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**2023-10-16, Liasion Meeting**

Agenda  BoardDocs  
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Duration 01:24:02

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- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Meeting adjourned. Roll call, please. Meeting call to order at 6.04 p.m.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Roll call, please. Here.
  
- ▶ [ ] Here. Here.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Also, a side note, Zoom is not available for public participation tonight. Item B, minutes, B1, approval of January 23rd, 2023 minutes.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] I move approval.
  
- ▶ [ **Matthew Jorgens** ] Second.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Roll call vote, please.
  
- ▶ [ ] Council, Committee Member Thomas? Yes.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Yes Yes, I See that there's no old business, so we'll move on to new business D1 presentation by Newark library manager Joe stoner. Welcome Thank you
  
- ▶ [ **Joe Stoner** ] Thank you, Liaison Committee and especially Board Member Thomas for inviting me to speak tonight. This is going to be an updated version of my previous presentation and I expect to go for about 20 minutes. I come as a dedicated advocate for the Newark schools. There are some things that I observe in my work as a library manager that I think are relevant to what the school district is facing, but also for our planning at the library. It bothers me when I hear people say, and I've heard people say this directly to me, that they would not send their children to the Newark schools. Or that they think the problem with the Newark schools is students here just don't study as much as in neighboring school districts. Or that Latino families aren't as committed to education as other community groups. These are all comments I've heard from influential people in the community. I'm concerned about the assumptions I hear about what a good school is. As the library manager, we have visitors from many different school districts and from many private schools. From as far as San Ramon, we have teen volunteers coming from the Harker School, many private schools. So I'm approaching this presentation from research I've done as a librarian, but I'm not going to pretend I'm an expert in all of these areas. These are just some observations that I do try to keep in mind in planning our library work. So to get started, there is a lot of societal pressure today convincing students and parents that this is the one path to success in school and college and career. It seems like it makes school and education into a stiff competition with little room for mistakes. But I ask, why should we accept this as normal or assume this is the standard? So this is the reality for most people, and I would include myself in this. This is what my life has looked more like than a straight path to success. I borrowed this from Challenge Success, which is a nonprofit organization based at Stanford University that works with schools all over the United States to help redesign the school day, the school plan, so that it's still rigorous but less stressful for everyone. So these are some numbers I dug up recently in my work as a librarian. So it's from the National Center for Education Statistics. And the one in the red box there that I highlighted, it just kind of made my jaw drop when I realized that, that if you look at all of the colleges in the United States, colleges and universities that accept less than 50% of applicants, it is only about 6.7% of 18 year olds. who end up going to colleges that are even that competitive. And I think for many of our

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community members, a college that accepts 50% of applicants seems pretty generous. We're looking at Cal last year accepted less than 12% of applicants. UCLA is at less than 10%. So I just I wanted to keep that in mind as a frame of reference that only six point seven percent of 18 year olds end up at what we would call a competitive college. I'm really interested in all of the other students to the one third who don't go directly to any kind of post-secondary training after high school. The you know the 80% who are going to four-year colleges, but are not going to a competitive college. I'm interested in all of these students. I'm interested in the 8.5% of Newark Memorial students who are not graduating on time. These are all of the students that I want to serve at the library. So this may look a little familiar to some of you who have seen this before, but the numbers are updated to the current year. I won't make you guess. I'll just tell you what this is. These are what US News has ranked some high schools that are familiar to most of us. The left-hand column are what US News claims are the national rankings. And then the right-hand column would be the Bay Area rankings of these schools. So I'll tell you what they are. Top to bottom, we have Mission San Jose. Next is American High School. The third one is Irvington High School, then James Logan, then Newark Memorial, and at the very bottom is my high school from Farmington, New Mexico. And to put this in context, U.S. News counts about 25,000 high schools in the United States. But 6,000 of them are so tiny, they have less than 15 12th graders. So they don't even bother looking at those. The ones that they actually try to rank order are about 13,000 high schools. So what are we to make of all this? Is there any validity to this at all? So Dr. Jack Schneider, PhD from Stanford and now professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, says these lists are meaningless. They're absolutely meaningless. The problem is a lot of our community members don't think so. So why are they meaningless? Because they're not actually measuring what students learn at school. All of these lists, what US News is doing and other similar websites, are basing their rankings primarily on one-time test scores. And the issue there is that only measures what a student knows at that moment in time and does not account for where they learned it, when, or how. This is the explanation of why you know, that's not a valid way of rating and ranking schools. So this is from one of Dr. Schneider's professors, Dr. Edward Hartl, now emeritus from Stanford, from an influential speech he gave to the Educational Testing Service, ETS. And if you look at the green area of the chart, The correlations that they find between student test scores and various variables, 60% are from out of school factors. Only about 10% they have found attributed to a teacher, with another portion a little less than 10% to other school factors, with about a quarter still unexplained. So it's not, you know, Dr. Hartle reinforces, it's not that schools and teachers don't matter, but there are so many other variables at play in students' lives that impact what their scores will look like, such as family income or the neighborhood income or parents' level of education. So this is from the Statistical Atlas, which draws on census data to create maps and charts. These are a little bit dated, so I think the actual dollar numbers are probably higher than what's shown here, but I think the overall trends are still what we see today. As you can see in the surrounding city, The neighborhoods where these other high schools are, are substantially wealthier than what many of our students in Newark face. I particularly wanted to look at the lowest income families. So this is the 20th percentile from the bottom. And in these other neighborhoods outside of Newark, what qualifies as low income is 80, \$85,000 a year or higher. which doesn't go a long way in the Bay Area, but is still much higher than what families receiving free or reduced price lunch are getting by on. And similar, if we look at the level of percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher in the surrounding city, there are neighborhoods where 75, 80, even 85% of adults have a bachelor's degree or higher. And I want to just point out, this is extraordinarily high. There are very few communities in the entire country where we have adults with that level of education. In Newark, the most recent numbers are 41% of adults overall have a bachelor's degree or higher. That's from the census. The national average is 34%. So I do feel like we need to acknowledge that there is a racial component in the Bay Area to all of this discussion. I wanted to talk a little bit about the model minority myth. So this is a notion that was first popularized in the 1960s and started out focused on Japanese-Americans, but now other Asian communities have been included. And it basically goes like this. If Asian immigrants are as successful as they are, why can't other racial or ethnic groups like African-Americans or Latinos be as successful? One of the problems with this myth is the assumption that immigrants from a particular country are typical of everyone from their country of origin. That's one problem. These books dispute that there is some broad Asian cultural traits that have led to the success of Asian immigrants to our community. What they both point to is the history of immigration law in the US, especially the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, which has favored high-skilled workers and family reunification since then. I'll go into a little more detail here. Some of the

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things the broad model minority myth glosses over is the range of income levels and education among Asian immigrants from different countries. It glosses over the struggles that immigrants from some countries, especially where there have been many refugees or asylum seekers, have faced. These immigrants have had a harder time financially and gaining education in the US. It also glosses over the variation from individual countries. So that book, *The Other 1% About Indian Immigration*, points out the variation from different states in India. A lot of our tech workers are from South Central India, whereas earlier waves of immigration were from the North, from Punjab and Gujarat. And especially from Punjab, the immigrants have tended to be less educated than from South India. And as I mentioned, so the model minority myth kind of pits different racial and ethnic groups against each other. So I wanted to highlight what we're seeing with Latino immigration. And it is interesting. So this is from the Pew Research Center that just in the last decade, we've seen some significant increases in the level of education among Latino immigrants. I'm going to focus on Mexico there at the bottom because for a long time, immigrants from Mexico were less educated than the average Mexican and also less educated than the average American adult. But recently, it's reached basically parity where people immigrating from Mexico have the same level of education as people who decided to stay in Mexico. The thing that those two books that I mentioned point out is that, especially among tech workers and health care workers from Asia, they refer to these immigrants, the high-skilled workers, as hyper-selected, that they are more educated, often much more educated, than the average Indian or Chinese adult. And also more highly educated than the average American. So that's what they point to as one of the major causes of success of these communities. So I did want to point this out as well. So this is from a talk by Dr. Schneider looking at further evidence at how one-time test scores are not a good reflection of what students are learning at school. Now, Dr. DeLeon, you may be able to answer this. I've been hearing that California will be publishing growth scores, looking at year-over-year progress, but I think this is not widely available yet. Thank you. So without going into too much detail here, we have these statistical correlations looking at the mean scores, the average scores, and how they correlate to students in these different demographic groups. And then the column in the pink box is looking at growth scores. I don't know where this data comes from, but this is something that Dr. Schneider had available. And again, without going into a lot of detail, what I just find really fascinating is we do see statistically significant, all of the numbers with the asterisks are considered statistically significant. And the value of the correlations with the mean scores are relatively high, some of them. That means that there's a large correlation. But what is so fascinating is if you look at the growth scores, there's still some statistically significant numbers, but the strength, the size of that correlation is much, much smaller. And the ones that do have a larger correlation, percent English language learner and percent special ed, I think we all agree, like we understand those students are going to have special challenges. But I just, I find it so fascinating that if we're looking at the progress that students will make in a year, as opposed to what they happen to know at that moment in time, students from all backgrounds are more or less equal in their ability to grow, to learn. So why is a librarian talking about all of this? Well, it's what I mentioned at the beginning, that we are hearing from many different voices in the community about how we should spend our time at the library, our time and our space and our resources. And I personally believe we should be here as much as possible to help the students and families who don't have other resources. I should comment on this slide. So this is from Dr. Jennifer Lee, who co-authored the *Asian-American Achievement Paradox*. And from their study, which was not comprehensive, but was looking at Chinese-American, Vietnamese, and Mexican-American families in the LA metro area. They concluded that, again, if we're looking at progress, growth, over time, in this case from one generation to the next, it is in fact Mexican-Americans who are making the biggest progress from one generation to another. She tells her own story that I think her mother, her parents are from Korea, her mother was a nurse and her father was a professor. So for her to become a professor is really just maintaining the level of education that her parents had. But we find immigrant families who come from a less prosperous background, there is significant progress from one generation to the next. So what does this mean for what we do at the library? We provide a homework help program every day with about 20 volunteer high school students. But I think what's unique about it and what is, you know, I've taken from all of this research for how we run this program, we no longer put it on the library website. We do not advertise the availability of homework help in the library at all. We rely entirely on two things. It's referrals from the Newark Parent Partner Office and also promoting homework help through the Newark Promotoras WhatsApp groups. That is the only way that we promote homework help because we really want to reach out to the students who need it the most

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and not have them crowded out by students who have other resources. We'll never turn anyone away if people walk in the library and find out we're holding it. Of course, everyone is welcome, but we're really targeted in the way we promote it. The other program I mentioned here is our summer youth ESL program for newcomers that we've now offered three years. I have a quick story. So last spring, Marta, one of our new staff who used to be a teacher in Mexico, overheard a middle school-aged boy speaking Spanish to one of our other staff. And so she engaged, because the other staff wasn't fluent, and found out that he was newly arrived from Honduras. And brand new to the US was starting Newark schools this year. And so we got the family contacts and we were able to get them into our summer youth ESL program, which ran for four weeks. I think it was four days a week. So it was 16 sessions with one of the Avanzando scholarship recipients, Fadio, who we were able to pay to run this program. So we had a handful of students, but we were able through our contacts to really tap into students who are brand new to the community and not speaking English. Another Avanzando scholarship recipient, Brian Lopez here, is a second year student at Cal State East Bay studying construction management and is absolutely passionate about sustainable construction. So we had him as a guest speaker for our weekly Manitos en Accion, Little Hands in Action program, which is held every Wednesday afternoon, all in Spanish. And this is the kind of thing we try to do is when we find people in the community who can be role models and inspiration for our families, we bring them in. And my final slide, my final example. So this standing is Francisco. He's one of our library staff. He is finishing his master's degree in library science this semester. But he started out as working in operations research for a biotech startup and decided he really missed working with people. So that's why he's becoming a librarian. But he's working here with our three paid teen makerspace interns. On the right, we got a grant from the California State Library. And on the left is another one of our staff, Irene, who is a computer engineering major. And together, they assembled a gaming PC for the library. So this was something Francisco has done on his own. He's a passionate gamer. But we really thought this would be a great hands-on experience for all of them, introducing them to computer hardware and just how it all operates together. So again, how do we take this background knowledge that I've I've researched about the community to really tailor what we're doing at the library to serve families who don't have other resources. That's what our mission is at the library. Thank you.

- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Any questions?
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] OK. You mentioned something about the boy from Honduras being a newcomer. Is there a way that, given that that's a summer program and it would give the newcomers a head start if they're going to be coming into the school in the fall, rather than happening to meet this boy at the library, is there a way that we can find out who some of these newcomers are and get them into your summer program?
  
- ▶ [ **Joe Stoner** ] I mean, I'm definitely open to it. And we had made an attempt at that the year before, getting referrals from the parent partner office. So I mean, that's something we have done. Families new to the community in situations like that, there's a lot of different details they're trying to figure out for their lives. So sometimes just getting that message passed on can be difficult, but I think it's worth trying.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] I'm wondering if when parents sign their children up for our schools and we see that they're newcomers and coming from another country.
  
- ▶ [ **Joe Stoner** ] Do you have a flyer? I can follow up on that.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Yeah. Is there anything that the school district offers in the summer for newcomers?
  
- ▶ [ ] I'm not sure.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] I'm thinking of how children who have gone to preschool come to kindergarten more prepared. So the more you can get children prepared before they come to school, especially if those early years, the better. And if we can identify them and find resources for them, I think that would be great. But I really

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- appreciate all of the statistics and the myths and the truths about learning and about how the teacher impacts compared to the home. I think that's all things we need to keep in mind when we serve our children and serve the entire child.
- ▶ [ **Joe Stoner** ] Yeah, again, Board Member Thomas, I would reinforce what Dr. Schneider and Dr. Hart will say. It's not that teachers don't matter. Teachers matter immensely. But if all we're looking at are end of year test scores, that's not really saying a whole lot about how much students have learned at school.
  - ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you. Thank you. I really appreciate your presentation, Mr. Stoner. Any comments?
  - ▶ [ **Matthew Jorgens** ] Yeah, thank you. I do appreciate your presentation. As someone who's been in the library pretty frequently while the homework help is happening, it's always great to see that and how many kids are getting help there. Thank you.
  - ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] And I really appreciate the fact that staff is working with kids with tangible implementations of building a gaming computer. I think that's so that they can see the step-by-step makings of how to put how engineering works on a computer, but my daughter did this at home with my husband and she loved it and she built her own computer, yeah. So I think it's really great to just introduce that to kids who normally don't get experience at home to be able to do that kind of stuff and to learn outside of their comfort zone and know that you can definitely make a mistake in trying to put a computer component together. But the best part of it is that you can troubleshoot it and try to resolve it in different ways. So I think that that hands-on experience is something very tangible. And that's a different way of learning. And a lot of kids do learn that way a lot better than just trying to memorize text. But definitely visual, definitely hands-on and tangible. So thank you so much for that.
  - ▶ [ **Joe Stoner** ] Thank you. I would just add that what I heard from the team was the basic assembly went fairly quickly, but it was the troubleshooting that's the challenging part.
  - ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] But that's where you learn the most, and that's where the growth happens. So I think that's really wonderful that that's part of your program. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you. OK, on to item D2, update on state of the High School District Superintendent.
  - ▶ [ **Penny DeLeon** ] Thank you so much. Members Nguyen, Mr. Jorgen, Member Thomas. OK, let's see here. Council Member Jorgen, I should say. Presentation was on. Did I do something? I promise I didn't touch it. So this is a presentation that I gave at our last board meeting, but I thought it would be good to review it here tonight.
  - ▶ [ **Penny DeLeon** ] It's up it's up again
  - ▶ [ **Penny DeLeon** ] Thank you.
  - ▶ [ **Penny DeLeon** ] Does that mean this won't work?
  - ▶ [ **Penny DeLeon** ] OK. I could go up there and manually do it, too, since I know the slides. Voila. Would you like me to come up there and get the?
  - ▶ [ ] Testing.
  - ▶ [ **Penny DeLeon** ] Oh, it does work. Well, hello again. All right. So tonight, I'll be giving a brief State of the District presentation. For those of you who have seen it, there won't be any surprises. However, I do have some really great news that we've gotten since I first presented this. So, you know, sometimes we just like to get the urgent information just out on the table and get that over with before we talk about our goals. And so aligned, and

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a lot of this is aligned to what Mr. Stoner just shared with you. So I'm going to go ahead and start with a couple urgent challenges that we have as a district. And I think this impacts everyone in our community. And we're asking our entire community for help. So this is the right place for this. So our first urgent challenge is we are in the midst of a dire nationwide teacher shortage. Many reasons for that. Part of it was we lost a lot of qualified teachers, a lot of retirees and resignations during the pandemic. It was a bit much for a lot of people. Most of us who lived through it can't believe we survived it, actually. But we did lose a lot of teachers and unfortunately haven't been able to recruit them back into the teacher preparation programs in our universities and colleges. So when in the past we have had shortages, we've been able to call our university partners and ask for Do you have anybody? Do you have interns? Do you have student teachers? Do you have teachers for us that need placement? They haven't been there. So what you're seeing is a chart of positions. The yellow highlighted positions are ones that are still unfilled in science. The rest are all long-term subs and or TOSAs. So we have now 18 vacancies still at this time of year, which is unheard of, many of those we did not even have long-term subs for up until just recently, the last couple of weeks. And what does that mean? And why did I put this slide up here? Why is this urgent? Well, number one, we do need everyone's help to spread the word. We are out and about beating the bushes trying to find teachers. We are using every resource we have to advertise for teachers. I think you have our flyers out front in English and Spanish here. If you know anybody who has a bachelor's degree, we can get you into a teacher program, or at least be a long-term sub. But the reason I say this, and I'm starting with this, is that people don't really realize the long-term effects. And as Mr. Stoner stated in his presentation, teachers do have a meaningful impact on students. They are those who are with our students every day, spending the most time with our students. And in terms of the school setting, have the greatest impact on our children. So we want to have highly qualified teachers in every single classroom and every position filled. When that does not happen because of the dire shortage we are in nationwide, not just here, every district is in this situation, what happens is then we use our normal daily subs to fill in as long-term subs, and then we don't have normal daily subs. And normal daily subs are the subs we have to fill in when teachers are sick, when they go to PD, whatever the case may be. When we don't have them, then our other teachers fill in on their prep periods. And they lose that valuable lesson planning time, that valuable grading time. And pretty soon, morale is down. Folks are tired. In September, they're already feeling like it's May because they're giving up their preps all the time. And so we've had a real push to recruit and a real push to get substitutes so that teachers wouldn't have to backfill. And we have many thanks to our wonderful Human Resources Department. Our interim executive director, Steve Burrell, who has done an all-out push, and we've been able to hire 22 certificated substitutes over the last month and a half, which is taking some of the burden off of our teachers. And so I say all of this to say that the longer it goes without highly qualified teachers in our classrooms you can imagine the impact on learning. And not just standardized test results, but any kind of learning. And I absolutely agree. And we'll talk about this later. I have a few things to say about standardized test results. They're not my favorite. But in any case, so that's where we are with that. And then there's another urgent challenge we have in our district. And I'll be real honest with you. We have a looming structural deficit in our district. Many, many districts throughout the state are facing what they are calling a budget cliff. The budget cliff is a result of ongoing declining enrollment. Nearly 70% of districts in the state of California are in significant declining enrollment. We are losing students like crazy post-pandemic. We began losing at a high rate during the pandemic, but a lot of districts were losing even before that because of declining birth rate, people moving to states that were a little bit more affordable, et cetera. So when you have declining enrollment, you have to match the reduction of expenditures and the reduction of staffing at the same rate or better than your declining enrollment, or you are very quickly upside down. It's a simple, well, I won't say it's simple, but it is basic expenditure versus revenue. And our students are our revenue in public education. And our staffing is about 80% of all of our expenditure goes to staffing. So you have to, as you're declining, you have to also make sure that your staffing is also being reduced equally through attrition, resignations, retirements, those kinds of things. That is a really hard thing to do. It's hard because when people resign or retire, They don't always retire in the exact place where you need the reduction. Or you get five people with the same credential who retire, and you can't. You have to replace four of them. Or let's say it's the band teacher and the choir director. You got to have one of each. You got to replace them. So it's not as simple as saying, as kids leave, we just reduce our staffing. It's a much more difficult puzzle. But in any case, Newark is in a spot with next year, we will have to reduce at this point. We're hoping we have

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an extra year. But at this point, we will have to reduce \$6 million from our budget in the 24-25 school year and an additional \$8 million in the 25-26 school year for a total of about \$14.9 million of structural deficit. People will say, oh, well, other districts all around us have this same issue, and they are also cutting their budgets. \$14.9 million from our budget of about between 70 and 80 is more significant than a district that has a \$300 million budget. a big chunk for us, and we are working very hard to plan. And one of the things we're doing is we've convened a district budget task force made up of community stakeholders to help us with that. But I wanted to bring those things up first, because I want everyone to clearly understand where we are when we talk about our district goals and some of the things that we have, the challenges we have to meet to be able to achieve our district goals, which are first and foremost, student learning. And we cannot take our eye off of that. We have to keep laser focused on student learning, which becomes really difficult when you don't have teachers and you are in a deficit. So we're going to keep working at that, though. That's, I guess, the magic ticket is how do we do that. So what we've done is, as a district, we have set some goals. Our wonderful board has guided us towards creating some goals for our district. And, of course, the first one is student achievement in English language arts and mathematics with a 2% growth, stretch goals of 5% for students in subgroups that are below the overall. These are, of course, you know, the growth is, of course, measured by our state standardized assessments because that's how we are measured. I don't agree we should be measured that way because there are multiple multiple measurements of student success. We haven't even begun to talk about personal success as people, what kinds of people are coming out of our schools. But as I think member Nguyen said very eloquently, many students learn by doing. All students actually, well, I won't say all, but a great percentage learn by doing. They learn so much better with project-based learning, hands-on learning. There is no measurement for that on any standardized test. There's no way to capture that. And the questions that are asked on the test often are asked in a way that students absolutely have no idea what they're asking because in class the information is not presented in that way and or they're doing it hands on in class and now suddenly they don't have that ability to demonstrate what they've learned on the test. Really, in my view, it's not the best way. It's not even the top ten best ways to measure student learning, but that is what our state has. And so that is our goal 1A. And then our second one will be to increase our college and career preparedness rate. This tries to get a little bit closer to what you were talking about, Mr. Stoner. There are eight different criteria for how a student can be counted as college or career ready. I'm going to say out loud in this room and anywhere anybody who asks me, I am not somebody who believes that every child needs to leave school ready for a four-year university. I would like them to have that as an option, but not every child needs to go to a four-year college. Let's put it that way. I'd like them to be ready. I'd like them to have that option, but I don't think that it is the right choice for every child, and not every career needs a four-year degree. I would like to see our students leave with multiple options to be able to do a wide variety of things when they leave. to have the choice, whatever option they want when they leave. If they want to go get an industry certification in Java, more power to you. Go right off and go work in a tech company the minute you leave. You want to go be a mechanic and the best thing for you is to go to the ROP digital automotive program and get a certification, great. If the best thing for you is to go to a community college and get an AA and then move on to a four-year later, perfect. I want kids to have all of those things, have all of those options when they leave us. So this particular indicator, the College of Career Readiness Indicator, allows us to count kids as ready through multiple different ways, like whether they met A through G, the A through G college preparation requirements, the number of students who passed AP tests, the number of students who got college credits, the number of students who completed CTE pathways, et cetera, et cetera. So there are multiple ways, and that's sort of getting a little bit closer to what we're talking about in terms of multiple measures. So this is something that we're working on, and I'm working very closely right now with the Mission Valley ROP Superintendent Hanson in trying to infuse more ROP into Newark Memorial, and also Bridgepoint and Crossroads. We need to have options for CTE and industry certs as many as possible to give kids more preparation for careers that they love. We want kids to go do what they love when they leave. So that's our first goal. And the things we're doing to work on it, professional development, we're expanding the STAR Academy to include CTE, ROP. Our counselors are being trained. Our special education teachers are being trained. We added a second goal for the board. Teacher and support staff recruitment and retention definitely needs to be its own goal. Tomorrow night, our interim executive director will present the recruitment plan and how we are going to fill our vacancies, our current vacancies. We also have, besides teachers and subs I've already mentioned, we

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also have various classified positions that impact us in a huge way. When you don't have a district cook, your person in charge of food services is cooking all day and has a tough time managing the kitchen. and all of the other multiple things that have to happen. We don't have a bus driver. Let me tell you, when you don't have a bus driver, every single sports team that has to go anywhere, every field trip, we have to pay a charter bus at \$2,000 a pop. We can't find a bus driver. We have advertised everywhere. Nobody has them. Nobody has bus drivers. Custodians, we can't find custodians. We've raised the pay on all of these. We can't find people who know people. Please ask them. Learning environment is important. Our schools need to be safe and clean, up to date and current. We need custodians. And then part of this will be a comprehensive plan for the 24-25 school year. And we'll be beginning now the recruitment plan for next year. And we're putting a lot of things in place that we haven't had before. including potentially an early notification bonus. We're going to work on doing that so that people who are retiring or resigning tell us early so we can get them back filled versus telling us in the summer. All of those things, going to in and out of state recruitment fairs, we're going to be doing a lot. So that's goal two. Goal three, safe, secure, healthy learning environments. We will be creating a public facing comprehensive safety plan. as well as dashboard to let our community know where we are in terms of school climate, in terms of how students are engaged in school every day. We will also be presenting a facilities maintenance plan for the year. What projects are we going to work on and complete this year? I think it's important. Every district has a huge 500-page, \$800 million facilities assessment master plan. Everybody has it. But when you can only get through the first three pages because your bond was \$60 million out of the \$800 million, then it tends to get shelved. And what we want to do is pull those projects out. What can we do this year? What can we do next year? What can we do the following year to make it manageable? So we're doing that. We have an attendance campaign going on. One of the good news pieces I wanted to share is that our district is recognized as a leader in our chronic absenteeism drive and initiative. We are one of the districts with the lowest chronic absenteeism rate. Chronic absenteeism in the state of California is defined as any student who is absent for 10% of the school year, which is 18 days or more. numbers skyrocketed during the pandemic and after the pandemic. Kids are staying home for no reason now. This district, Newark, has done a fantastic job. And last year, we were one of six districts in the state that maintained or decreased our chronic absenteeism rate. So that's a huge kudos for us. It was a really, really good push. We are also meeting with Hanover Research to help us with a community dashboard I had mentioned before, public facing, so that our community can be interactive and look at our data, all of our data. We have mental health service initiative and also a facilities initiative. Parent and community engagement and communication. We, you know, 3A, goal 3A is to convene stakeholder committees. We have begun most of those committees now. We've had our first superintendent's advisory council, which is a community council. Any of you who would like to be on it are more than welcome to be. We're about to start our inclusion task force of community members and stakeholders who would like to work on how we can get as many of our students with special needs mainstreamed as much as they possibly can be and as successful in the mainstream as they possibly can be. We've gone up on ParentSquare, which the great thing about ParentSquare notification system is that it translates in over 100 languages. Everything that comes in and everything that goes out So whenever we post on Parents Square, it translates into over 100 languages. And then they can send us a message back, and it translates back to English for us in their home language, which is huge for us. So we're really excited about that. We've begun our district bi-monthly newsletter. And also, our social media is improving. Let's put it that way. That's a huge piece for us.

 [ Penny DeLeon ] And then lastly, but by no means leastly, fiscal health. So we have convened a district budget task force. I think there are people in this room who might be on the district budget task force. And that is a group of community folks and stakeholders who are going to help us determine what our priorities are. Really what it is is a It's input around keeping cuts, which, let's just put it this way, we're going to have cuts, but keeping them as far away from the classroom as possible. So what that means, it's basically an exercise in prioritization and going through and looking at the things that are the most important to us and those things that maybe we can do without. What's effective? What has the biggest impact on the classroom? What do we need? What do we not need? I'll tell you in my experience is you can go through our expenditures, and you will find, for example, subscriptions to services that three people in the whole district use, and we're paying \$100,000. It's that kind of stuff where we need to say, OK, do we really need this, or can we find something free? So that's the process that



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our district budget task force has to go through, and they're going to look at all of those expenditures. That's really great. We have a budget consultant named Mike Birdberg who's helping us with that and many other things in our district. Oh, I forgot to take out the financial advisor. But anyway, we're going out for a request for proposal for auditors. We've already done that. Going out for real estate advisors. And we already went out for legal services and finished that process. We're kind of going back to the drawing board and really going out to a fair process and trying to get the best, most competitive deals for all of these services that we can get. And the reason we're getting a real estate advisor is we're going to start looking at our surplus properties as potential ongoing income in the form of leases, because we have a lot of surplus properties. So in any case, that's what we're going to do with that and hopefully get some finances there. And then I did say I have some great news. And so here are a few pieces. And I didn't put it on a slide, but I will at a later date. A couple of things. Newark Memorial High School was just honored as an AP honor roll school, which needs to be up on the marquee and everywhere. working on trying to advertise that. Very few schools actually get that, and that has to do with the number of students enrolled in AP classes, the number of classes, sections you offer, pass rate, all of those things. And we have been honored to be an AP honor roll school, so we're excited about that. We are also excited to announce that the California Association of Science Educators has selected one of our teachers, Rachel Bloom, as the upper grade science teacher of the year in the state of California. So Rachel Bloom from Little Old Newark Unified is the top upper grade science teacher in the state. And then also, additionally, Jacob Goldsmith from Newark Memorial has been selected as a featured speaker and panelist at the CASE, the California Association of Science Educators Conference, which is coming up, which is a huge honor. Only a few people get to speak, and he's going to be speaking about our STAR initiative. So we're really excited about that. I told you about the chronic absenteeism. And what was the other? recognition I wanted to talk about. I can't think of it off the top of my head, but it was something great. Trust me, it was great. But in any case, that is my presentation for tonight. I know it's a lot, but I did want to share our district goals and all the hard work we're doing. And I do have to thank our board and our entire staff and families for helping us every single day. I really have felt very welcome in this community as a superintendent, and we're doing a lot of good work, and I thank all of you. So, any questions? Nothing from me. You guys know this backwards and forwards. They have to listen to it all the time.

- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you for the presentation, superintendent.
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you for the presentation. Thank you. Okay. On to item D3, presentation on city plan updates. Art in Public Places, Parks Master Plan, Broadband Master Plan, Citywide Facilities Master Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Assistant City Manager of ORCA. Welcome.
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] Thank you, School Board Member Nguyen, Council Member Jargons, and School Board Member Thomas. All right, so tonight I will be talking with you about six master plan either developments or updates that the city is currently in progress of. And let's see. They worked the first time you asked me to use them. Should I try the remote control?
- ▶ [ ] Oh.
- ▶ [ **Matthew Jorgens** ] You're just having a good time today.
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] Okay, I'll start over. We have six master plans that we are in various phases of developing, either new plans or updating plans that we've had already in existence. They are listed here, cover various areas in the city, so it's pretty amazing we can do all of these six. plans at once and update all these various areas in the city. So I'll go through each one briefly, starting with our Citywide Facilities Master Plan. This plan addresses the city's current 24 building structures that we own and operate. It's a planning document, as all these are for long-term growth. They address at least five years of growth. And in this particular plan, we'll also look at the maintenance of our current city facilities. So it's done a building assessment of each of our facilities, and we'll make some suggestions and recommendations as to how we plan to fund the maintenance, as well as look at

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what else is needed that we currently do not have. So we are in our second phase of community engagement. The first one, we went out to the general public. We did some pop-up events. We had a meeting that we engaged the public in. And we also had an online survey. We received over 600 responses to the survey. And so that information was all gathered. And then that led us into phase two, which is currently where we're at in community engagement. And that's asking the community, based on the information already received, what are good locations and spaces for the types of activities they want to see city facilities provide. So if anyone would like to fill out that survey, there is the website address there. You can also go to our website, just our homepage at Newark.org, and there's a banner on the homepage that you can click on to reach this and other surveys. So the plan is to close that second phase of community engagement next month, and then a draft plan will be developed by our consultants, which we hope to present to the city council in December, and then hopefully final adoption in January. Next is our Art in Public Places Master Plan update. So our original plan was adopted in 2001, and this will be the first update of it. This plan and implementation of the plan is funded through fees that we collect on certain building permits in the city. We just completed a tremendous outreach effort. Located a lot of artists in our community and those interested in art. So now their plan is being drafted by our consultants. We plan to present that to City Council in November or December. Our citywide parks master plan update. This covers our over 130 acres of city parks. We do have a current master plan that was completed in 2017. In that plan, we had a few priority projects that were identified. Those projects were completed. Those include things like our dog park and our skate park. We also do have a survey open for anyone that would like to provide input on what they'd like to see. New amenities in our parks, park space, that is also at Newark.org. And we hope to have final approval of this plan in springtime next year. Our broadband master plan. This will be a review of our citywide infrastructure and where there are gaps in infrastructure in order to provide improved speed and access to Internet usage. So we do have consultants drafting a report, which will be completed in early 2024. We're very fortunate to City Council approved funding through the American Rescue Plan Act that funded this master plan and will also fund the beginning phase of implementation along with a grant we received from the state. So we have already a couple of million dollars dedicated to this project. Implementation will occur in phases. The plan will probably include tens of million dollars of potential upgrades. We will look, though, at partnerships and things we can do, grants as well, to mitigate the expenses of that. We'll be focusing on serving the under-resourced areas of the city. And we'll start there and then see what short and long-term needs we can accomplish with the current funding we have. as we look for grants and other opportunities. Next is our Active Transportation Master Plan. This is an update and a renaming of our Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. So this addresses all of the walking and biking throughout our community, ways to make it safer, infrastructure needs that will make it more inviting for people of all ages, abilities, and means. And of course, it includes the safe routes to schools that are all around town. So, again, this survey is actually no longer open, but it's interesting. If you go to the website, you can see the community input that we've gotten. There was an interactive map up there where people could put little walk or bike Circles in the areas of town that they felt needed improvement or needed additional Routes and so you can see that you can also get the contact information For Esther Jung our engineer in charge of the project if you have any input or questions on this project So we've just sort of we're wrapping up the community engagement phase now and we hope to have a completed plan Also in spring of next year And lastly is our local hazard mitigation plan update. So we currently have a plan. It's about five years old. It is a multi-jurisdictional plan. We're collaborating with the cities of Fremont and Union City, as well as Alameda County Water District and Union Sanitary District. So it's an incredible effort where we are all actually coordinating, and we'll have an update to the current plan. In our city, our community services coordinator, Richard Martinez, he is leading this effort for us as well as for Union City. I know Ms. DeLeon has already either been in touch or they're getting in touch with Mr. Martinez. part of this project as well as it will be in our comprehensive emergency action plan, which will be updated after this one. So this plan, we are currently identifying mitigation strategies. So we've had a few planning and public meetings where we've asked the public, what are your concerns or what have been your experiences around hazards such as earthquakes or other natural disasters that we experience? And we are identifying which ones are most prevalent or most likely in Newark, and then what are some mitigation strategies we can put in place to either prevent or have a lesser impact when things like earthquakes happen in our city. So that is expected also to be wrapping up in spring of 2024. And as I mentioned, Richard Martinez is also working, will be working on our comprehensive emergency services plan, which will coordinate efforts

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throughout the city when an emergency occurs, where shelters will be set up, how we communicate. So schools will be definitely involved in that as well. And that is all I have for you. My favourite quote from my favourite principal, unfortunately, who's no longer at Newark Unified School District is, make it a great day. Any questions for me?

- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you so much.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Member Thomas. Could you say a little bit more about the broadband plan? I know the city got a grant from the state to our Assembly member, Alex Lee, I believe. What does that pay for? What is the broadband hope for the future in terms of access, you know, equipment, community access, and so forth?
  
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] So the grant from the state will go toward our implementation phase. So since we are currently still drafting the plan, we don't know what exactly will be recommended and in what order and how we will address it. So our consultants have gone out and identified what infrastructure is in place. And they're currently identifying the gaps between our infrastructure and what's needed to provide a speedy and accessible broadband throughout the city. So this focuses on the needs of the city as well as community needs. The funding that we've received and our interest is to focus on the under-resourced areas. So when we receive the master plan, it will identify what areas of town those are, and then we will first look at those and focus on what implementation we can do in those areas allow to provide more access to folks that don't have it or to increase the speed of those that already have it.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] So is it envisioned that this would be some kind of a similar to Wi-Fi hotspots rather than, you know, access into homes like most homes have now?
  
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] Yeah, so it'll be the ability to connect, so it could be a number of things. devices, specifically providing devices to folks, but just laying the infrastructure out so if folks do have a hotspot, do get a laptop that they will be able to connect to the internet and they'll have that access.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you. Just a follow-up question. So is the city's goal to provide a free public Wi-Fi? Is that the main goal?
  
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] It is not the main goal, but that will be part of the plan, is how can we offer that? Where can we offer that?
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you.
  
- ▶ [ **Matthew Jorgens** ] Obviously, I'm really excited for these to come back to Council. Just briefly on the active transportation plan, my comment now would be let's be really careful to look at those safe routes to schools. Since 2017, there's been a lot of home construction in Newark, so a lot more new places where Newark students are living. With the fewer school sites and redrawing that map, they're going different places. So that's something we're going to kind of need to look at, again, with kind of new eyes and a very new situation. So let's just make sure we're taking careful care with especially that part of it.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you. And I just have a follow-up for Member Jordans. So I'm on the Newark ATP Advisory Committee, and yes, we are definitely looking at those points. They were brought up in the first committee meeting that we had last month. Great, thank you. And then I'm just really excited for arts in public places. I think that access to public art is great for the community and also the Parks Master Plan. I'm looking forward to seeing that and seeing if there's going to be plans for inclusive parks throughout the city. So, thank you.
  
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] That has come up already.

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- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] So, don't we already have... Didn't we get some funds to look at modernization of Old Town, what's the progress on that?
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] So we do have an Old Town plan and streetscape project coming up. Construction, I believe, begins in 2025. And so as we have the streetscape project, another project we're having is our central overpass project. We're going to look at how to incorporate art into those projects as we plan, and those plans actually come to fruition. Those are already part of the master plan update. Kind of a preview we have is that those will be part of the priority recommendations, as well as painting our utility boxes throughout town. So looking forward to that.
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] So one other point I just wanted to note, because I did see this and I just remembered it, but all the new bike paths that are being put in place, they look great. And I'm excited to use them. One day when I was driving back home from work, I noticed the kids are riding their bikes in and out, weaving through the pylons. So I'm hoping that we can do some educational awareness. And the worst part is that they were going against traffic. If the back wheel hits the pylon, you know, one of the cones, and they could swerve out into the street. So that's my main concern. But educating our community and our kids about, you know, bicycle safety, I think, goes along with having those bike lanes also.
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] OK. Thank you very much for your comments.
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Is there any plans for bike lanes along Cedar Boulevard? That's a pretty busy thoroughfare.
- ▶ [ **David Benoun** ] I'd be happy to follow up with you. As I sit here today, I don't recall of any specific plans on that thoroughfare. However, I am pleased to report that on the Thornton Avenue, there are plans for reconstruction of the entire thoroughfare, and that would include the installation of buffered bike lanes. The city was able to secure \$2 million from Congressman Khanna's office. through the federal government. And we're working on that project, and construction on that will commence in about a year, two years, three years, something to that effect. And that would be from the freeway all the way up to Old Town. At Old Town, we have the streetscape improvement project. And then following that, past that Willow area, we're looking at additional Thornton Avenue reconstruction. We don't have any funds secured at this point, but we're hoping that Congressman Khanna can help out in that regard.
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] I guess the last thing I'd like to say is regarding the city facilities master plan and the fact that the school district is embarking on looking at our facilities, I hope that there's going to be tight communications between the city and the district regarding our excess property and any mutual benefit that we can get from the mutual use of some of our facilities.
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] Yes, thank you.
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you so much. Thank you.
- ▶ [ **Lenka Hovorka** ] Thank you.
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] On to Item D4, update on School Resource Officer Program. City Manager Benoun.
- ▶ [ **David Benoun** ] Yes, good evening, Madam Chair, members of the committee. This is a relatively short presentation. a whole lot to report on. If this committee may recall, about six or seven months ago, the city had to suspend the school resource officer program as a result of staffing for our sworn personnel. Obviously, the city is fully aware of the importance of this program. What we have right now is a shortage, in addition to a shortage of teachers, we have a shortage of sworn officers throughout the state. What Newark is experiencing is is nothing that is outside of what everybody else in the Bay Area and the state is currently experiencing. We've had

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to suspend a number of programs as a result of our staffing levels. That includes special enforcement team, traffic team, units like that. And so unfortunately, the school resource officer succumbed to this, essentially this police officer staffing shortage. At some point, there is positive direction. We are trending in the right direction in terms of recruitment. We dedicated a sergeant to our recruiting efforts, and that is paying dividends. We have a lot of officers currently enrolled in various academies with various completion dates. Following the academy graduation, they then go through a rigorous training program here with the department before they become a solo officer. We do have some light at the end of the tunnel, but it won't happen anytime soon. As soon as staffing levels reach that critical point, one of the priorities, of course, would be to reinstitute this program. Just to reiterate, this has nothing to do with finance. The city does pay 100% for those costs associated with that school resource officer program. The city's been doing that for a number of years. So even if the school district offered to pay 50%, which is what is happening in the past, that would not solve the issue. This really is a staffing issue at this point in time. next year, certainly not any time in the immediate future. Frankly, probably more like next school year. We hope to have the re-institution of that program. In the meantime, staff is committed to the extent that we have available resources to sending officers to the high school based off availability and whatever we can to address the situation at this point as far as mitigation efforts. That's essentially all I have at this point. I'd be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Do we have any questions? Member Thomas? Any questions? Member Jordans? No, we're good. Thank you so much. City Manager McNew. On to Item D5, Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair.
- ▶ [ **David Benoun** ] If I may, so since we have some newer members, this has been a kind of a, there's no by-laws or anything in regards to the operation of this But we've had a longstanding tradition and practice to rotate between, just out of respect and comity, just kind of respect between the two jurisdictions. We've alternated between the two of them for chair and vice chair. So currently the chair is committee member Coyasso. We do not have a vice chair because the previous vice chair was a gentleman, Mr. Grindahl, who's no longer on the school board. And so if we had followed the practice and tradition, Mr. Gundahl would be the chair going forward and somebody from the city, a council member from the city would serve as vice-chair. So it's totally up to the committee's discretion. If you want to follow the previous practice, that is certainly acceptable. If the committee would like to go in a different direction, certainly now would be the time. This is a policy decision for the committee in terms of what route you want to go.
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] as being the logical next chair.
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Thank you, Member Thomas, for the confidence. You did a terrific job today. Thank you.
- ▶ [ **Matthew Jorgens** ] So I'll second that. That was a motion. I'll second it.
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] OK, that was a motion, and it's been seconded. I will happily accept. Thank you. And with that, I will nominate Member Jorgens to be the vice chair. And I know that we Now we would go back and have meetings at the district office, is that?
- ▶ [ **David Benoun** ] Correct. So the model had been previously to switch every year. The city's been hosting this now for almost two years. So we would recommend that starting in January with Ms. Nguyen assuming the role of chair of this committee, that would be a good turning point to move over to the school district office. School district office staff would be responsible for securing the YouTube and live stream and all that, as well as the minutes. Thank you.
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] OK. Yes, we have to vote on the.

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- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Do we have to vote?
  
- ▶ [ **David Benoun** ] Yes. Yes, the committee should vote on this matter.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] OK. Then I'll formally nominate member Nguyen to be our chair.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] And you seconded, right? Yes. OK. So roll call, please. Roll call vote on that. Committee member Thomas? Yes.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Yes.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Yes. And then I motion to appoint or nominate member Jorgens as vice chair.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] I second that.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] And roll call vote, please.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Yes.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Yes. Yes. Are there any public comments tonight? No, I see none. So we're going to go to F, future agenda items, F1, 2024 meetings. The meetings are going to be set January 22nd, the fourth Monday, April 22nd, the fourth Monday, June 24th, and October 28th. Are there any issues with any of those dates? Member Thomas, Member Jorgens? Okay, great. Any requests for future discussion items?
  
- ▶ [ **Matthew Jorgens** ] Nothing at this time.
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Member Thomas. Well, I'd like to think about it a little bit more on how to approach it, but I know there's money available at the state for preschool. We have Kidango. We have preschools that the city is offering. And I think if we can expand the number of of children in Newark that are in preschool at the age of three and four and hopefully going into TK, I think that will really go a long way toward helping those students be kindergarten ready when they enter our system. So at some point, I would love to see us look into some kind of a joint effort to see if we can increase the number of preschools available to our high needs English learner students, low socioeconomic students. So maybe in talking to staff, staff can be thinking about steps forward to seeing if there's a way that we can collaboratively move in that direction to increase the number of students, especially those that can't otherwise afford it.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] OK. Thank you. I have none at this time. So next is adjournment. May I get a motion to adjourn the meeting? So moved. Thank you. Motion made by member Jorgens. Second. Seconded by member Thomas. Roll call vote, please.
  
- ▶ [ **Kathy Slafter** ] Committee member Thomas?
  
- ▶ [ **Nancy Thomas** ] Yes.
  
- ▶ [ **Phuong Nguyen** ] Yes. Meeting adjourned at 7.27 p.m. Thank you everyone.