea. Analee, our associate superintendent of Connections, had a wonderful idea that we replicate this process of building a vision for 2030 for Connections.

This big, audacious goal is now going to encompass not only ACCESS, but Connections. So, we've had multiple conversations with our Connections, special education program, in which now we are developing a vision for what this program could look like by 2030. And these wonderful conversations have been well attended and well appreciated that their voices being heard as we establish a vision for their work in the next five years. I'm going to add this in our reports, and that's upcoming dates for you guys to know because it's great to see several of you at some of these events. So just really quickly, we'd love to invite you guys if you've never been to general staff meeting. We're going to have about 500 employees at the conference center. That's going to be October 8th at 8:30. Come by. Love to introduce you.

BARKE: Can you give us a printout of this?

BEAN: Of course.

BARKE: If not, I could write it all. I'll take a picture.

HENDRICK: I can send it to you.

HENDRICK: Yeah. Renee will take care of that for us.

BARKE: Thank you.

BEAN: Our Orange County Schools Bright Futures Foundation, which Mari is a board member of, the second meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 15th, at 1:30. We had the inaugural kickoff last month, and it was just wonderful to have very prominent community activist, community organizers, philanthropists, businessmen, and women in that particular foundation. If you can drop by, that'd be great. Careers in Service Event. Mari and I are going to attend this. It's an all-day event. Mari, I don't think I can attend all day though. I'm sorry. Is that okay?

BARKE: I don't know. We'll see.

BEAN: I know you'll be there, but we would love for Brandon to represent the rest of the board there. Hispanic 100...

BARKE: Oh, that's the military event?

BEAN: Yeah. That's the military career event, right?

BARKE: Yes. I have the prayer breakfast in the morning, but I should be there by 9:30.

BEAN: Fantastic. And then the Hispanic 100 Event. This is amazing organization that gives scholarships to young students, Hispanic students across our county, and this is their main event, the annual event would love—I think we have a few seats available.

BARKE: Yeah, I'm attending, I know. I signed up.

HENDRICK: Both Mari and I think Tim have...

BEAN: Taken those seats?

HENDRICK: Well, they've already RSVP'd.

BEAN: Okay, so how many seats do we have available? Do we know Dennis? I think...

COLE: There's one left.

BEAN: One left. So, if you can't go, we'll send Brandon.

BARKE: I might be going. So, I'm happy.

BEAN: If he's available.

BARKE: It's a great event.

BEAN: It's a great event. Great, wonderful event. Our wonderful language team is putting on their annual OCDE Interpreters and Translators Conference. I'm kicking that off. Love, if you guys have time, please join us October 3rd. Olive Crest Power of One Lunch is Tuesday, October 7th. I think we have a ticket or two for that. If anybody wants to join me for this wonderful lunch. And then this is a great event that Junior Achievement does annually. That's the Junior Achievement Stock Market Challenge, Tuesday night, October 9th at 5:30. These are all, the reason why I put these up there, because these are all organizations that support our districts and our 450,000 students across Orange County in its different ways, in its different capacity. The incredible thing that Orange County Department of Education does is it connects these agencies and organizations to our districts and local education agencies. These are wonderful events to attend. So that is the superintendent's report. Any questions?

BARKE: Great report. Thank you. Appreciate it. All right, Renee.

HENDRICK: You do you have your invitations for the teacher of the year award.

BARKE: Yes, thank you. I will go.

HENDRICK: And so that is coming up on November 7th, and so please let us know as soon as possible if you'd like to attend. Great event. Our next board meeting is October 8th, so it's the second Wednesday, and the submission deadline is September 24th, and the board packets will be delivered on October 3rd. That's all I have.

BARKE: Great. Thank you. Darou, I'm a yes for the teachers' event. All right.

BEAN: You're everywhere.

BARKE: I try. I try. Let's see. Board member comments.

SPARKS: I have a little announcement. Very exciting. The Christ Cathedral is opening a new Shroud of Turin Museum this fall at the Christ Cathedral and it is so cool. It's going to have a sacred art, a 360-degree, theater rooms, interactive exhibits, and they're inviting the media to meet with Bishop Vann on September 8th. It's like 10,000 square feet. It's just incredible. And it talks about it is this sort of immersive experience, and it's going to be open to all the students of Orange County, and I think they're targeting middle school. I don't know, they'll be reaching out to you guys, but it is amazing. I mean, it's really amazing. And the website for it is called theshroudexperience.com, and you can just Google it and it'll come up in Orange County. And I have not seen it yet, but I've heard about it from my Catholic colleagues and friends. And it just is going to be a game changer in terms of just having this immersive experience with all the digitization, and you feel like you're there, walking the walk. It's going to be really special, I think. So obviously our Catholic students will be going there, but it's open to all of our public schools as well. And I think it'll be really special.

BARKE: Mr. Valdes?

VALDES: On Friday, I'm looking forward to speaking at the new Magnolia School in Anaheim.

BARKE: Nice.

VALDES: Friday morning. I was invited to do that. Thank you. Maria Rowell. I look forward to that. Tom Sheehy, I want to make sure that you have this letter from the Riverside Sheriff to the Senate Education Committee. I think...

TOM: May I approach the...

BARKE: Yes, please.

TOM: Do you need a copy of this sir?

VALDES: I do not. I have a copy of that one.

SPARKS: And that was my copy you stole.

VALDES: Oh, sorry. Also, Tom, next year, I know that I asked you to do this on 727, kind of late in the game. Next year, I know earlier in the year, I think you did a presentation this year about a lot of bills. I think next year I want to have a meeting with you after you do that, after you sort of synopsise everything, because I want to get on the same page with you on stuff like 727 or whatever else we're going to oppose. I'm going to pay much closer attention to your presentation next year, but I also want to have a meeting with you next year about the things that

I think our board are going to oppose and the resolutions that I'm going to raise. So, or hopefully support.

I want to do that next year with you, after you do your sort of summary of all the bills up there. And then the last thing I want to mention is I sometimes bring this up, but this is proud papa again. My son will be representing the state of California in the 9U. He's only an 8U player, but he is representing the state of California in the Allstate games in Texas in November, where all the states send their own teams to Houston, Texas. And he's one of, I think it was 13 players out of 225 that tried to get on the team. And he was, I am told, one of the first nominees.

WILLIAMS: Congratulations.

BARKE: That's awesome.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is it soccer?

VALDES: It's baseball.

BARKE: Anything, Tim?

SHAW: No, I'm just very proud to have played a small role with the team, and going up to Sacramento, and I'm just so proud of what Sheehy Strategies did for us. I'm sorry I'm not there to celebrate with you in person.

TOM: Thank you. Tim.

BARKE: I would concur with Tim that it has been a great experience working with you. I appreciate everything you have done for our board, and we are truly, truly grateful to you. So, thank you. It's been a great relationship.

TOM: It's our honor. Thank you.

BARKE: Yes, thank you. And that's it. I think Brandon covered most of my adventures, so I don't need to go over them again. It's been a great meeting. Are we finished?

WILLIAMS: Make a motion for adjournment?

BARKE: Yes. Motion for adjournment. Any second?

WILLIAMS: You second it. Hit it. There you go.

HENDRICK: Staff gave information to the board, and no action was taken.

BARKE: All right, now we are...

WILLIAMS: Now make a motion.

BARKE: Yes. Now, a motion to close.