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2024-10-28, Liaison Meeting

Agenda



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- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] We'll do a voice vote on this. Yes. Yes. And I vote yes as well. We have nothing under old business today. And our first item under new business will be item D1.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] Under old business, can I ask a question? Yeah. I saw on the minutes that it was possible to join the event between the city and the school district. Has anything been planned or talked about?
- ▶ [**David Benoun**] If memory serves me correctly, we had discussed an event over the summertime, the Ash Street Community Barbecue, if that qualified as a joint event in community member Gwen's mind. I think she indicated yes, and so we did collaborate over the summer in, I guess, the tail end of July at Ash Street Park.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] OK. It'd be nice to have another event where it's joint effort.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] I missed the whole sermon.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] I'm glad that you're back. Yeah. So then under item, under new business, we've got item D1. How children are getting to school. Is there a presentation on that?
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Yes. I'm going to turn it over to our assistant superintendent, Jose Quintana. I don't know if you've met Jose. Jose is our new assistant superintendent of business services and serves as our CBO here at the school district. So I'm happy to have him on board. Jose, if you're ready, get started.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Absolutely. Thank you. So here at Newark Unified School District, we do have transportation. Department, and we do abide to the California Home to School Transportation Program. This program provides funding for school districts and county office of education for transportation services. And currently, to qualify for this type of funding, school districts must develop a plan that prioritizes low-income students and those in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade. The plan must also describe how the district will use transportation services to benefit students with disabilities. Currently, our funding, this program has reversed up to 60% of transportation costs, including fuel, new buses, and technology. It also includes cost of living adjustments, which is our COLA. I don't have control of that there. Yes, so. Oh, absolutely. They're right on there. So going back to the program being funded for districts and county office for education, for transportation services. The next slide would have on there the qualifications for school districts and county offices to prioritize low income students. and those in TK through sixth grade. The plan must describe how a district will use transportation services to benefit students with disabilities. I think that's the majority of emphasis here at Newark Unified. The next slide provides funding. 60% of the transportation costs are reimbursed. The other 40 through the general fund. But the 60% includes fuel, new buses, and technology, which is included in the COLA or cost of living adjustments. The next slide talks about basically where this was implemented, Assembly Bill 181 and amended by Assembly Bill 185. We currently at our district have two clean energy buses, 64 students in each bus, that is the capacity, and two electrical buses with 64 students at each bus with a total of 256 students that can be mobilized at any given time. The unfortunate part about this, we don't have any transportation bus drivers. We finally just acquired one that is doing local transportations as needed. But most of our services are being contracted through vendors, specifically for special ed transportation. And those are the home to school transport students in the special ed programs.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Absolutely.

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- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] So we have buses, but we don't have bus drivers.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Correct. Correct. We finally have a licensed bus driver who's doing local runs. So we do have one.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] So most of our students actually walk to school. Some of those are here at Newark Unified School District. And then buses are used typically for special events and for day-type trips.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] So when the high school, they go play games, football games, do they get bused?
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Yes, they do. And those are vendors. Now, we have contracts. We have a purchase order, correct. Gotcha.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] But they use their own buses, not ours?
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Correct. They don't use our buses. Usually if they're chartered, they use the vendors' buses, correct. Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you for being here. Thank you. Absolutely.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] So I know that at the school district where I teach, there is a longstanding partnership between the city of Cupertino and our district around exploring transportation for students and looking at all sorts of different options and how do kids go to get to school and their surveys and things like that. And if people are interested, I'd be happy to try to make introductions to the right people if we wanted to benchmark and look at similar things for our district?
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Absolutely. I can answer to that. Any context you might have that we can partner up with any AAs in the area? Absolutely. Transportation is part of business services. So yeah, I'd be more than open to it. OK, great.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] My interest here on kind of under the subheading about children in school is More on the walking and biking side, it's kind of where are they at, you know, what kind of, you know, from the city's infrastructure point of view, where do we need to be making improvements, you know, what's working, what's not, you know, where are the bottlenecks? So do we have any sense of that, like, you know, what's the percentage of kids walking to school, percentage of kids biking to school? Imagine the overwhelming majority are being driven to school. You know, where are we looking at, just, you know, as we start looking to make, you know, different safety upgrades to some of the infrastructure, kind of, do you have a sense, as the district, where we should be looking?
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Yeah, absolutely. That's a great question. So I don't have the numbers as far as the percentage of our students, but being that most of them are elementary schools, they are being driven to the school sites. But typically, a school district would have a partnership with transportation authority, whether it be county or city, that I'm looking into actually having those conversations with them and saying, hey, what can we do to facilitate access to our school sites? bus passes, routes that we can take, kind of just awareness in the community for our students to have that access to our school sites. So that's something we're planning on having a conversation with our local transportation authorities. So I have a great sense of this. I'm used to working with transportation authorities in most counties. So we would be happy to report in our future meetings.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] So I do go to my grandson over at Kennedy. And I see their bike racks full. I see the little kids pick up their bikes, and they have bike racks on both sides of the school. There is quite a few kids that do bike themselves to school. It's nice to see that.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Absolutely, yes. And that's something that I will follow up on, and what that percentage looks like. It's a great question.

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- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Although we are seeing fewer bike racks, that is something that we're going to need to look at when we do our active transportation plan, looking specifically at, a seven-year-old biking to school has very different transportation needs than other cyclists. And that's something that if what we're seeing can be worn out in the data, that's something that we're going to need to look at to make sure that we're making that trip as safe as we can.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] I think that's definitely looking at those routes for our school sites, where the pressure points might be at, what intersections are the most busiest. So yeah, I think that's something that we we can have mapped out that maybe get some assistance within the city or partnership of some sort.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Obviously, in the past, so that's something to just be aware of, because they do get some momentum going. So making sure that students are aware of it.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Yeah, my guess would be that we have more high school students.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] This morning, I came across one on Lafayette because I was coming to work. It was like 7, a little past 7. He was over going to the junior high. I was kind of making room for him. I wanted to make sure he was safe.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] And I think that's a safety concern, right? Because these e-bikes are at 20 plus miles an hour. And so those bring other safety concerns for conversation.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Because with the high school, we're looking at most of the high schoolers, we would be looking more at Cedar Boulevard and Mount Comitee. you know, make improvements there. With the junior high, there's a few more ways to kind of ingress there. So something that we'll need to look at. But it would be good to have kind of data on, you know, how many kids are walking and biking. And as we try to figure out what their needs are, so we can keep everyone safe.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Yeah, we kind of knew that this would open that dialogue to having those partnerships with our city transportation, county transportation authorities.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Thank you. I'm going to. Thank you member jorgins for running the I appreciate you continuing this
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Seeing none, we'll move on to item D2. And I assume there will be a presentation on item D2 as well.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] There is. D2 is on enrollment of our students. And looking at a little bit about our history, the past, and where we've come from, and where we're at today with our third enrollment numbers, which I would be able to tell you. We just recently shared this with our Board of Education. And so with that, I'm going to turn it over to Emma Scofield, who is our coordinator of student services and personnel services.
- ▶ [**Ana Scoville**] This is on, right? Good evening, everyone, and thank you for joining us today. My name is Anna Scoville, and I'm the coordinator of pupil services. Today we will be reviewing our district's current enrollment data, which as you know, you will see a pattern of decline in enrollment over the recent years. California has seen a consistent decrease in public school enrollment, with the most recent data showing a decline of over 40,000 students in the 2022-23 school year. The main contributors to this decline are decreasing birth rates, which result in smaller cohorts moving through the school system, and changes in migration patterns with more people leaving the state and the area than coming in and families leaving the Bay Area as well because of the cost of living. As enrollment decreases, so does state funding allocated to school districts, potentially leading to budget cuts and program reductions. So let's begin by taking a look at the enrollment trends over the past several years. So we're gonna start off with, actually, there's one prior to that. That one, thank you. So we're gonna start off looking the last 10 years where we're at. So as you can see, and I'm not gonna go line by line, but school year 14-15, we were at 6,196 students. The following year, we were at 6,013

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students. Most years we were down about 2%. Right here in 17-18 school year is actually the only year that our number increased by 0.84%. And then again in 18-19 school year, we dropped another once again about 2.99%. Then in 19-20, as you all know, the pandemic hit. that year we dropped 1.52. However, after the pandemic, next slide please, school year 2021, we dropped, sorry, 6%. Sorry, no, sorry, I take that back. So from 19, 20, 2021, and the biggest drop was from 2021 to 2022. So that was a 6% drop. The other big drop was the year right after, it was a 4.16%. And then in 23, 24 school year, we dropped 2.5%. Next. And the enrollment, our enrollment, total enrollment as of last week is 4,669 students. Next slide, please. So when looking over the past 10 years, we lost 24.6%, about a fourth of our students. That's a huge number. So we were down 1,527 students, which is about a quarter of our students. And when we are looking at ADA over the last years, again, once the pandemic hit, our ADA dropped as well. We're slowly going up, so this year we went up 1.2%, and we're working on increasing our attendance. Correct. Thank you. As we've seen, our district is facing a clear trend of declining enrollment, which brings both challenges and opportunities for growth. Addressing this trend will require a collaborative district-wide effort to strengthen our programs. enhance community engagement, and promote the unique benefits of our school and our school district. As we move forward, I encourage all of us to think creatively and collaboratively about ways to increase our district's appeal and to provide valuable input. Together, we can work towards stabilizing enrollment and securing a strong, vibrant future for our schools and community. Thank you again, and I welcome any final thoughts or questions.

▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] I guess just one question for me then. We see declining enrollment across the Bay Area. Isn't the Newark Unified a problem? It would be great if it wasn't. We could just say, hey, make different decisions here. No, it's a solid problem, but it's not, it's certainly not a newer unified problem. We're seeing it across the Bay Area. Are we seeing some cities that are, it's more of a sign, I guess, in my head, that the Bay Area is becoming more and more unaffordable for families to live here? Are we seeing cities doing things, are there some districts that maybe have, you're seeing less declining enrollment because cities are doing X, Y, and Z? Or is it just everyone's kind of in the dark trying to figure this one out?

▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] Or how's Dublin?

▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Because Dublin, their schools are growing. They are growing. But they're also putting in a lot more new housing. So their farming community is changing drastically out in that region. So that's really been where the new growth is here in the region.

▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] And when we put in housing, people complain because we're putting in more housing, there's more traffic.

▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Well, and I'm not anticipating you were gaining the amount of land that Dublin had to work with when they started growing out. So I was just curious if there's, I don't know if there are, but if there are any success stories, like what's happening where families are able to live in those communities?

▶ [**Ana Scoville**] So I am not sure. I do have meetings every month with student services directors from Alameda County. And I think we're all seeing very similar situations. Although I did hear one of our last meetings, Dublin was kind of not as much, but I think they're starting to see a little bit of a drop. They are starting to see that. So I think it's statewide. Like I said, it's California in the 22, 23 school year, they declined over 40,000 students in that statewide.

▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Districts in the state of California are declining. The areas that you see growth tend to be more inland or up in the high desert regions where they actually are growing and putting in more manufacturing in those directions. And so you're seeing more affordable housing out there. That's definitely the challenge right now for us here in the Bay Area. And obviously we're along with a good company with other school districts as well.

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- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] That's something that should be talked about here because it's certainly not just a school district problem. It's going to have to be something that we're going to need a full community solution on. So I appreciate the presentation.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Appreciate you. Thank you.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] So we'll move on to item D3 on the new business, FAQ. I guess measure LL and measure O is going to be separated together.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Do you want me to really just put it on here just in case there are any questions from the committee members that you might like to ask us about? That maybe if you've had questions or if you've had someone that's come to you that's got questions on either measure, we'd want to be able to help filter that. But I realize all of you are very versed on both of those issues.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] So I can start a discussion if you have questions over here. Actually, for our
- ▶ [**Phuong Nguyen**] Just for our community, I know that maybe families in Newark and who are part of the school district aren't very versed in Measure LL versus Measure O. City Manager Bernou, could you give us a little bit of an overview of LL? Thank you.
- ▶ [**David Benoun**] Sure. I'd be more than happy to. It sounds like the microphone is on. Measure LL is a measure that was placed by the Newark City Council on this November ballot for voter consideration. The city currently has a hotel tax. Technically, it's a transient occupancy tax. And what it essentially does is it taxes those who are staying in our hotels at the rate of 10%. So for every dollar that a guest pays towards their hotel rate, that rate is 10%. They pay an additional 10% to the city as the hotel tax. This measure, if approved by voters, would increase the hotel tax from 10% to 14%. It's a general fund tax, a general service tax, excuse me, general hotel tax, meaning that the funds could be used for any legitimate government purpose. The funds would be received by the city's general fund, into the city's general fund, at the rate of approximately \$2.1 million per year in additional revenue. and those are projections that we currently have at this point. The council has identified a whole host of needs that could potentially be used to fund, that could be funded by this revenue stream. There's a whole host of master plans that the city is currently pursuing and in various stages of development. In fact, at last week's council meeting, the council met and discussed the city's parks master plan update for approximately two hours. There is also a facilities master plan that the council just recently approved. There's a serious need to replace the city's old fire stations. We currently have three, two of them are very outdated. One was built in 1980, and that is actually in worse shape than the one that was built in 1966. These funds could be used for that purpose. The measure would require independent oversight, so like the city's current Measure GG that was used to fund the construction of the city's Civic Center. There is an independent committee that reviews all expenditures made under this measure. Measure GG as well as Measure LL should that pass. And that independent committee will review those expenditures to ensure that they are done in compliance with all laws, the state law as well as the proposed text of the measure. Monies would be required to be spent locally here in Newark. Monies would not be allowed to be taken away by Sacramento. That is in a nutshell. I'd be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.
- ▶ [**Phuong Nguyen**] Thank you.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] I'd like to make it clear that our residents will not be taxed on anything. It is strictly for people visiting and staying in our hotels.
- ▶ [**David Benoun**] That's correct. It's not a tax on any Newark residents or People who live here in our community, it's for people who are staying at hotels in Newark. Currently there are 11 hotels in Newark. We have about 1600 hotel rooms in our community. And those folks who come in and stay in those rooms would be subject to the tax. I'd also like to note that it did poll well. The city hired an independent third party to commission

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a public opinion poll earlier this year in the springtime. And that came back at 64% favorability.

- ▶ [**Phuong Nguyen**] Just a follow-up question. So for residents who choose a staycation at the hotels, are they subject to the tax?
- ▶ [**David Benoun**] I did ask that question many years ago when it was very, very hot. I elected to stay at a Newark hotel to take advantage of their amazing and totally awesome air conditioning. No, unfortunately, to have an exemption for Newark residents would potentially run afoul of some legal issues. And so the city attorney advised that we not make an exemption for Newark residents.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Thank you. I just felt that it needs to be clarified. So thank you. and talk through some of the changes that might happen in classrooms, that would be really helpful.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] I saw that. Kind of wonder what that means. I think for years and years and years, and you'll probably still see it for a while, that our classrooms still look very traditional. They tend to have desks with just basic seating, row seating for the most part. Some have gone to some tables that are primary grade levels. But really, when you look at 21st century, you're now also blending not only books and materials, but you're also blending many of the computer skills that have to come forward with it. And so with that is technology, technology infrastructure that needs to happen. Also, as we shift into more hands-on learning with STEAM learning, to be able to work with that, those would be some of the areas that we want to help strengthen and make sure that our facilities are up to the standards that we would need to be able to offer those kinds of services, and also be competitive with other surrounding school districts.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] It's good to hear someone who went to Newark schools in the 21st century and felt like I was in 21st century classrooms at the time. It's good to hear that we're doing some good improvements there. I have the opportunity to do so.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] To add to that, and it's not just technology or STEAM, but rather safety around the campuses, right? Fences that keep our students in and keeps intruders out, right? But also upgrading some of our sites with HVAC systems, with anything with PA systems, we still have the overhead projectors that are being utilized where primary and secondary screens are used in most LEAs. So those are things to look at as well. So I'll just add to it.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Any other questions on either of these measures? If not, I will see if there are any questions in the public about either Measure LL or Measure O. All right. All right, now we can move on to agenda item E, public comments on any non-agendized items. So if there's any member of the public who would like to speak on an item not listed on this evening's agenda, now is the opportunity for you to do so.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] Single file, please.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Not all at once. Seeing none, I guess we'll move on to agenda item F, which is future agenda items. I would like to see more collaboration with the city of Newark in terms of manufacturing week. I think that
- ▶ [**Phuong Nguyen**] It would give a great opportunity for us to maybe start a program with the city and encourage students and also the local manufacturers in Newark to be able to have students come and intern for the week or some sort of shadowing program so that students could have that opportunity just to see outside of high school and in the classroom what a business structure or manufacturing business looks like from that point of view. Thank you.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] One of the things I would like to add is we are actually working very closely in collaboration with the police department on our Renhaid fight. And so I think to do a presentation in the near future on that as to what we're doing for training in collaboration with our police department might be a nice update for everybody

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here. It's exciting.

- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] Would that make sense to do, looking at our future, needing to do more at the end of the school year? I know I'm anticipating a update now that we've been able to bring back the school resource officer, and just update on how that's going. And it makes sense for me at least to wait out the year to see, get ourselves in a position where we can say, this is how it's going. We need to make improvements to make improvements there, not to rush to any kind of decision making.
- ▶ [**Tracey Vackar**] Yeah, at this point, we're just in the process of getting ready to go out and do training at all of our school sites. So just to make an awareness and to make you and the community aware.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] I think we can, if we could do that in June and have just a longer, hopefully very positive update from our police department on the collaboration that's happening there. Anything else? Then we'll get item two, which is our future meeting dates. The next year, which would be January 27, April 28, June 23, and October 27. Before we close, I would just like to thank Council Member Pedraza for your time here. And heading towards retirement, you've got two more council meetings left. And this is your last one of these. I want to thank you for everything you've done on this board and the council. It's always making me smarter.
- ▶ [**Sucy Collazo**] I want to say it's been a pleasure. being able to serve, I've enjoyed every single minute of it. It's been a pleasure serving with everybody.
- ▶ [**Phuong Nguyen**] Yes, thank you so much, Dr. Quay, for your service to our community and also being a part of the liaison committee for all these years. We really appreciate your thoughtfulness and kindness and just collaboration. So thank you so much. You're welcome.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] And with that, I will close the meeting.
- ▶ [**Matthew Jorgens**] It looks like it is 6.30 through.