

Minutes  
Clark County School District  
Meeting of the Board of School Trustees  
Edward A. Greer Education Center, Board Room  
2832 East Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, Nevada 89121

Work Session

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

4:01 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present

Brenda Zamora, Vice President  
Tameka Henry, Clerk  
Lorena Biassotti, Member  
Linda P. Cavazos, Member  
Lydia Dominguez, Member  
Ramona Esparza-Stoffregan, Member  
Adam Johnson, Member  
Emily Stevens, Member

Members Absent

Irene Bustamante Adams, President  
Isaac Barron, Member  
Lisa Satory, Member

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Schools

Trustee Zamora:

Afternoon everyone. We will be getting started. Hello everyone. I would like to welcome everyone today. I am Vice President Brenda Zamora, and I call this work session of July 2nd to order. The time is 4:01. I would like to remind everyone to please silence your electronic devices.

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is territorial homelands of the Nuwu-the Moapa Band of Paiutes and the Las Vegas Band of Paiutes.

**Flag Salute**

Trustee Zamora:

All right, we will start with our flag salute. Trustee Johnson, can you please lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance?

Trustee Johnson:

Yes.

**Adoption of the Agenda**

*Motion to approve the agenda with the following changes, reference material is provided for item 2.04 Artificial Turf Conversion Projects.*

*Motion: Stevens Second: Cavazos Vote: Yeses-4(Cavazos, Dominguez, Stevens, Zamora); Not Present-2(Biassotti, Henry)*

*This motion passed.*

Trustee Zamora:

Before I open item 1.02, is there anyone who did not get a chance to fill out a yellow card? Okay. I will be closing that section now.

Trustee Stevens, will you make a motion to approve the agenda?

Trustee Stevens:

Sure. I would like to make a motion to adopt the agenda with the following changes: reference materials provided for item 2.04, Artificial Turf Conversion Projects.

Trustee Zamora:

Would anyone like to second? Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. I will second that motion.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Please cast your vote.

Thank you. That is 4-0.

## **2.01 Annual Membership Renewal - Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB).**

Discussion and possible action on approval to pay the annual membership of the Clark County School District in the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB), for a total not to exceed \$33,877.38, to be paid from FY26, Cost Center 1010001002, G/L Account 5810000000 Dues and Fees, Fund 1000000000, effective July 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year, is recommended. **(For Possible Action)** [Contact Person: Irene Bustamante Adams] (Ref. 2.01) *(According to Governance Policy GP-17: Cost of Governance)*

*Motion to adopt item 2.01 Annual Membership Renewal - Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB).*

*Motion: Esparza-Stoffregan Second: Johnson Vote: Yeses-5(Biassotti, Cavazos, Dominguez, Stevens, Zamora); Not Present-1(Henry)  
This motion passed.*

Trustee Zamora:

I look over to my colleagues. We'll be moving on to item 2.01, annual membership renewal with the Nevada Association of School Board, and I will be actually calling in our board liaison for more information.

Joe Caruso:

Good afternoon, Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert. My name is Joe Caruso for the record.

Joe Caruso:

Trustees, this afternoon we have agenda item 2.01, Annual Membership Renewal for Nevada Association of School Boards. For discussion, possible action on approval to pay the annual membership for a total not to exceed \$33,877.38. If approved, the funding will be paid for from the board office budget as funding is available in the dues and fees line item as well as the other professional services line item to cover the expense.

As this item is under \$50,000, District Regulation 3312 allows the board office to submit the invoice for payment to the purchasing department, which is what occurred in 2024. However, Trustee Bustamante Adams has asked that this item be placed on the agenda so that the new trustees are aware of the annual membership fee.

For historical perspective, the membership fee for 2024 was \$32,264.17, and in comparison, to the 2025 invoice, there was a 5% increase in the amount of \$1,613.21. As noted on the attached reference material, the NASB board of directors agreed to increasing member dues at a reduced rate for fiscal year 25-26, which has started yesterday, to address the rising costs. And the reduced rate, just so you know, is 5% versus the initial proposed 8% that they discussed.

So, at that time, I'm glad to answer any questions regarding this agenda item.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Mr. Caruso.

I failed to mention that if anyone would like to do public comment, you are allowed to do your yellow card now. Okay, perfect. I'm closing that section now.

Any questions, members? Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Thank you, Mr. Caruso for bringing this forward. I know oftentimes we get questions about the cost, how is that calculated? And I know that different organizations do it for different possibly student population or the kind of services rendered. So, do you have any information on that?

Joe Caruso:

Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan, to your question. So, they do base it, it is the size of the district. So, we are the largest in the state, so we do pay a larger rate than other districts. How they calculate it specifically, I would have to go back to NASB and get the exact breakdown on how they get to that number.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you. I was just wondering. I know that Vice President, you are one of our representatives on NASB. If either you or Mr. Caruso could just give a brief description of the services that NASB provides for us.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, of course. I am very lucky to actually sit on their executive board. And NASB, I have been in their committee, I was appointed since I got on two years ago, so I've learned a lot. NASB is very good at holding monthly trainings for everyone. It is a one-day training, usually on a weekend, which I appreciate and I know a lot of the board members previously and now appreciate because it is on a weekend so it doesn't interfere with our day-to-day work, and they're very intentional in that.

Some of the trainings that we have done that have really stuck with me just all throughout is one about cybersecurity. And even though we as trustees in this board, we don't really get into the nitty-gritty of that stuff like other board members do across the state because they're much smaller districts. Right? But it's something you learn and at least it helps you create questions as our cabinet is presenting... As they're presenting, we at least have an idea of what they're talking about, and would be able to ask the questions. It's just very informative.

I know the committee gets together the day before the training, and we're just going over... One of the things we just did was focus on our legislative priorities as a whole, and this makes us stand as a unit in the state of Nevada. So, it's very much of all the board members get together. We agree. We say this is what we want. I will share one of the examples was free school lunches for all students in the state of Nevada. That was one of our priorities that we all came together to discuss. As a committee, we presented it to everyone else, and just gave them updates throughout.

So very informative. Many trainings. You are allowed to choose if you want to attend or not. I appreciate it's very flexible in that way. Joe, I don't know if you have anything else to add.

Joe Caruso:

Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert. Trustee Zamora, to your point. A great overview. I think the key piece to remember is you as trustees are required by Nevada Revised Statute to have training in your first and third year. So, they're really the car to drive us to the training green light, or destination we'll call it. So that's one piece. They also offer the certified public official certification, which is something that trustees are able to do besides mentorship. And then, of course, the statewide advocacy that Trustee Zamora talked about, especially with the legislative sessions.

We've been a member for many years. So, the recommendation, of course, is to renew. It is based on fiscal year, which starts yesterday, July 1 through June 30th.

Trustee Zamora:

That was a really good question, Trustee Cavazos. I would like to add. At the end of the year in December, we actually have a convening statewide. We get together. We award district leaders in the district, our staff administrator of the year, and so on. We also show some appreciation to the board members across the state of Nevada as well, and that all is collective work.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you so much, both of you. I thought that was excellent. I just wanted to add too that they've been very helpful, and new member orientation also with their training. So, I just want to put in that that has been a big help to us. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Any other questions? Okay. And I have no public comments, so I'm looking. Anyone have a motion? Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. No slip today on that. I'd like to make a motion to adopt 2.01, the Annual Membership Renewal, Nevada Association of School Boards.

Trustee Zamora:

Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

I'll second.

Trustee Zamora:

Please cast your vote. And that is 5-0. Thank you.

## **2.02 Annual Membership - National School Boards Association.**

Discussion and possible action on approval to pay the annual membership of the Clark County School District in the National Association of School Boards (NSBA), for a total not to exceed \$14,975, to be paid from FY26, Cost Center 1010001002, G/L Account 5810000000 Dues and Fees, Fund 1000000000, effective July 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year, is recommended.

**(For Possible Action)** [Contact Person: Irene Bustamante Adams] (Ref. 2.02) *(According to Governance Policy GP-17: Cost of Governance)*

*Motion to not take action on item 2.02.*

*Motion: Dominguez Second: Biassotti Vote: Yeses-2(Biassotti, Dominguez);*

*No-4(Cavazos, Henry, Stevens, Zamora)*

*Motion failed.*

*Motion to accept as presented.*

*Motion: Esparza-Stoffregan Second: Cavazos Vote: Yeses-3(Cavazos, Henry, Zamora); No-3(Biassotti, Dominguez, Stevens)*

*Motion failed.*

*Motion to table until the full board is present.*

*Motion: Stevens Second: Biassotti Vote: Yeses-4(Biassotti, Cavazos, Henry, Stevens); No-2(Dominguez, Zamora)*

*Motion passed.*

Trustee Zamora:

Before I move on to agenda item 2.02, if anyone in the public is willing to do a public comment, you may fill out a yellow paper now. Do we have any? Nope. Okay, I'm closing that section now and throwing it back to Mr. Caruso.

Joe Caruso:

Good afternoon, Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert. Joe Caruso for the record. This afternoon we have agenda item 2.02 Annual Membership, National School Boards Association. So, we just did the Nevada Association of School Boards and NASB. This is the National School Board Association, NSBA.

For discussion and possible action on approval to pay the annual membership for total not to exceed \$14,975. If approved, the funding will be paid for from the board office budget as funding is available in the dues and fees line item as well as other professional services line item to cover the expense. The membership proposal was previously included as part of the governance professional learning agenda item that was discussed at the regular board meeting on January 9th. So, if you remember we had two proposals on there. The board then voted to contract with Dr. Alsbury for the governance professional learning, and the discussion at that meeting was interest in possibly becoming a member of the National Association, again, NSBA.

The first attachment reference A outlines the membership for the current membership cycle starting on July 1st. Again, fiscal year, July 1 through June 30th. The second attachment reference B is a document that outlines the organizational federal priorities of NSBA.

On a historical, the district was many years ago, as we talked about in January, a member of the National Association. We did have some trustees attend the conference last year, last fiscal year, I guess I should say, earlier this calendar year. So that might be a good point to talk about the advantages. This is an opportunity to become a member of the National Association. If you look at the proposal reference A, it does give you a breakdown on the discounted rates for travel if you do attend the conferences and other opportunities that they have. I'm happy to answer questions at this time.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Mr. Caruso. Any members have any questions? Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

I just wanted to see possibly if there's anybody on our board that has maybe a better understanding of what NSBA offers the National Association as opposed to the State Association and also to our present membership and the Council of Great City Schools.

I don't know if Vice President would like to do that, or Mr. Caruso would like to do that. I guess I'm the questioner tonight.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Cavazos. So, because we don't have a membership with NSBA, I've only been attending their conferences with a few of you. I think that's something Trustee Johnson, and I have bonded in attending. And then we recently also started attending CUBE, which is the Urban School District Conference. That is separate. They have been very informative for myself. I don't know as a whole what else they offer because I wasn't here when we were members back then. But the difference that I feel between the other membership we're in is very much of this is focused on bigger districts. And that is something that we are the fifth-largest school district, and we are in spaces with... we have Texas, bigger states that are out there that can relate to us.

I will mention just a story, if I can. When I attended a conference recently, they were like, "How many students do you have?" And I'm like, "We have over 300,000." And I swear I felt like they looked at me like I was crazy. But it's because it is not normal to hear that for school district. So, in the spaces with NSBA, we get to really bond, talk about what it looks like to really deal with bigger districts and the amount of schools and students that we have.

So, I don't know if that helps a little bit. Mr. Caruso, I don't know if you have anything else to add?

Joe Caruso:

Madam Vice President, members of the board. Superintendent Ebert. Joe Caruso for the record. So, if you refer to reference A, it does talk about in the second paragraph that it's their 58th year. It gives a high-level overview of their mission to create opportunities for board leaders to gain knowledge and skills necessary to be effective policymakers and advocates for students in urban, rural, and suburban districts around the country.

If you remember, in January, we had Valerie Carty from NSBA on with us. She provided a similar document to us then. CUBE, which stands for the Council of Urban Boards of Education, helps urban school board leaders improve their effectiveness by creating opportunities for them to get informed about strategic policymaking to address the unique challenges they face at the local level, remains committed to closing the achievement and opportunity gaps, and educating students in racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse settings.

It does do a breakdown of the enrollment, and of course because of our size, we're at the larger tier. And then on the second page, it gives a great overview of general benefits of what the membership entails. So, talking about different webinars to discounts on conferences and trainings. And then, of course, they have that board governance piece as well, which we've obviously contracted with Dr. Alsbury for, but they offer that service if the board chose to.

Joe Caruso:

So definitely a larger umbrella. I know that NASB, N-A-S-B, Nevada Association of School Boards, did have the National Association at their December conference. I think some of you actually met Ms. Carty in person there. They've kind of realigned together as one. So that's bringing kind of a shift back to the state as well.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you so much. And yes, I did attend. I think a few of us attended the CUBE Conference that was at the Bellagio.

Again, I want to reiterate what Vice President Zamora said: that it's kind of like a larger umbrella view of the urban perspective. As far as the Council of Great City Schools, we've belonged to them for years, and they've done a great job with a number of different topics, but they have schools as small as, what is it, 70,000, something like that, as far as membership. And this presented a larger view of the unique perspectives from urban school districts that were about our size, as Vice President Zamora said. So, I feel that would be a great advantage to add that perspective to our overview and basically our perspective for our district, especially as we go forward with so many new and great things that we're doing.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Cavazos. Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. I just want to remind my colleagues of a letter that was sent out by the National School Board Association in 2021, September 29, 2021. It was sent to President Biden at the time, essentially calling parents domestic terrorists. And I think this was the beginning of the weaponization of the Department of Justice against parents.

Many parents were put in jail, were incarcerated because of this. I think that we should not forget that there was a time that this organization was utilized against parents, and utilized against the First Amendment in their right to speak up on how they believe that their children should be educated. I just want to read a quote from this letter.

It says, "These acts of malice and violence and threats against public school officials have increased. The classifications of heinous actions could be the equivalent to the form of domestic terrorism and hate crimes."

And they were referencing parents coming to school board meetings to advocate for their kids. So, I just want to kindly remind my colleagues of their previous actions.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Dominguez. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregen?



Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. So, I do have a question, but before I ask it, I do want to give a bit of perspective because I did participate in the CUBE conference that was here, and I found such great value. And it wasn't just that it was a cross-section of large urban districts. We have to remember we have rural schools, and that organization has access to a lot of rural schools and districts. I will say honestly that having connected with some of the rural community beyond Nevada has been very insightful for me as a trustee. I've still been in communication with some of those trustees outside out of the state.

So, I'm going to say to you that it's very much more expansive than just large urban districts. They also have access to the advocacy for looking at socioeconomic status of our students. So, I think it's something that we need to not forget, like there are other aspects of what that organization brings.

My question is on page 2, Mr. Caruso, is this fee inclusive of all the benefits that it's talking about where it says CUBE exclusive benefits? If we were to decide to go with the membership, we would get an annual conference complimentary, we would get an NSBA. Is that all-inclusive of all those items 1 through 5, inclusive of purchasing the membership.

Joe Caruso:

Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, so the bottom of one talks about the annual membership fee for 14,975 for the membership cycle. And then as a member, exclusive benefits, let's see, governance teams, superintendents, school board and district support, I need to clarify that with Valerie just to see. But I believe everything that was listed, from my understanding, it does count as the exclusive benefits, because the email that she had sent me, let me just pull that out real quick, did state outlines the membership for the cycle. So, that was inclusive of the fee, but I can clarify with her for sure, just to make sure.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan: Yeah, just because it's a lot with that that's being added, which is a benefit to us being a part of that, because there's some membership fees, there's some complimentary webinars. I mean it's not just conference things, but it's that networking that we need to grow ourselves as trustees and that, like you said, the requirement for professional learning. So, I don't have a vote, but I have a voice and I would love to see us to be continue that conversation in the networking, not just for urban, but for our rural schools as well.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Vice President Zamora. And as usual, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan took some of the words out of my mouth here, but this is very true that this is a very diverse district and this organization presents some unique perspectives having to do with the type of large, diverse districts. So, not to take away from any of the rural districts, but they present an overall perspective.

Trustee Cavazos:

And in regard, with respect to my colleague's reference to the letter sent in 2021, that letter was sent after there had been numerous attacks on elected officials. That was in 2021 when I was the president and I was one of the school officials that was attacked. The letter was sent. The letter was sent before that personal thing happened to me. They walked it back. That letter was walked back and they apologized in October of 2021. They explained that they were talking about as far as safety and what the actual purpose had been.

So, I think that is something that we are not going to debate here tonight, but as it was brought up by my colleague, I wanted to give a little bit wider background on that. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Cavazos. Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:

Thank you, Madam President. I think the word "attack" is being used loosely. As a parent, that was addressing the board sometimes, especially in contentious times. There was a lot of questions, a lot of blaming that was coming from parents and that wanted answers. So, I disagree strongly with it being cast as an attack, because parents felt attacked themselves. I also did have a question for Mr. Caruso. Under general benefits, I see that the list is longer than actual benefits for members. So, for the general benefits, we would be enjoying those without having to buy the membership, the one through 10?

Joe Caruso:

Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, I'm sorry, Trustee Biassotti, to clarify, so the general benefits, one through 10 come with a membership. Is that what you're asking? I'm sorry.

Trustee Biassotti:

No, I wanted to know what comes with us just being in attendance and not having to purchase the membership.

Joe Caruso:

Okay. Sorry, now I understand. So, the intent is, the proposal is to have the additional advocacy and the support to be a part of the organization. You can still attend the events, which the trustees have shared that they've done, you would just pay the higher rate versus if you're a member district, you would pay a lesser rate. NASB, Nevada Association of School Boards, works very closely with the National Association, but the district itself is not a member. So, again, you'd still have to pay that difference in price.

Trustee Biassotti:

Thank you. And I do see the price difference is \$10, so I wanted to know what exactly is the perks you get as a member other than the E-newsletters or I believe that's actually anyone can subscribe to that? I just want to know what comes with that price tag other than... Just if we can attend without being official members and forego the 14,000, I'd rather do that. Thank you.

Joe Caruso:

Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, I'm sorry, so the general benefits are one through 10 and then the exclusive benefits because your CUBE is part of that NSBA, so that's what that whole package is and I can get that in writing from Valerie as a follow-up just to make sure. But that was what the proposal was, is that once the district pays, then this becomes part of their package that they receive. I understand your question of whether or not to be a membership. So, remember, the board had this discussion in January that they wanted to bring this back as a discussion point because there was interest in January. So, that was the whole intent of bringing this item back today, just to have it-

Trustee Biassotti:

I guess what I'm trying to find out is what is the difference between being a member and a non-member? What benefits do you enjoy as a member that you don't just being in attendance?

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Biassotti. I do want to also mention us, being a member, basically gives us a seat at the table as well. So, we also get to, if you see at the bottom of page two of three, even something as it might seem small now, but nominating, we have the ability to nominate someone for some awards that are national, and that helps us also be at a higher-level playing field to see the work that we're doing. So, we have been recognized before nationally for our family support center here in the state. So, things like that are very helpful for our district too, so we can continue improving and amplifying the work that we do as a district as a whole. And being a member gives us all these things on this list. A non-member will not give us any of these benefits.

Thank you. Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. I'm ready for motion if you're ready.

Trustee Zamora:

Trustee Johnson just got off the queue. Okay. For the record, there is no public comment, so I will take your motion, Trustee Dominguez.

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you. I would like to move to not take action on item 2.02.

Trustee Stevens:

To not take action?

Trustee Dominguez:

To not take action.

Trustee Zamora:

Do I have a second, Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:  
I would like to second the motion.

Trustee Zamora:  
Okay, we have a first and a second. Please cast your vote. And that is four noes. 4-2, that motion does not pass. I'm waiting for my queue screen to come back on and then I will look for another motion. Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:  
Am I still on? I'm sorry.

Trustee Zamora:  
Yes. Okay. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:  
Sorry, I need my glasses. Okay, thank you. I would like to make a motion to accept 2.02 Annual Membership National School Board Association, as presented.

Trustee Zamora:  
Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:  
I would like to second that motion.

Trustee Zamora:  
I have a first and a second. Please cast your vote. And that motion does not pass. That is 3-3. And we look for another motion? Yes, thank you. Okay, I'm waiting for my screen to pop up. Thank you. Looking for another motion. Trustee Stevens?

Trustee Stevens:  
I motion that we table this until we have a full board.

Trustee Zamora:  
Okay. Any second? Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:  
I second that motion.

Trustee Zamora:  
I got a first and a second. Please cast your vote. That motion passes, 4-2. Thank you, team.

**2.03 Clark County School District Compliance with the Safe and Supportive Schools Act.**  
Presentation and discussion of Assembly Bill 330 of the 82nd Session of the Nevada Legislature, which introduced significant reforms to student discipline policies and restorative justice practices in Nevada schools. [Contact Person: Jesse Welsh] (Ref. 2.03)

Trustee Zamora:

All right, moving on to the next agenda item, I have 2.03 Clark County School District Compliance with the Safe and Supportive Schools Act and I will pass it to our superintendent.

Jhone Ebert:

Thank you. This evening, we have Kevin McPartlin. We'll be presenting the information in regard specifically to Legislative Bill 330 that passed last legislative session. There have been reporting requirements that have shifted a lot of the work. There's data that we hadn't previously required and then also supports that are being provided by the states, which Kevin will go into more detail.

Kevin McPartlin:

Thank you. Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, I'm Kevin McPartlin, Associate Superintendent for the record. This presentation is the result of a request during the bi-weekly meetings on April 25th, 2025, specifically an update on the district's compliance with AB330, data that could be provided and any adjustments based on executive orders issued by the White House.

I would want to just recap the six main areas that were focused in AB330 when it passed in 2023 aligning discipline policies at all Nevada public schools including charter schools, defining restorative discipline plans, defining state oversight of student discipline, defining appeal processes available to families when facing discipline, ensuring students have access to instruction and materials while suspended from school, and clarifying discipline data that must be reported by all districts in the state.

Once a bill is passed, we rarely refer to them by their bill number. This slide is just a demonstration of why sometimes we still refer to this as AB330 because you can see it landed in multiple areas within the NRS. So, I just wanted to ensure that you were clear on where it falls in the NRS at this time. But for this presentation, in general, we'll still refer to it as AB330.

Our initial response to AB330 was the creation and distribution of an addendum to the existing code of conduct in October 2023. This addendum focused on seven main updates at this time and they were all to be in compliance with the new laws. Lowering age restriction on disciplining younger students for battery, it was reduced from 11 years old to eight years old. Updating timelines for school practices, especially as it relates to bullying investigations. Further refining protocols when students were suspended or recommended for expulsion.

Lowering age restrictions on discipline for weapon-related offenses, events, I apologize. Adoption of suspension with instruction as a school action, which ensured students had access to instructional materials and resources whenever they were removed from school due to disciplinary infractions. Adoption of restorative discipline plans for students when addressing behaviors, and the implementation of re-entry plans for students when returning to school after an extended suspension.

In July 2024, we introduced a completely revised student code of conduct, predominantly based on legislation during the 2023 session. This is the document that we reviewed on May 8th during the

Kevin McPartlin:

trustee work session. We also held two sets of professional learning opportunities for site administrators to be prepared for the implementation of this code of conduct. In addition to the new code of conduct, in alignment with the data reporting components of 330, we worked extensively with internal departments to develop multiple area reports so we can work with schools to adjust processes to improve data entry so we can ensure that our discipline data is as clean as possible.

Overall, looking at some of the data we have, this is a comparison year to year. This is data that you've seen before with the exception of when I presented last week. It was just through quarter three. This is through the full 2024-25 school year. As we talked about, we saw a slight increase last year. And then with the implementation of new code of conduct, new professional learning, we saw a 9% decrease during this past school year in student suspensions.

During the last meeting, Trustee Satory asked about recidivism. We had some great comments from Trustee Biassotti. So, I wanted to share some additional information that we pulled that was not complete in time to add to this presentation, but if you look at 23-24 where we had 30,326 suspensions, this represented 18,452 individual students. Additionally, we show that 6,163 students were suspended multiple times.

Comparing this to 24-25, while we had 27,631 suspensions, this represented 12,889 students. So, from over 18,000 to over 12,000. And then we had 3,775 students that were suspended two or more times. So, when we look at recidivism, we went from over 6,000 students being suspended multiple times to under 4,000. This represents nearly a 40% decrease in recidivism during this past year. So, definitely making progress in this area.

Slide seven is where we look at elementary school, middle school, and high school by level. Again, as you can see, elementary school and middle school increased in the last year. But then for this year, 24-25, we had decreases. And then you could see high school, we had three continuing years of decreasing suspensions.

This is the slide where we look at suspension rates by student groups. So, similar data to what you've seen before, just presented in a different way since we're not locked in by the template. Again, this is reported suspensions by student group per 1,000 students. So, you can see in 23-24, as we reported, we did not make true, substantial improvements in suspensions rates for any student group during 23-24. This year, we did demonstrate at least slight decreases in all student groups led by a reduction in the Hispanic student group of nearly 11% and within the African American student group of 8%. As we've talked about, we can see visually here that the African American student group is an outlier compared to other student groups.

Discretionary expulsions, as a reminder from our last meeting, this is a reporting using the state definitions of a mandatory expulsion is for any re-offense related to weapons. All other expulsions, including those that internally we mandate that schools recommend for expulsion are considered discretionary. That would include battery to staff, battery to student, distribution of controlled

Kevin McPartlin:

substance and sexual assault. Here, we see a steady decline for the past two years, nearly 15% reduction in discretionary expulsions over two years.

Looking at it by level, again, we see nearly an 18% reduction in middle school over two years and a 12% reduction at the high school level over the two years.

Discretionary expulsions by student group, again, using the same ratio that we used before, this would be discretionary expulsions by student group per 1,000 students. We see we had a decrease in discretionary expulsions over two years for all student groups with the exception of the native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, which is one of our smaller student groups.

So, what are we doing now and what will we be doing moving forward? I've talked to you in the past about the tiered school support framework where we were targeting middle schools based on data that we saw after the 23-24 school year. So, just to speak a little bit deeper about what supports were provided and what departments were involved, so the educational services division, and these were our targeted schools, the nine schools we've discussed, we went in and really focused on structural adjustments, code of conduct training and providing resources to the schools related to disciplinary actions.

Equity and diversity education, they provided professional learning on relationship building, cultural competency, and establishing school-wide expectations and communicating them proactively with students. The guidance and counseling department focused on having tier one lessons provided in classrooms by counselors, specifically on conflict resolution, self-regulation, relationship building. Those types of things that we discussed at the last meeting; counselors are going in the classrooms to present that.

The MTSS Department goes into build positive behavior intervention supports at schools. RPDP is one of our partners as well, providing classroom management PL specifically for teachers in the classroom. Usually, this looks like schools identifying a cadre of teachers that they feel need the most support, whether they're the brand-new teachers or teachers with a lot of referrals and when they provided targeted professional learning for those teachers. And then wraparound services regarding the use of social workers and mental health professionals to address behaviors in a proactive manner.

So, looking at the results of the schools that we targeted, we had nine middle schools that we targeted based on their previous data of the most suspensions during the first semester. Overall, during the second semester, we saw a 21% decrease overall for the suspensions in these schools. Seven of the nine schools decreased suspensions by over 10%. We do want to highlight three of the schools. Silvestri Middle School decreased suspensions by 63%, Sedway by 47% and Orr by 35%. And again, this is not because they were ignoring behaviors. It's because they added interventions to address minor behaviors before they escalated.

Regarding executive orders, as we identified this with the Nevada Department of Education, one area of potential conflict from AB330 was NRS 392.4644, which deals directly with

Kevin McPartlin:

disproportionality in disciplinary actions by schools. In partnering with NDE to collaborate how to address this potential conflict, it really came down to we are addressing suspensions for all students. This involves addressing the root causes, identifying and addressing the root causes for all students. We're not stopping any actions for any individual student group or adding any additional actions to other student groups. Our focus is getting in front of student behaviors in a proactive manner to avoid behaviors that would result in students being suspended long-term for all students.

Our partnership with NDE continues to expand. This is a reference back to the state oversights component that were on slide three that are now embedded within NRS 392. As was shared with you at the last board meeting, 116 of our schools were identified as having high levels of suspensions either overall or by specific student groups. We partnered with NDE to identify them. We worked with school administrators to communicate and to ensure they understood exactly what the concerns were.

The MTSS Department supported schools by providing training and support for them to complete a self-inventory that will flush out potential action steps to reduce exclusionary practices for all students. This will also be, for the first time, included in the school improvement plans next year. Our partnership with NDE extends beyond this year with monitoring and corrective action plans continuing each year. Additional support and oversight will be provided for schools that are not demonstrating improvements in these areas.

This concludes my report on AB330. I'm happy to take any questions or concerns you have.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you for that presentation. As a reminder, this is not an action item, so we'll be going straight to our colleagues for questions. Trustee Stevens?

Trustee Stevens:

This is awesome. It's always good to see numbers going in the right direction, so I absolutely love this. I do have a question though, and I think I've asked you this before. My curiosity stems from the tracking mechanism. So, if we're tracking how we're doing with discipline and student behavior, if we're tracking it by suspensions and expulsions, it might be fair to assume that members of the public would wonder, is it because student behavior is getting better because of policies that have been implemented by the district? Or could it possibly be that maybe administrators or whatever are lightening their-

Trustee Johnson  
Coding differently.

Trustee Stevens:  
What's that?



Trustee Johnson:  
Coding it differently.

Trustee Stevens:

Yeah. Are they coding it differently? That's a great way to say it. Like, "We're not going to suspend you, but we're going to try something different." You see what I'm saying? So, that could definitely skew numbers. Do you foresee maybe an additional tracking mechanism to really show the student behavior getting better outside of just the suspensions and expulsions? And I don't want to take anything away because I know you worked really hard on the code of conduct and everything that you've implemented and it shows. Just wondering if there's other tracking mechanisms to relieve any doubt there.

Kevin McPartlin:

Trustee Stevens, thank you for the question. Absolutely, we do. We hear that concern. We understand that concern. Again, we talked about having a new template for future presentations, but also in the end of the year, we're going to look to do a couple of different things where we bring principals potentially to speak to you again to demonstrate what they're doing in their schools, as well as potentially having some data of the number of events from last year to this year and what schools did to that. We want to try to improve some of that reporting to you.

Trustee Stevens:  
Love it. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Stevens. Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

I love this topic because I think it really gets to the root of how we can make sure that our students are continuing to be in classrooms, learning and letting us do what we do best, teach and drive instruction. I had two questions, one about middle school. Just do we have any root causes of why the big spike in middle? Because I know there's a lot of changes that students go through between fifth grade and sixth and then eight and nine, but it's three times higher suspension between elementary and then middle, and then two times higher between middle and high. Just hopeful we can get some understanding of what the trend is or the patterns.

Kevin McPartlin:

Absolutely. A great question, Trustee Johnson. So. Focusing on the nine schools that we talked about this year, that's where we really saw issues with relationship building and we saw issues of proactively communicating the expectations. And I think while I know at some point, we need to quit saying COVID-related, but we do see that there's some correlation to students in those years where those formative years where they were in elementary schools learning some of the behavior expectations that they were home. So, that still is part of it. Across the board for all schools, that's what we're going to be able to pull from the TFI, inventories that the schools did to really see across the board, are there trends that we can focus on that way, for sure.

Trustee Johnson:

Yeah, I guess that makes a lot of sense to me, thinking about you'd have oftentimes one teacher in elementary school. Then you go to a middle school setting where you're moving around classrooms, so it could be jarring, plus the hormones and all that for 13 and 11-year-olds. The other question I had about suspensions, or actually, two more. One, to be clear, on slide nine when we're talking about discretionary students' expulsions, that definition is both the state definition, plus the district definition combined? Or is it just the state definition?

Kevin McPartlin:

Sorry, Trustee Johnson. Yeah, so this is just the state. So, this is any expulsion that wasn't for weapons, even things that we, as part of our policies, make schools recommend for expulsion.

Trustee Johnson:

Okay. All right. So, that's all-inclusive. All right. And then the last one, it was great to hear zeroing in on nine schools and figuring out how we can do some replication. Did we see any declines in subgroups there in those nine schools? I know that the demographics of those schools, they may not be representative of the district at large. It might just have larger subgroup populations. But did we see, even within those nine schools, for example, Black student suspension decrease larger than other student suspensions?

Kevin McPartlin:

Thank you for the question. We did not at all schools, but at five of the schools, we did see a closing of the gaps, certainly. And so, that's where we'll explore what had occurred at those schools and different practices in place. But it wasn't across the board, but it is what we're monitoring.

Trustee Johnson:

That's helpful. Thank you, Mr. McPartlin.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Johnson. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Thank you. No, don't worry. He's giving me that look. Okay. So, no, this is a big lift and it's been years happening for the cultural shift, I will say. I think what I want to say is relative to the amount of kids that we do have in certain groups and populations, Mr. McPartlin, I would love to see... You're saying you're going to bring a principal in the future. And because our board has a vast, varying experience with the difference of MTSS, I would have an ask to give just what is that encompassing, because when you say minor versus behavior incidents, they don't know what those actual things mean.

So, is it, "I didn't come to my class prepared"? Because that could be a minor incident for people reporting. Or was I insubordinate? I think we just want definitions behind what these things are. And again, I want to get to the last time that you guys presented when I had families letting me know certain schools do certain practices and might put kids out where other schools say, "No,

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

we're going to wrap around this kid, develop a relationship and we're going to make sure that we address these behaviors so that we can change it."

So, I think that is a piece that I would love to see. Not just the data charts, but also educating us, as trustees, on what these terms are, if that would be helpful. That's an ask, not a question. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam Vice President and thank you from our Former Principal Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan for always giving us that perspective. That is so on point. I wanted to ask you, Mr. McPartlin, again, the continuity and the consistency where parents can feel secure that if something happens at one school with one child, something happens to another school, that there is going to be some continuity and not be vastly different. How big a part in the training for our administrators does this play in making this tiered system succeed?

Kevin McPartlin:

Thank you, Trustee Cavazos. So, it is certainly a part of our question. Now, one of the things that does not occur in the code of conduct is specifically first time this occurs, this is what you do, second time... It is a range. It is a range because principals, they know their students best, they know their school best, they know situations best. So, within that range, it is part of our PL. It is tightening up; I will tell you. But just to be clear, it's not as prescriptive as the first time this happens, this is what occurred but yeah. And I do see principals very much on board with progressive steps and working to be proactive. We see that more than we have ever before, but it is not as prescriptive as one step at a time.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, thank you for that. And I really think just from talking to different staff and parents at the various schools, the leadership is so important and our strategic, should we say... Well, this would not be in my purview but the superintendents, but I hear more and more from parents and staff and neighborhoods that they appreciate the care that goes into the way that new leaders are promoted and presented and how they match with their unique neighborhoods. So, the leadership really makes a difference. And I think that when it comes to, as you just said, Mr. McPartlin, they know their students best and they know their neighborhoods and they know the unique needs.

So, I thank you for this presentation and also for the additional information. Appreciate it. Thank you so much.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. Mr. McPartlin, just to touch up on what Trustee Stevens said when she talked about the tracking mechanism, so we don't have one? And you alluded to, in the future, having principals come in and talk about what exactly again?

Kevin McPartlin:

Yeah, I apologize if there was confusion. So, to this note, we do track it, we do have it. It's not been part of the template to present to you. And I know that might be something that we look to change and to provide additional, but certainly, it's data that we have available. As far as the presentation, in general, once a year as a culmination, we've brought principals before you. We talk about, "Here's what we do at our school." And so, it is more just giving you on the ground, "This is what we did at our school," from their perspective, which is much better than coming from me.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you, Madam Vice President and thank you for the briefing. I know we've talked a lot about this last meeting too. I know we've talked a lot about this last meeting too. I didn't ask last time about what kind of partnerships we have with the Harbor, like the juvenile center. And, do we track data between them? Are we partnering with them?

Kevin McPartlin:

Thank you, Trustee Dominguez. The county and the Harbor are some of our strongest partnerships that we have. So, with that, there's two sides of it. Is, number one, a school counselor, a school administrator, they can always refer to the Harbor even for non-disciplinary actions. We do have schools that refer even outside of ESD and major disciplinary events. Those are occurring. There's not tracking on our end for it, the tracking is with the county. The only ones that we track are students with severe behavior infractions that are being removed from school. There is a mandatory at least assessment with the Harbor. Those are the ones that we track internally through us when the students have severe behavior. So, we partner with the county; they are working to refine their data points to support us so that we can track it. So, it's their data, but certainly one of our strongest partnerships.

Trustee Dominguez:

Great. When we track data, are we tracking most importantly what happens after a student is expelled? They've done the action. The redemption part is what I'm looking for. Are they continuing that behavior? How do we track that data? And maybe, I don't know if that's something we can even put in a slide, that might be too much. But I would love to hear more on that.

Kevin McPartlin:

Yeah. For sure. That is the main point of what we do. It's not just the infraction that occurs, it's what happens a month, two months, a year down the road. A couple things with that, is we talked about academic centers the last time where we do have a transition specialist that builds a relationship with the students at the academic center and then travels with them to the school for that warm

Kevin McPartlin:

handoff, and tracks for two months to go through. Just so we can make sure that initial transition occurs. We do track recidivism of students that return to the academic center. Again, we talked about this 40% decrease in students getting multiple suspensions.

Trustee Dominguez:

For clarity... I'm sorry to interrupt you. For clarity, when you say academic center, you mean behavioral? The behavioral center?

Kevin McPartlin:

Yes. The previously called behavioral schools. Yes. Yes.

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you. Continue.

Kevin McPartlin:

There is that tracking of what occurs next, and we do that with the schools and we do that with our own central offices.

Trustee Dominguez:

Perfect. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Dominguez. Thank you for the presentation. I do have a few questions. It still is pretty alarming to hear that we went from 11 to 8-year-olds and this type of actions. Do we have any data of how many students have been included to the number since that change?

Kevin McPartlin:

Thank you. I don't have that number with me tonight. When we talk about 11-year-old to 8-year-old, there's a couple things that was in the code of conduct where schools don't act alone on disciplining 9-year-olds. We have our region behavior directors who support them and guide them through the process. Removal from school long-term is not necessarily part of it. It is a very delicate situation. And part of it starts with, if I have a student under 11 that I want to discipline, the first phone call is to my directors who guide them through the process, because they're the experts.

Trustee Zamora:

Perfect, thank you. Another question I have is the in-house suspensions, is that included in this data?

Kevin McPartlin:

Currently, that is not included in this data point.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. And I know there was a few slides about expulsions. Do we have the top three reasons why there's expulsions and then the top three of why there's so many suspensions? Is it fighting, is it weapons, and so on?

Kevin McPartlin:

The only one I feel confident telling you about, just because I just looked at it today, expulsions, it is battery is the number one reason for expulsions. The others, certainly we track it, we have it. I don't have it at the offhand, but we do see they are the mandatory offenses are the ones that we see.

Trustee Zamora:

And I only ask, because our cell phone pouches, when they first came out a lot of principals actually talked about cell phone pouches being helpful to stop even fights happening on campus, because they're coordinating during class. Have we seen...? Do we have, you probably do not, but any data of how cell phone pouches has actually helped when it comes to expulsions and suspensions?

Kevin McPartlin:

Thank you for that question. The one thing is that's not a behavior code that's in there, so we can't pull data off of it because its own data code. However, no students were suspended for not using or not utilizing the behavior pouches. Now, maybe if it's a repeated behavior over and over, now we get into insubordination. Specifically, the cell phone pouches was not a reason for any, it's not allowable in the code of conduct to suspend a student. But as far as, we saw a reduction in suspensions, is that due to cell phone pouches? We don't have that correlating data.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. And I know one of the... A few of us do the... Thank you, expulsion review board. And some of the gaps that I know that I have seen is some of the students getting bullied, and that leads into fights and trying to handle things on themselves. Is there anything that we're possibly doing to start pushing more of the Safe Voices? And how do we use that to mediate some of the issues that we might have going on?

Kevin McPartlin:

Absolutely. Thank you for that question, Trustee Zamora. So, with bullying, again, we partner with Dr. Scavella, who was up here with me last week. He's doing professional learning throughout the summer, consistent with schools, supporting schools that we see concerns at. Safe Voice, I receive every single Safe Voice that comes in for every school, so it's being used. It's all part of building those layers. There's not one silver bullet that's going to solve that. But by building these layers and ensuring that students are aware, by ensuring they have a relationship with an adult on campus that they can go to themselves if they were feeling it, that's all part of the layers that we're building on.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. I have one more question. In-house suspensions, where does that data fall under then, if it's not here?

Kevin McPartlin:

It's its own data code right now. We do track it. We do include it in some of our removal reports with students. But as far as for this, just because of where it started with Focus 2024, it's not included in here.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you for that. And I hope to see some of the principals from the three schools you mentioned come and tell us what they're doing. Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:

Thank you, Madam President. Mr. McPartlin, on slide 12, tiered school support framework. I see your second bullet point there is equity and diversity education department. My question is, have you or has the department prepared for a situation where you would have to remove this department if and when President Trump's executive order clears the courts?

Jhone Ebert:

I'll take that question. Thank you, Trustee Biassotti. We're actually getting ready to do a press release, and we are changing the name of that unit which will come out, and then also restructuring the work within that department.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Superintendent. Trustee Biassotti, do you have any follow up?

Trustee Biassotti:

No, thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. I don't see anyone else in the queue, so I think we're good to go. Thank you.

#### **2.04 Artificial Turf Conversion Projects.**

Discussion regarding the District's artificial turf conversion projects at secondary school baseball, soccer, and softball fields. [Contact Person: Felicia Gonzales] (Reference material will be provided.) (Ref. 2.04)

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. I will be moving on to agenda item 2.04, Artificial Turf Conversation Projects. This I will also pass it along to our superintendent.

Jhone Ebert:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. This evening, we're proud to bring to you where we are currently with the conversion of artificial turf, not only here locally within Southern Nevada, but nationally there's been a lot of research and questions and comments, so felt it was important to share exactly where we are as a school district in the conversion. We've also asked for experts on both sides of the topic, if you will, to come and present just a few minutes. Each item here, we could sit in this boardroom and speak for a week about this topic, and that's not what we're doing

Jhone Ebert:

tonight. We're giving each of you a flavor of what is transpiring so that you can go out into the community as well. We do have a high school principal that will be joining us online to share their experiences, and then leave it to all of you to take this information and speak to the community and make a determination on how we may move forward. Thank you.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Madam Vice President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert. For the record, Brandon McLaughlin, assistant superintendent for our construction development division. Tonight, we're just here, like Superintendent Ebert mentioned, we're just here to provide a brief overview of the district's past and current artificial turf initiatives, the related legislative actions, as well as any prior board decisions, water savings data, as well as some common community perspectives that we just want to offer some insight on ahead of the stakeholder involvement that we've got queued up for tonight. A few key stakeholders will be joining us throughout this presentation, these are invited guests of both the district and the trustees, both. Like Superintendent Ebert, we just wanted to introduce a very balanced presentation here where we're presenting simply facts, perspectives of all ranges. It's not just this perspective versus that perspective, but all perspectives are being heard, so that your guys' discussion can be very fruitful for all of the information being presented.

Certainly, artificial turf is a clearly charged topic. Like I said, we're offering a balanced perspective because there is a lot of diverse perspective in it, but we're just grateful for all the community partners and stakeholders that have volunteered to speak here tonight. And one of the ones we'll introduce here tonight, SNWA, being a major partner of ours. And their perspective will be invaluable in some of this.

The district has launched three major water conservation initiatives that involve the removal of natural grass. The first one we'll highlight is non-functional turf removal. The statute that we'll get to that defined this, granted that the SNWA could define this, and they have. This includes things such as grass that serve no functional purpose, and these predominantly pertain to streetscapes, frontages, courtyards, and certain HOA managed areas. The natural grass removal is predominantly transitioned to desert landscape or xeriscape, not necessarily artificial turf, but worthwhile to highlight for you guys here tonight.

The second project stream that we initiated, starting as early as 2020, was the high school football field conversions. And these focus primarily on student athlete safety and field functionality, with obviously the additional benefit of water savings, as we were able to transition those fields for safer playing surfaces for our student athletes.

The third was our high school baseball, soccer, and softball field conversions. And these targeted programmable sports fields to improve both our surface consistency as well as additionally save water. Over the past decade, many presentations have covered these initiatives. I didn't feel it would be fortuitous for us to regurgitate a lot of that, and we can certainly share links to those presentations. We'll summarize key aspects of them throughout the presentation. But we predominantly want to focus on updates as well as allow feedback of our stakeholders related to predominantly the baseball, soccer, and softball fields here tonight. That's the things we're going to



Brandon McLaughlin:

cover when we get to the project updates and statuses, because we're nearly complete on all other football and non-functional turf initiatives.

So, while water conservation is a well-known issue in Southern Nevada, I do want to highlight the key legislations that shaped the district's artificial turf actions to date. The first of which was Assembly Bill 356 from the 2021 Legislative Session. Verbatim from the bill, this just prohibited the use of Colorado River water on non-functional turf by January 1st, 2027. This law drove much of the district's non-plate... The turf removal starting in 2021 for non-functional turf. Again, these projects emphasize things such as parking lots, sloped non-competitive sports areas predominantly.

The second bill was Assembly Bill 220 from 2023. This, again, reinforced the non-functional turf removal requirements and introduced additional mandates, including things like connecting to municipal water supplies, and the very few septic to sewer conversions that we still have outstanding there where we have septic systems not connected to municipal sewers, loosely connected. I just wanted you guys armed with that assembly bill in hand as well.

Then we get to previous board actions, again, focusing specifically on high school baseball, soccer, and softball conversions. Two predominant interlocal agreements with the SNWA are driving the current projects we're underway with. The board approved both agreements for the totality of the projects of that baseball, soccer, softball initiative on September 14th, 2023, which included approximately \$21 million in SNWA rebates upon completion. Those projects are now at various stages of design, bidding, construction, and completion.

Another key board action that relates to funding, each year the business and finance unit brings forward an excess statutory reserve authorization. This is just to refresh a categorical approval of projects such as HVAC upgrades, security improvements, as well as turf conversions. Due to their urgency and frequency, that authorization allows construction contracts to be awarded directly without bringing each one individual because of their repetitive and low-cost values. The most recent approval of that was on February 27th, 2025.

Before reviewing the projects included in the interlocal agreements, I just want to address a few common questions that we get related to artificial turf fields, the first being the infill material. Some stakeholders have raised concerns about the rubber infill in particular being harmful. I do want to clarify, the district utilizes a more organic mix, so this includes coconut husks, olive pits, plant-based polymers, as well as sand. While recycled rubber was a very common turf infill when the artificial turf fields began to emerge, our fields only use the safer, more natural alternative.

It's also important to explain how that infill product was selected. Beginning in 2021 and 2022, we knew the transition on our competitive sport surfaces was going to be a significant change, so the district leadership formed a broad committee, which included principals, athletic staff, student

Brandon McLaughlin:

athletes, parents, NIAA representatives, as well as licensed landscape architects to best evaluate and test the available products out there. This team reviewed the safety, the performance, the real-world applications before making a final recommendation. We have heard some minor feedback, but many stakeholders support the products that we selected based upon the collaborative and informed process that we use to select it. And it's already used across, like we will get to many of our school sites in the particular high school sites.

Now, onto another frequent concern, student athlete safety. Which is always a top priority when selecting anything for our facilities or grounds, in this case. Certainly, I would be remiss if we didn't introduce the incident at Spring Valley High School, it's the elephant in the room of this discussion. During that peak heat event in August of 2024, student athletes were training on an artificial turf field with high hand-to-turf contact. While all district fields are equipped with what we call water cannons or high-capacity sprinklers used to cool down the surfaces, these must be properly used. When coaches follow the extreme heat protocols, including the cooling of the field approximately every 20 minutes, in some instances, during those extreme peaks, the system does effectively reduce those surface temperatures. But when practices occur during extreme heat without proper cooling or other mitigation measures, the risk of heat-related incidences, regardless of whether it's artificial turf or natural grass, is a risk to our student athletes.

Temperatures exceeding 112 to 117, it's just a statement of fact, any surface becomes hazardous at that range. We must remember, we are in the Mojave Desert and we're one of the harshest climates in the world. At the end of the day, in a hot July day, that couldn't be more true.

Another safety topic we often hear about is field consistency, so concerns around rolled ankles, knee sprains, and especially concussions. The research here is mixed. Some studies suggest turf increases injury risks, while others also highlight benefits like more consistent playing surfaces compared to uneven or poorly maintained natural grass fields. There's merit on both sides of it, and then it's really up to this board to make those interpretations of the data that's available.

I will say, one widely cited study that I've continued to be referred to is a study that claims natural grass was significantly safer than artificial turf. And for anyone that wants to reference that, I'll gladly provide that. And that study, I just wanted to highlight that study compares ideal conditions. So, yes, a pristine, well-rested natural field somewhere in the northeast United States is a lot different than turf use in our harsher climate. I don't believe that one study that continues to be referred to me is actually apples to apples comparison. In our region, grass fields often cannot be properly watered. And due to the way high school fields are often utilized, they don't have that proper rest to be able to regenerate the grass seed, and especially with our drought conditions. So, context matters within some of the readings that you'll find out there.

And last, the concussion safety. We just want to highlight that our risk management department does play a very critical role in how we undergo head injury criterion, are also called HIC tests, to ensure that surfaces meet national-international standards for concussion risk.

Brandon McLaughlin:

We're almost at the end of this piece before we get to stakeholders, just bear with me. Another common question we receive is about the cost to maintain the natural grass versus artificial turf. This slide is out of a presentation that the then associate superintendent, Blake Cumbers, gave back in February of 2017. Which presented a cost comparison for maintaining natural grass versus turf with rubber infill and turf with organic infill. I do encourage you to review the full presentation, and we can make available, it's in board docs as well publicly. But I'll briefly summarize a few of the points within it.

Mr. Cumbers' data showed that artificial turf with organic infill does cost 90% less to maintain than natural grass. However, the presentation did highlight that artificial turf with organic infill, which is most comparable to our systems, has a 73% higher life cycle cost than natural grass over a 20-year term. We're not hiding from that. That's one of the fact points that you guys need to evaluate within what we're discussing here tonight. A 90% reduction in operational cost, but 73% higher capital cost over a 20-year term. As a scale of a budget we operate, I'm not going to say it's a wash, because that's not a wash, but it's negligible at the scale we're at. But again, data points that you guys need to evaluate.

Therefore, if it's nearly comparable and it's over a 20-year lifespan to really actualize any of those benefits, we then have to look at effectiveness of what our maintenance resources are available to provide to those field surfaces. In reality, our grounds department is very under-resourced and under-staffed, that's due to a myriad of issues, including budget constraints as well as labor shortages, and broader challenges. And frankly, federal policies make for uncertain workforce at this position in particular. While natural grass may be cheaper on paper over a 20-year lifecycle, the deferred maintenance that leads to poor field conditions can present a much less safe playing surface than if artificial turf were appropriately maintained throughout that same lifespan.

These last few should go a lot more briefly for us. Now that we've got some common questions, I want to look at project status. So, list of schools receiving conversions was outlined in the interlocal agreements, proposed or approved in September of 2023. As of 2025, we have completed Laughlin, Moapa Valley, Virgin Valley, Legacy High School, Desert Pines, A-Tech, and East Career and Technical Academy, with approximately \$36 million of improvements made to those campuses. As far as active projects, we have 26 active projects that are either under construction or in the bidding or award phase, and on-site work is set to begin in the coming weeks. Together, these projects represent approximately \$22 million in current expenditures, with additional expenditures obviously coming in as they complete the work.

And then, what do we have remaining? The design and permitting are complete for approximately nine schools, although bidding has not yet started. This includes Desert Oasis, Spring Valley, Boulder City, Foothill, Southwest CTA, Silverado High School, Palo Verde, Kenyon Springs, totaling approximately 11 million in planned improvements ahead of us. We've also heard from principals at these sites though, expressing concerns about the perceived inequity. I'll say

Brandon McLaughlin:

specifically, the gaps in facilities between schools that have received the improvements and those that are still waiting for those, so we need to be cognizant of that as well.

Last but not least, because I'm joined by the expert next to me, but next I'll share some preliminary water savings figures. As well, we'll dive into a lot more detailed data in the next portion of this. But across our three turf conversion projects, the district has already begun to realize 372 million gallons of water annually in savings due to the efforts of the non-functional turf, the football fields, and the baseball, softball, soccer fields completed to date. If all of the projects provided for in the interlocal agreements are completed, we would then be actualizing approximately 1.2 billion gallons of water annually.

This shows the program is being effective and it highlights our responsibility as one of Southern Nevada's largest water users to be a leader or have a responsible seat in this conservation effort. At this point, I'll turn it over to Ms. Colby Pellegrino, Deputy General Manager for SNWA. We'll go through a small segment with them, and then we'll also invite two other community stakeholders up here to go through other segments of it.

Colby Pellegrino:

Thank you very much, and thank you to the board and the superintendent for having me here to present. I am the Deputy General Manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. I'm also a Las Vegas native, I was born and raised here. I'm a graduate of Silverado High School. My children are both in CCSD schools. My dad is a retired CCSD teacher. My aunt is a retired CCSD librarian. I thank you all, because I know how hard the job is in the seats that you guys sit in.

SNWA, if you're not familiar with us, is essentially the water wholesaler for the valley. We provide water to every municipality that forms Urban Clark County. My responsibility, in particular, is to make sure that there is enough water for this community. That means every home, every business, every school, we have to make sure that water exists. And one of the major ways we do that is through water conservation. If we had stopped growth at the point in time that this community had to start conservation, we would've stopped growing in 2002. Every single person that has moved here since 2002 has done so because somebody else before them has made a sacrifice in terms of implementing some sort of water conservation effort.

We are the driest metropolitan community in the United States. We get far less water than any of our peers. We get a far smaller share of the Colorado River. I am not going to spend a ton of time here, but I can talk to you about this for days if you'd like. Lake Mead is going down, and our water supply is uncertain. As we sit here today, we do not have operating guidelines that exist beyond 2026. We know the shortages in supply we are going to take are going to increase in the future. A study the federal government did two years ago suggested that our community's water use could be cut to half of our allocation. If that were to come to fruition, our conservation programs simply do not do enough.

Colby Pellegrino:

So, our job is to get ahead of this as much as possible, to be as responsible as possible on the Colorado River. And that's the other side of my job is to negotiate policy there, so I'll stop before I get too deep. But this was my slide about how urgent the crisis is on the river, and I'm a little behind clicking through it.

I'm just putting this up here to show you that we really have an all-hands-on deck approach to conservation. We have used the state legislature, we use local code, we use incentive programs. Every single part of this community that uses water, there is an incentive program that we provide for them to use less. And I will tell you that nobody likes to change the way they do things. Nobody likes to look at a different technology when they're really familiar with the ones they have. But we are seeing success in all of these programs. In order to meet our conservation goals that allow us to continue diversifying our economy and keep our water rates low, requires us to make progress in all of these sectors in terms of water savings.

I'm going to just dive in. Some of this was already shared, so I'm going to be brief. We have been doing agreements with the school district since 2021, specific to athletic fields. We've also incentivized lots of other conservation, including HVAC systems and things like that. We have a really good working relationship and we appreciate that partnership. I will say that I was in a different position when the school district first came to us. And the first football field that they came to us to convert was about the condition of the field, not about the water savings. But they knew we would play ball, no pun intended, because of the water savings associated with it.

A typical field has 94,000 square feet of play area, which means every field converted saves about 7 million gallons of water annually. If you think about a square foot of grass, I would also like you to think about the height of a regulation basketball hoop. That is the amount of water that grass is drinking every single year. There is a major correlation in why turf matters in this community, because it's the only water that we're not getting back into Lake Mead, the water that we use outside. That's why we have to focus on that for our water supply.

We have 27 high schools that have already had fields converted, that is over 2 million square feet of turf. We have provided \$6 million towards those rebates. And that's our part in helping make those curves match that Brandon showed. That if we can help offset some of the cost associated with converting these fields, it makes the long-term cost for the school district a little more equitable between their other choices. And we have other ball fields that are in conversion and have already been converted.

I just have a couple of examples here. There's plenty that other people could show. But I just wanted to highlight a few and, in particular, ask you to look at the condition of the field. I went to school, I said at Silverado, my sister was in marching band. She walked onto Green Valley High School where her boys' field is. And it's like, wow, I really wish this was what we got to march on. But it is a really nice surface. It is very difficult to maintain turf in our environment. I would point to

Colby Pellegrino:

that the Raiders facility has four practice fields for one football team. That is because it is really hard to keep grass in good quality for competitive play.

And as you all know, these fields have more than one football team on them. They have PE, they have all sorts of activities that they get used for. Which, really, in our climate where grass does not grow naturally, in our soils which are not meant to sustain grass, it's very hard to keep a good quality field. I would also note, while I'm flipping through this, that a lot of our private schools have done conversions as well. Bishop Gorman has used our program. Faith Lutheran has used our program. And we see other smaller private schools have done this as well. So, this is Laughlin, the condition of the softball field there. This is Legacy High School; you can see that there's a much better transition on the baseball field here. And I like this one in particular with Centennial. What you see on the soccer fields here is not different than what every single recreational department for our municipalities face, that it is very hard to maintain soccer complexes or any of these fields outside of the school district, but are recreational facilities, and they look a lot like this when you look from them from the air. So, most of all, besides the water savings, bringing a really consistent playing surface. And I have walked on this field this week. This is where my kids go to school. Summer Cross Country Family Day was this week. So, Coronado High School is just one more example. So, wrapping this up, we have another agreement that we entered into in 2024, which supports baseball, softball, soccer fields at 46 area schools. We also applied for federal grant money to support the rebates for those schools. So, not only is SNWA providing rebates, but we're adding to that money through grants we've applied for specific to these projects that we do with the school district. So, we will continue to work with CCSD and be partners with CCSD. I would just like to reiterate that we do not require the conversion of any recreational surface that has a functional purpose to it. The only mandated turf that has to be converted in this valley is stuff that doesn't have a recreational value. So, our soccer fields, our baseball fields, our football fields, that's not it. And that's what I've got. Thank you.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Thanks Kelly. So, before we transition to questions, there's two stakeholders we want to hear from. So, I'll turn it over to Mr. Keith Wipperman. Very great that Ms. Colby Pellegrino was able to highlight Centennial, so principal at Centennial High School will be able to walk us through. We want his perspective as a high school principal. What has a turf field done for him, allowed for him, and honestly what are some of the drawbacks that you guys should also be aware of? So, I'll turn it over to Mr. Wipperman.

Keith Wipperman:

Thank you, Brandon. Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, my name is Keith Wipperman. I am the proud principal of the Bulldogs of Centennial High School. Go Dogs. So, we started our process. We were one of the first schools to start the process. One of the first pros that I would say if you may or may not be aware of this, but Centennial had a very large, I'm going to call them gophers. I don't really know what they were, but they were digging up all of our fields, including our football field before that got converted. Our soccer field was unusable. In fact,

Keith Wipperman:

our girls had not played, or our boys had not played a soccer game on the soccer field in four years because it had been condemned due to the rodent issue. They tunnel underneath, and they created an unsafe playing surface, and risk management essentially closed down that field.

We had to spend about \$30,000 to get the softball field, get grass put back on it. We were lucky enough that the Pro Bowl was in town, and they actually gave us the grass, but we still had to pay to put that on just so we could have a season that season. Our grass process was finished, not in time for soccer, but we did get to play baseball and softball this first year on it. And I can tell you there are some great pros to the turf fields. One, it's a clean professional look, and we get a million compliments about how the fields look. There are no dangers from holes or wildlife, or to the points that were made earlier, very hard to maintain a grass field and keep it clean as far as a flat, clean, playing surface. So, you often, over time, because we don't have the maintenance budget to maintain fields like professional football teams and things like that, you'll often get holes or uneven surfaces that can cause injury, although I also want to recognize that injuries do happen on turf fields, and I think that was addressed earlier that we do have some lower laying injuries on turf fields. It can't be underscored.

The water savings that is occurring at Centennial, not only just from the watering but from the breakage of irrigation that we had constantly, and again, only having one person to do maintenance that doesn't have that ability, in an aging school we often had significant breakages and significant water loss. One of the other pros is, I would say, I'm going to say potentially less maintenance, simply because I don't have enough experience to speak to that, but I believe that we will have less maintenance and costs on landscaping and irrigation over the long haul at Centennial.

Some of the cons, because I want to talk about really kind of both sides. Yes, the surface of a field such as turf is harder. And I will say that the infill material is relatively abrasive, and so we do worry about our kids getting hurt from that. It's hotter for kids as well because there is no way to water the new fields. And then, of course, what are the overall overarching costs of maintenance? I know that Brandon addressed those as well, but I will say that, all that being said, in the short time we've had the field, we've had an overwhelmingly positive experience in this first six months since we have had the fields. And I am excited to see how this will continue and how long this potentially will last. So, with that, I will close my comments. Thank you very much for allowing me the time to speak to you today.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Thanks, Keith. So, last speaker I'll invite up, Water Fairness Coalition is an organization I've become more familiar with in the last couple of days and had the opportunity to speak with the individual earlier today, actually. So, she's a wealth of knowledge, and I've committed to meeting with her with other district staff that are applicable over time. So, we'll offer five minutes for her to give a perspective on it, and just know we're meeting for additional insight afterward as well. All right, Laura.

Laura McSwain:

Thank you very much. Vice President Zamora and board members, some familiar faces because I was here before some of you last year during public comment when there were some bids that were in the paper, and it was rather alarming to us and to members of the community. At the time, I brought forth a lot of scientific data, and so I really very much appreciate being invited here today. I was expecting to be able to present a much more robust program. I do have the experts with me if there's any questions afterward. I do have a PowerPoint in my pocket, but I will give you-

Theodore Parker:

I'm sorry, I hate to interrupt. Could you say your name just for the record? Maybe I missed it, but I didn't hear you-

Laura McSwain:

Laura McSwain.

Theodore Parker:

Say-

Laura McSwain:

Laura McSwain.

Theodore Parker:

Thank you so much.

Laura McSwain:

M-C-S-W-A-I-N with the Water Fairness Coalition. I'm the president.

Theodore Parker:

I heard the Water Fairness Coalition. I just didn't hear the first name. I apologize. But thank you.

Laura McSwain:

Thank you. I appreciate that. Anyway, so I have several experts with me here today among other, I think other people here in the community that have been very supportive of the Water Fairness Coalition. I'd like to introduce them first. Dr. Kelly Kopp. She's a water conservation expert, agronomist and extension specialist from Utah State University. Her expertise is sought after throughout the country in identifying and educating people on the best methods to achieving water savings while protecting the environment and preserving quality of life. Also with me is Stacy Stanley, President of Spanish Trail Homeowners Association. He served three terms as Mayor of Aspen, Colorado. Spent six years as Director of Aspen Center for Environmental Studies, was a senior staffer for US Senator Michael Gravel. He was chairman of the subcommittee of both water resources and environmental pollution, and he served as Director of the Living Planet campaign at the International Secretariat in Switzerland for the World Wildlife Fund. He also served two terms on the Nevada Test Site Citizen Advisory Committee. Also with us is Norm Schilling. He's a



Laura McSwain:

landscaping legend in Clark County, and he worked at the Demonstration Gardens at the Las Vegas Valley Water District. He's also the most decorated horticulturist in Nevada.

What is the most concern? Let me find my notes right. First of all, let me explain the Water Fairness Coalition. We're a nonprofit that focuses on recent water policies that we believe are doing immeasurable harm to our environment, quality of life, and consequently risks impacting health and the welfare of residents of Southern Nevada. Substituting artificial turf for natural turf playing fields in the pursuit of relatively little water savings stands as an example of policies that follow a pattern of putting growth over all else. And the reason we are so grateful for the opportunity to speak to you. And by the way, I'm in construction. I am not anti-growth. I do believe in smart growth, and I do believe in growing the community in a way that protects our environment.

Trustee Stevens:

Laura, I'm sorry, I just want to do a quick interruption. Is there any way, you said you have a presentation?

Laura McSwain:

I do.

Trustee Stevens:

We got to see the SNWAs like to yours as well, if that's okay. Can we do that, Joe? She has it on a thing for you.

Laura McSwain:

Well, I've got an opening remark, and then the presentation is actually going to be presented by our expert, if I can have a minute.

Trustee Stevens:

Sounds good. We just want to make sure that... My colleague and I are like, "I want to see it."

Laura McSwain:

Thank you very much. So anyway, as a native of Las Vegas, I'm also a former student athlete of Clark County School District and a parent of two student athletes, and there are few fields of play that I'm unfamiliar with. Quite frankly, it's very difficult to believe that this conversation is even necessary. I played soccer on artificial turf once when I was 12, and that was all I needed. Information and concerns about artificial turf health impacts have been available to the public going back to the 1960s. There's a mountain of evidence to suggest that artificial turf poses health risks both in toxicity and heat related illness. The question decision makers face is to what degree, when faced with opportunities that may on the surface seem reasonable, such as finding maintenance savings and water savings, decisions too often are swayed toward financial benefit. Your responsibilities are great, and the pressure of educating approximately 300,000 students is no doubt daunting.

Laura McSwain:

Weighing water savings against children's health, however, should not be a close call. Our appeal is for you to review the available data and consider a future of plastic hardscape, dust and exacerbated temperatures that will be the future of our children, grandchildren, and future generations, and weigh that against the perceived benefits.

While SNWA's estimated 1.2 billion gallons of annual water savings for all these conversions seems like a stunning amount, it amounts to water savings that have been estimated to be less than 1% of Nevada's, of the water that we have when you include Nevada's allocation out of the Colorado and other resources, other water resources that we have in the valley.

And the financial cost to taxpayers? Collectively \$360 million. What will that cost be in another eight to 10 years when these materials reach end of life, and who will be paying the bill, then? How many permanent teacher hirings might this pay for within the district? What other price is being paid for heat stress, allergies, burns, and joint injuries, the Water Fairness Coalition being aligned with these experts we stand... I'd like to bring up, and I can give you this PowerPoint presentation. And I need to find it. I got derailed at the FedEx office.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you for that. We will actually move to take a five-minute recess, so we can set that up. Thank you. We will be back at 5:41.

Recess: 5:36 p.m.

Reconvene: 5:52 p.m.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you everyone. We are coming back from our recess. We will turn it back over, Dr. Kopp, welcome, for the ten-minute slideshow presentation.

Kelly Kopp:

Thank you, Vice Chair Adams. And thank you to the board. I appreciate the opportunity. I also just wanted to add a word of introduction to what Laura shared with you and that is that at Utah State University, I direct our Center for Water-Efficient Landscaping, and my entire twenty-five-year career has been devoted to water conservation in the landscape and for outdoor purposes. So, with that, I will begin, and understanding that I've got a ten-minute time constraint, I will be moving quite quickly through some of this information.

Artificial turf has been around since the 1960s, and it has changed quite a bit over time, mostly in response to complaints about injuries and that mostly from professional players, to today when we have very modern products that have all different types of infills. And you heard a great deal about that already. I appreciate that this district has moved away from crumb rubber because that did present some particular health concerns.

Kelly Kopp:

Today, I have information about the life cycle costs of artificial turf as compared to natural grass. And they do, I'm afraid, conflict somewhat with the previous presentation. For example, in a study in 2005 out of Missouri, the comparison of average annual costs between artificial turf and natural grass was significantly different with natural grass being much less expensive. Of course, that was quite some time ago, and now we have more recent information from 2016. And I apologize because the formatting isn't quite right there. But the bottom-line take-home message here is that again, in multiple locations and across multiple types of use, university, public school, and parks department, the cost for maintaining natural grass fields was significantly less than artificial fields. That continues to be the case today.

Maintenance, of course, is going to vary between the two types of fields, but the take home point I want to leave with you there is that maintenance is required in both cases. The idea that there is little to no maintenance with artificial turf fields is simply not true. It's different maintenance, but it is equally time-consuming, equally resource-intensive, and so that is something that I think should definitely be considered, so things like removal of debris, reducing compaction. Some of these things are consistent, whether it's artificial or natural grass, but again, my point is that there is maintenance required regardless of the surface.

And some things you might be surprised by, for example, artificial turf requiring the removal of weeds. That might be something that you thought only occurred on natural grass fields, but it does not. And in addition, and I think very relevant to the conversation today, the requirement of irrigation on artificial turf fields. Some mention was made of the heat concerns previously. That is certainly true. But irrigation is also required to clean these fields because they can harbor bacteria, which I will get to, as well as controlling particulates regardless of the infill material. So, quite a bit of maintenance.

And I would also add that the information I'm sharing with you here today is all supported by scientific peer-reviewed articles in literature, and I'm happy to provide that information to you. Some of that literature and perhaps this is the study Brandon referred to earlier-from New England has found that irrigation needed to be applied with each event to maintain safe playing temperatures. This was in Pennsylvania.

More close to home, perhaps, New Mexico State University has found that keeping artificial turf cool enough to play on requires the same amount of irrigation as a natural grass field. So, the water savings, I have some questions about. And again, irrigations are still required for cleaning as well as particulate control.

Natural grass, again, also requires maintenance, of course, we know this, it does tend to be less expensive overall when you consider lifecycle costs.

Kelly Kopp:

Something else that I don't think has been brought up is the lifespan and disposal of artificial turf fields. In a climate of high elevation, high sunlight, like you have here, granted, cooler and a bit more rainfall, fields are lasting in the neighborhood of eight years and then requiring replacement. The additional challenge there is that the disposal costs are significant and we don't have great recycling options for artificial turf, and there are, sometimes, environmental handling costs for disposing of it in landfills.

So now, on to human health considerations. So, a lot of orthopedic injuries are of concern, those have been mentioned, so things like tendon tears, muscle strains and spasms, et cetera, increased soreness. But there is also information there on natural turf and the injuries that occur there. And the injuries in the two surfaces are different when you consider equally well-maintained surfaces. And in both cases, changing surface texture over time is a huge concern and that's where a lot of the maintenance on artificial turf comes in. They really have to be maintained well if you're going to avoid inconsistent surfaces and increased injuries, just like a natural grass field.

Things that are considered in some of the research, I will just share with you the kinds of shoes. What environment is the field in? What type of synthetic turf is it? What type of natural grass is it? How old are the surfaces? And of course, again, level of maintenance is a big deal as well as the use of these fields.

There are a number of peer-reviewed research articles available on the orthopedic injury aspect. Some research has found that there is not an overall higher injury rate on synthetic turf, but other research has found that there is, both peer-reviewed and not peer-reviewed. And by not peer-reviewed, I'm talking more about surveys of NFL players and things like that. So, a good amount of data is available on those particular human health concerns.

I will skip through that and then talk about other human health considerations like fine particle inhalation from whatever the infill may be. Toxicity in the case of rubber infill, although I know that is not the situation here. Silicosis, which is the inhalation of silica from the breakdown of the grass blades in artificial turf, skin and lung concerns, creating allergic or toxic dermatitis and asthma. As well as cancer concerns, again, due to inhalation ingestion and dermal contact.

I mentioned, briefly, earlier, concerns about bacteria, and the reason that, sometimes, we're applying irrigation to clean artificial turf fields is to help address this.

MRSA is antibiotic-resistant staphylococcus aureus. This is a common issue, especially in high school football. And some of that is dealt with by treating these fields with detergent and disinfecting them. Some of that is helped by the addition of ultraviolet light. High temperatures can also help.

But the survival rate of MRSA on commonly used natural grass is comparable to artificial turf and no disinfectants are required for natural grass.

Kelly Kopp:

Other considerations, and some of this has been brought up, heat is a huge concern. Generally speaking, artificial turf fields, and it's cut off there, but what that says, they are 50 to 104 degrees hotter than natural grass under sun exposure. That's particularly true in a climate like this where we have some elevation and we also have a great deal of sunlight year-round. And this effect is particularly true in this climate.

Ooh, I'm not sure what I did there. There we go. Just some illustrations of the temperature differences. This is the same location and what you see there are differences in air temperature of 94, and I won't go through every single one, but the synthetic turf there is 165 degrees Fahrenheit, and the natural grass is 104, so quite a bit different.

This is just additional research illustrating the temperature differences between natural grass fields and synthetic fields. Again, striking differences in temperature that we found at a climate with high elevation and a great deal of sun exposure.

Something that has come up more recently are PFAS, and these are also known as the forever chemicals, and they are of concern in many, many, many different arenas, not just artificial turf. And they have been found to be elevated on players' hands after play on artificial turf. So again, environmental leaching of these compounds is a concern, and disposal risks also exist.

So, wrapping it up with environmental considerations. I'm going to move past the crumb rubber infill because I know that's not the situation here, but when water is moved through these fields, and it must be moved through these fields due to regular maintenance, there is concern with toxicity to aquatic organisms from leachate, particularly following installation, toxicity to surrounding soils, and then significant micro and nano plastics released during decompositions.

So, I'm not going to belabor this. There are a number of benefits to natural grass including cooling, dust and smog control, fire prevention, noise abatement, et cetera.

And artificial turf is also not without some benefits. It does have applicability in some conditions where natural grass simply cannot grow due to either temperature or light issues. It can tolerate a lot of traffic. It can be suitable for certain situations like pool surrounds. Can be fun with fiber optic lighting.

And it is used professionally today. There are a number of NFL stadiums that do have artificial turf. I think this is largely the result of legacy stadiums that were the first indoor stadiums that didn't have access to sunlight for the grass, but your own Raiders Stadium is a stadium with natural grass because of NFL player concerns.

So I am at time, kept it to 10 minutes Superintendent Ebert, but I'm be happy to answer questions if you have them.

Brandon McLaughlin:

So, at this time, I just want to... Brandon McLaughlin for the record. ... I just want to thank SNWA, Keith Wipperman with Centennial and Water Fairness Coalition for joining us here. We have a series of other district representatives as well on hand to answer from the maintenance, and athletic perspectives, I believe. So, we'll open up for any questions at this time.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you for the presentation. And as a reminder, this is not an action item, so we do not have public comment section, but we are ready for questions. Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. And I do want to thank my colleague, Trustee Stevens, for bringing this presentation to the board. I know I received a lot of inquiries about this, so I really appreciate that.

And I do want to echo what Principal Wipperman had mentioned from Centennial, my son was in middle school, and so we traveled to a bunch of different middle schools for his games and the fields were very lumpy and they were very full of holes and all sorts of things.

And Mr. McLaughlin, I wanted to go back to slide three. I'll jump around a couple slides for these assembly bills. I was quickly looking them up. Again, I know you had mentioned they were for non-functional turfs. Is there any requirement in law pushing the school district to convert to artificial turf?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record. I believe Ms. Pellegrino answered that, that non-functional is the only one tied to 356. The other ones, the competitive playing surfaces are strictly elective, we're not required to. And I think that she hit that home pretty good.

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you. And then, I know we had gone into a little bit on the rebates and we talked about that. So, it's on page four of the presentation, the rebates. So, I know that the SNWA had mentioned 6 million in rebates. I'm just curious, are they being paid out per project, like, as we go, we receive funds for them?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record. Yes, each project completion has a closeout process where they're going on site validating that the project was completed in conformance with the plans and specs. And then, all the conditions of the interlocal agreement are met as to how they close those out. And then, each project is issuing payment.

Trustee Dominguez:

Got it. And then, as it shows on page eight, it was 36 million for the completed turf projects and only 6 million in rebates. So that left us with 30 million. And so, where the funds... And I know I'm flipping back between page four and page eight, but I saw that the funds were coming from excess statutory reserves. How are we making sure that the district is prioritizing security and HVAC ahead of artificial turf?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record, we just balance that among a myriad of priorities on facilities and grounds fronts. And so, yes, we're continuing to make security improvements, we're continuing to make HVAC upgrades with available internal forces and to general contractors on those fronts. And then, turf, like we mentioned, back in '23, was a voted and approved priority of the board at that time to prioritize dollars towards these initiatives as well. So, it's just one of a myriad of priorities we have.

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you. I know everything seems like a priority, so it's hard to balance, but I want to make sure in the scheme of our... if we have a criteria, what's the number one part of it? Is it security or is it the artificial turf?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record. Both, among everything else on that list of the categorical approvals. The high need things are things that'll close schools and we do prioritize those, but all the other projects on that list are things that are of interest to bettering our learning environments for our staff and students.

Outside of that, there's not much established priority, but that's what that fund is for, those things that we know need life extension, so carpets, playgrounds, HVAC related, not wholesale replacements of entire systems, but one AC unit at a school needs to be replaced, and that's the fund to do it with.

Trustee Dominguez:

Got it. And so, I just want to point it out that that is about 30 million that is not being covered by rebates.

And this question was for Dr. Kelly Kopp. Hopefully, I said that correctly. Some of your slides, it really struck me, especially the one with the radar for temperature. When you compare natural gas to artificial turf, in your professional expertise, is this making the climate hotter?

Kelly Kopp:

Kelly Kopp for the record. Sorry. Yes, indeed. This is making the climate hotter. And this is why a number of communities, not only in Utah, but other states as well, California, New England, are

Kelly Kopp:

really looking at this issue carefully, and making the decision not to install vast amounts of artificial turf. It is most definitely making a difference. The temperatures are striking.

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you. And one last question, and you had mentioned something about the disposal of the artificial turf. I'm a big recycle person, but I do know that these bottles are going to take 20 years to recycle. What kind of environmental impact do these artificial turfs have on our environment?

Kelly Kopp:

Right. And that's one of the concerns that I have about them. Their lifespan is not all that long. The industry will tell you eight to 12 years, in my personal experience, it's closer to eight, then the product has to be removed and often landfilled because there simply aren't recycling options for it. What becomes a concern following landfilling is the leaching of all of the materials that comprise the artificial turf, including PFAS as well as a number of other concerning compounds.

Trustee Dominguez:

Yeah. Thank you. And I know this is not a non-action item, but this is very concerning. And I know a lot of constituents, and myself as a parent, have experienced this on the field, and just hearing from constituents. So, I appreciate both of you for bringing this presentation to us.

Kelly Kopp:

Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Dominguez. Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:

Thank you, Madam President. Mr. McLaughlin, regarding the data, you said when it came to the injuries, you mentioned there's mixed results. And that's something that really concerns me because that opens, leaves us open and liable to lawsuits in the future, especially with situations like what happened last year at Spring Valley High School, my kids were in school, and I know who the coach is.

So, we shouldn't have to leave it to our educators to try to figure out what kind of conditions would harm students if they're just doing normal routines and just having students exercise regular routines on the field.

And then, number two, I have a question. Are we testing the cleanliness of the synthetic turf right now in schools?



Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record. I have to confirm what our team's step-by-step process is, but I do know we have antimicrobial treatment that we apply to our field. So, I'd have to verify what the exact step that they do that and if they're checking with any, say, ASTM rating within that.

Trustee Biassotti:

Okay. Thank you. And one last question to Ms. Kopp. Considering the human health conditions that you went over, very alarming. The fact that MRSA and other harmful bacteria can thrive in artificial turf, we should be calling for immediate action on something for this to be addressed in making sure that our students aren't getting sick off of these fields. So, I think that's something we really need to consider immediately. So, thank you. Thank you for that informative presentation.

Kelly Kopp:

You're welcome.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Biassotti. Trustee Henry?

Trustee Henry:

Thank you so much, Madam Vice President. I know that you all spoke about the infill that's being used, I had a question about the turf backing, what's the material used for that?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record. It's a nylon-back product. And I have to get the exact specification for it, we can pass it along.

Trustee Henry:

Okay, thank you for that. And the other question, when we're talking about student safety and injuries, at the schools that currently have turf, has there been an increase of injuries or not? I know we were talking about a mix.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Yeah, Brandon McLaughlin for the record. I think it's probably too early to tell that, but it's a good data point, something that we can begin to track.

Trustee Henry:

Okay, thank you. That'll be helpful.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Trustee Stevens?

Trustee Stevens:

Thank you. And thank you guys for showing up and presenting and giving us all this wonderful information to help us always answer the question that we have at the end of the day, is, what's best for our kids? Right?

So, as I listen to these presentations, and I'm thinking about this, I'm also thinking about fiscal impact, and I know it's been mentioned a couple of times. And I'm seeing on here that with putting in these fields with the synthetic turf, that it would include 21 million in rebates.

I think what I'm trying to understand is if the synthetic turf only lasts for eight to 10 years, that's if we take good care of it, right? Are there any rebates for us when we have to do that? And then, do we have a disposal plan? I guess, I'm wondering what our plan is, big picture, for these fields?

With grass, we know we got to keep sodding it, we got to keep cutting it, we got to keep watering it. In a situation like this, it sounds like we might need to have a plan in place for pulling it out. How are we going to dispose of it? How are we going to put in more? What's that cost, cost per field?

I'm just kind of wondering the fiscal impact as well because a point was made earlier about, like, what does that mean in terms of dollars compared to the grass? Because if it is more, how does that impact when we're trying to pay for more teachers and cost of everything else in education goes up as well? So, I'm just kind of thinking about what that looks like, if we have a plan in place or are we thinking about doing that a little bit later down the road?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Good question. Brandon McLaughlin for the record. So, the plan is that our business and finance tracks fields much like all of our other physical assets, and so they are assigned a lifespan. And so, we very much track when those life cycles are met. And then, just like a flooring product, we know that in eight years' time, we have to budget for those, and that's exactly what the business and finance team has done with that, so that we know, eight to 10 years' timeframe, we need to have an improvement project that goes and replaces that turf and infill material.

And we're seeing the success of that. I mean, there's a demonstrable of that in our carpet. The UPC, unit price flooring contract, when we did that in '21, we're now coming up on carpets in schools that are also of that lifespan. And in fiscal year '26, we'll start going back and replacing some of those ones we did in the first wave of that. And that's the same process we're going to utilize on the turf, again, from that excess statutory reserve.

So, the drawing of comparison between how many more teachers could we pay with that or what other general funds that we do from that, well, none, because it comes from excess statutory reserve.

Brandon McLaughlin:

When I have to deploy more maintenance workers to service a natural grass field, that does take away from general fund dollars, which does take away from our educators. So, it's helpful to understand which stream the funds are coming from to make statements such as that.

Trustee Stevens:

Thank you. I appreciate the clarification. Madam Vice President, are we doing just questions right now or are we doing discussion as well?

Trustee Zamora:

Both.

Trustee Stevens:

Okay. I would like to note, I did a lot of research on this myself. One of the things that I read about was that some of the studies that came forward that struck me were that some of the studies showed that one of the reasons that NFL is starting to kind of... why the Raiders have their natural grass field is because the synthetic turf tends to provide knee injury.

Specifically, they were testing football players, not necessarily all athletes, but they did a study on football players and they said that football players were more prone to knee injury three times the amount than on regular grass. And so, I found that to be interesting when we start thinking about our kids.

The heat component really bothers me as well because I think, kind of like my colleague said earlier, the slide that showed the difference in degrees from even the asphalt to the syn turf and how much it retains that heat, I get a little nervous about that for our kids. And that the only way to cool it down is with more water, but then that kind of takes away from the reason why we did this. So, I don't really have any more questions. I'm just trying to say I like the grass. I just say that, I like the grass.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Thank you, Trustee Stevens. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. And thank you all for the wonderful presentations today. It's great to hear the different perspectives and to get a lot of the data.

I was wondering, and I'm just going to go ahead and say this to Brandon because Brandon endured, I want to say, countless questions from me in 2021, I don't like artificial turf. I mean, that's just my personal opinion.

Trustee Cavazos:

Having grown up in Arizona, we didn't have a lot of grass around just like here in Nevada, so when I go to Oregon or Washington or something like that, it's just such a treat.

However, in my role as a trustee and as one of the Region IV representatives on NIAA, when I started getting so many messages from coaches, from athletic directors, from principals asking me to come out to the fields in my district and to walk those fields, I remember Chaparral was really scary. I thought one of us was going to break a leg there because the holes and it was just terrible, I had to weigh what the coaches and the parents and the community were saying against my own personal opinion of I don't like artificial turf.

So, I just received a message and I hope that Dr. Alsbury is not watching me because he just said, "No, you better not be on your phone," and et cetera, et cetera. But this is a coach that's listening to the meeting. It's not a coach in my district, but it's a coach I know personally.

And he says, "Linda," he says, "I wasn't a fan of this either." He says, "You walked our field, you saw what it was like." He says, "We have not had more injuries." Now that's unofficial coming from one person, I'm just going to say that right now.

He says, "There's been some minor issues having to do with, sometimes, the water and the cooling and when it's available, et cetera, as far as using the water cannons." But he said the same thing that Brandon did, "When the coaches follow the instructions," he says, "we love it."

He says, "I'm not going to try to get into the trustee stuff, the water savings and all that," he says, "but the football fields are lined permanently." He says, "We can use them for more than one sport just on that. And basically, there are..." He's saying, "at about halfway through the season, with the old fields, they were torn up halfway through because they're not just being used for football games, they're multi-use surfaces."

So, he's listening and he wants the folks that are telling us about the environmental impact, he has had, I think, six kids that have gone through CCSD, all have been athletes, boys and girls. So, he says he really, really understands that, but wonders if there's just some kind of way that we can look into this without taking away, because these agreements, they're done. I mean, these are already a done deal.

And the last thing he said is, "I don't want to give away the school," but let's just say he's excited about one of the projects that have not been completed yet with our upcoming, but he wants the environmental folks that came in to tell us about that, that he really appreciates the information. So, from one of our CCSD employees and parent.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Cavazos. Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

Yeah, I don't have any questions, so I'm going to take a point of privilege to just do some opining and I guess, thinking out loud because I know that, at some point, we're going to have to find a solution. So, my hope is to share some thoughts and then we could use those as a way to us work towards a solution to this because this is a challenge that we have and so we'll have to figure it out.

I think the first one I was thinking about is I appreciate bringing up the NFL, and I love watching my Washington football team play on natural grass. And I recognize though it's not necessarily apples to apples in that the professional football team, their job is to think only about football fields and football playing. And so, yes, I recognize that they're going to invest significantly more in keeping a natural grass because that protects millions of dollars' worth of athletes who play on it.

And so, I want to make sure that our students are safe. And you know, NBA courts aren't the same as high school basketball courts. They're not going to make the same investments in that because we don't have the resources that the Los Vegas Raiders do. So, I don't know that it's always a comparable point to say that because NFL does it, we should try to think about the way that we do it and the way that they do it.

And we live in a place that grass isn't natural. We built out of the desert, and so we created our own issue here. And this is a person who came here in 2013, so I chose to come and I'm part of the problem, I recognize. And we have to figure out, how do we make sure that we keep this place safe?

Because grass isn't natural to this place and so, to think that just putting more grass in is going to be the solution, I don't know that that is it because we don't have enough of it and it's not going to grow easily and the water isn't going to regenerate in that space.

And so, we'll have to think really creatively about, what is the middle ground to try to figure out between how do we have a place that's not so hot, the surface, it's not going to kill students, and this grass isn't natural to this place and we can't afford to try to figure out how to make it generate here?

And I guess also thinking, now that we are halfway through this plan, what would it cost to stop the plan, to then rip out all the turf, put grass in every single football field, every single baseball field, every single soccer field, every single softball field? That, in and of itself, costs millions of dollars and we don't have the money to spend on that, and then maintain that moving forward as well. So that's a consideration that we have to think about.

And then, the last thing I was thinking is if we decide, so let's say we made the choice and we went to all grass, all schools' budgets aren't equal. And what I mean by that is it costs more to run a school in certain communities.

Trustee Johnson:

And so, if that school had to make the choice then between, okay, do I have no sports programs because we can't afford the maintenance on our fields and we can't afford the things, but we are going to spend that money inside the classroom, versus schools in communities that could afford all the extras plus the instruction, then we'd be creating another set of problems for ourselves around making sure that every school is a place where every student wants to be and that we would be a destination school district.

So, I know I raised a lot of issues that I don't have solutions for, but I guess what I'm saying ultimately is that we are going to have to be creative. And I don't think this is going to be a binary, we do all of one or all of the other.

And while I recognize that we don't have unlimited resources, whether it's water or money, we're going to have to be really creative because it's not just going to be like, let's take this list of pros and say, "This is the answer," or let's take this list of cons and say, "We can't do that one either." It's a really complex issue that's going to take some real good thinking from us around how do we solve this challenge? And I don't know that it's going to be just an easy solution to this challenge.

So sorry, I appreciate you giving me four minutes to just kind of say what was on my mind, but both sides had lots of great points and we just have a really complex issue that we're going to have to work through. And I think if we work collectively, not just 11 of us, but folks who want to see grass in our community, people who want to make sure that we're saving money, making sure we're keeping kids safe, we can all come to the solution. And I think more conversation might need to happen, if and when we have to make our decision.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Johnson. Trustee Biassotti, I see you in the queue, I would like to do one round of questions with the members who haven't gone yet, is that okay?

Trustee Biassotti:

Sure. I just had a comment. Well, actually, it's just a comment based on the information we're sharing with each other. I know I appreciate all the input, but I just had a comment for my fellow colleagues, when we're providing that information, I appreciate the discussion amongst each other and not from hearsay, basically. That information that's being provided, people that have something to say shouldn't say through us, that's what we have public comment for. I wish I could strike that type of testimony from the record so we wouldn't have to consider it, because at the end of the day, it's hearsay. We don't know exactly who and what is saying it. And we already did get training on this, so that's what we have public comment for. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So, I tried not to comment on this at all. So, I will express a concern that one of the principals expressed to me. I had a visit before school closed, and his concern was that projects that were already slated, when you talked about the inequity of some schools getting before and others not, there's real fear now that this was an agenda item because they are worried that their kids will not have the opportunity to have the field. So, there's just a fear factor right now with some of our administrators.

So, I'd like to know, and then I'll express as a follow-up. Mr. McLaughlin, like, has there been communication since... I know this was an approved item, things have been completed, but since then, has there been conversation with the ones that were not completed? Those site administrators, please?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin for the record. Yeah, we communicated with the project managers under construction management that are executing upon that, and so as soon as the directive was given to me to, "Hey, let's pause until this agenda item could come forward," on those nine remaining, those team members were instructed to communicate with each and every principal on that list or who they were coordinating with on site.

Whether they got their principal, I can't say with certainty, but oftentimes they coordinate with assistant principals, but their admin team was to be made aware, yes.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So, is that an indication that they've expressed a certain interest of one way or the other about the project being completed or them having a say?

Brandon McLaughlin:

I guess our team was instructed to share with them, "Hey, the nine that remained, we're going to temporarily pause them until the trustees can hear this agenda item."

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Okay. So, it is being paused?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Right.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Okay. So again, I want to reiterate that that is a real concern. So, I think our superintendent wants to weigh in and then I'll come back.

Jhone Ebert:

Yes, thank you, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan.

Jhone Ebert:

Twofold. Number one is, yes, the discussion not only locally, but the discussion nationally that is happening, and several of you have... there's a lot to weigh here. And so, our intent today was to provide you with information.

And then also too, I did have Deputy Superintendent Dr. Welsh send notification to all principals, 100% of them, to let them know that this discussion, not a determination, but the discussion, was being had tonight. They had the opportunity to weigh in.

We do realize this is the week of July 4th. It's a vacation week and all of that. So, it was very important that this was not a decision, it was the time to have discussion about where we are, research that was brought in different areas across, and so yes, I asked the team to hold for the board to be able to have discussion before we continue to move forward.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Thank you, Superintendent, for that. I just wanted that clarification because I just want us to be really mindful about how even discussions are going to impact the outcomes of our kids having access in an equitable way.

Yes, I know you guys kind of get tired of me saying I'm the former high school principal, but I was one of the first two fields that was replaced back in the day, and there were significant injuries, sprains, concussions, hamstrings, broken bones, as a result, unfortunately, because of the lack of... not because there wasn't a maintenance demand or concern, but it goes back to the resources, folks.

We don't have the water. We didn't have the personnel. So again, if we're going to have this discussion, let's go deep. Let's be really real about the reality of what we're going to do going forward.

And I do appreciate all of the presentation that we did here today. Real significant concerns. I will tell you that when those fields were replaced, that equipment was purchased, it's a specialized operational machine, I forget what it's called, that is purchased to be able to clean those specialized fields.

So, I think we need to just be really cognizant of how this would impact our kids going into the new school year, and what projects will go forward or not or what's going to be paused. I just want to put that down for everyone, so please be cognizant.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan.

I do have some questions. So, Trustee Dominguez, I see on the queue. I'm trying to look at my notes. Thank you for the presentation on both sides, turf project timelines, because as we talk about concern of what was on the agenda item, can you briefly give us what the timeline is for the



Trustee Zamora:

projects that are happening now? I know it's usually in the summer, but if you can give us just more information.

Brandon McLaughlin:

Great question. Brandon McLaughlin for the record. Yes, the turf projects are an immense coordination effort, and I wish I could say it only happens in the summer, but due to the volume of what these entailed, many of them were during the school year and during seasons.

So, there was a multi-unit coordination that happened to happen to be between other municipal agencies, nearby parks, as well as other neighboring schools, so high schools or middle schools, students going to high schools and vice versa.

And so, it was just intense, almost a year-long planning process so that student-athletes could know with certainty where games are being held, practices are going to be held, where transportation's going to be to all of them, and then if there's any medical accommodation needing or athletic training needing to go to those sites as well.

There was just a very robust planning process.

So, for this eight, yeah, it does have impact, and so it would basically push it into another layer of need to re-coordinate that depending upon when that action or any different action to resume those starts. Because that way, we'd have to see what sports were impacted, when their seasons start, the NIAA schedule, and when their first games are happening.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you for that. Another question that I have is, do we currently have a policy or protocol in place for outside activities? I know we get air quality protocols if it's too dusty, we don't do any outside activities. For the heat and the temperature, do we have anything like that?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin, for the record. Yes, our athletic coaches are aware of extreme heat protocol. So, there's certain check-downs they do, including washing down the field, among other things that they have to do for student-athletes.

Trustee Zamora:

Do we have a number of the Fahrenheit that if we hit that then it's absolutely...

Brandon McLaughlin:

I don't remember what the percentages, I don't want to misrepresent... Or sorry, the temperature is, so I don't want to misportray it too, but we can follow up with that.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay, thank you. The other questions I have is, as we talk about temperatures, Dr. Kopp, there was a slide in your presentation that showed the temperature for the synthetic grass in that situation. I was doing research and depending on the synthetic artificial grass that there is, the temperature will be vastly different. In that photo, do you know what material was for the artificial grass?

Kelly Kopp:

Kelly Kopp for the record. I do not.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. Then the other question I had, on your presentation, do you have any other data that is more focused on similar cities, like Clark County? We talk about the weather here. We're a desert. We're not California, we're not Minnesota. We are in a desert. Is there any other data that you might have that's more centered towards our living situation here?

Kelly Kopp:

Yes, and it's not going to be exact, of course, but the closest data available to me as I was doing the research is from New Mexico. That is also a desert climate. They do have somewhat more rainfall, and they are somewhat cooler.

However, I think that just makes the problem more clear here, where temperatures are higher and rainfall is even less. And that would indicate that those irrigation require... The findings in New Mexico were that the irrigation requirements were similar between natural grass and artificial turf fields in that climate.

So, I would anticipate, given higher temperatures and lower rainfall here, that the situation would be similar to that, if not more irrigation required here.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. And the grass that we have now, the artificial grass that we have now, do you have any data of the temperature that that hits? Is it as extreme as the photo or anything like that, because of the materials that we use here at Clark County?

Brandon McLaughlin:

Brandon McLaughlin, for the record. I can't remember those off the top of my head. I don't want to misrepresent them to you, but I'd say, due to the combination of the organic fill that we utilize, which is a non-PSFA coconut organic material, coupled with the water cannons, I believe we're probably lower than some of the pictures portrayed.

But I don't want to... That's not a matter of fact. It's just, I believe that and we can have SNWA follow up with some of those as well. But I'll dig up what we have available for that.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Thank you for that. And then I just have one more comment. I agree with Trustee Johnson. We have to stop comparing to NFL and the football fields because as shared, they have four fields here and our schools cannot afford having four fields for real grass. So that's also something to think about. But that is all. Thank you, team. Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you, Madam Vice President. This might be more towards for you. So, we just had two presentations from the NSWA and the Water Fairness Coalition. I would like to see their presentations entered into record.

Trustee Zamora:

They will. After this board meeting, actually, our board liaison is already working on that.

Trustee Dominguez:

Perfect, thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

And they will be for the public on BoardDocs. That's where you will be able to find it. Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

No worries. Ms. Pellegrino? All right, thank you, like the water. Can you share if you have any information about water savings that we've been able to see? I know there was a slide in Brandon's, Mr. McLaughlin's presentation that talked about the... I think it was slide 11. It showed the gallons of water that we've already saved. But the point of contention that I've heard from more than one person is that, one, with the maintenance that needs to happen, you'll have equal amounts of water to keep the field cool. And so that maintenance then equal a lot of water use.

Do we have any data that shows where we were previously?

And I guess maybe I'm just trying to understand how slide 11 works into what we've been hearing, as it relates to: we have maintenance that's going to require a lot of water usage, and that water usage will be equal to having grass fields because it's so hot on those fields.

Colby Pellegrino:

Right. So, I'll provide a little context. The precipitation really matters when we have these university studies from other cities that say we're going to see natural grass use this and artificial turf use this. Because if their natural grass is not using that 73 gallons a square foot that ours is to begin with, say, they're using 40 gallons per square foot, then what you apply to the artificial turf, to say they're using the same, is significantly lower and not representative of our climate.

Colby Pellegrino:

So, we do have some data on conversions of artificial turf, not for CCSO, that show these bona fide 73-gallon-per-square-foot savings or more.

The issue we have, and we were looking into this a little bit this week, is we don't have exact dates in our water use information for where every field stopped irrigating to prepare. So, we don't have a year over year where we say, "This is a year that the field was fully irrigated and this is a year, a full year where that field was not irrigated," to compare yet across schools.

That's something we're interested in doing, to make sure that we made a good investment and to help inform future investments for turf replacement that we might do in partnership. So, we are looking at that data and we would be more than happy to bring that back to you as we find it.

Our data, and the manufacturer data that we can find, indicates that it is maybe about 10% of what irrigation requirements would not equivalent.

Trustee Johnson:

All right. And then, Mr. McLaughlin, it'd be helpful for me, in order to see the full picture, would you be able to, and you don't have to do this right now, but when we have another discussion about this, total square footage of grass that's going to be replaced?

So, between all of the high schools and each one of the fields that are going to have to be replaced? Because I think that will help me do the equation of how much water, total water would have to be used and money to be saved, et cetera.

I know you might give us the aggregate, but if you could give how much grass we'd have to replace and water, et cetera, that would be helpful information for me to see.

And I don't know my colleagues, but I know for me, to help make good decisions, I just need to have as much information as possible.

Colby Pellegrino:

And some of that is in my presentation. So, slide eight in my presentation shows for the 27 fields that have already been converted, what the water savings is anticipated to be associated with those. And then for individual schools, those examples that I showed there is the amount converted at each school that we exemplified, what fields were converted and anticipated water savings is broken out by school.

Trustee Johnson:

Perfect, thank you.

Colby Pellegrino:

And we could provide that for every school if that's desired.

Trustee Johnson:

So, it'd be helpful to see every school that you all have already done and then also every school that's in our portfolio so that we can do the comparison across. At least I'd like to be able to do the comparison across. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Trustee Johnson. Well, I think that is it. Thank you, everyone, for the presentation.

Colby Pellegrino:

Thank you for having us.

### **Public Comment on Items Not Listed as Action Items on the Agenda.**

Trustee Zamora:

All right, we are moving on to item 3.01. Public comments not listed as action items on the agenda. I will give everyone one more minute if there's anyone that did not fill a yellow card.

Okay, I'm closing that section now and we will actually be doing two podiums when I call your name. We have Shandrea Daniel and Nakia Jackson-Hale. Ms. Daniel? Okay. Ms. Yvette Williams?

Unknown Speaker:

She left.

Unknown Speaker:

She had to leave.

Trustee Zamora:

Okay. Sorry, Nakia. Give me one second, I'm trying to get someone on the other one. And then Julie Wignall?

Unknown Speaker:

She had to leave also.

Trustee Zamora:

I apologize. Diane Henry. Perfect. If you want to take a seat over here. Thank you for being so helpful, Ms. Diane. All right, ready when you are.

### **Public Hearing**

Nakia Jackson-Hale:

Good afternoon, Madam Vice President, members of the board, and Superintendent Ebert. My name is Nakia Jackson-Hale, for the record. This is my first time making public comment, but I felt compelled to be here.

Nakia Jackson-Hale:

During my time on the board, one of the areas that our budget took a hit was on matters of legal settlements. In January 2024, the board approved a \$1,000,000 settlement for two Durango students that experienced an excessive use of force incident with Lieutenant Jason Elfberg. Yet, there we are, potentially putting ourselves in a position of liability.

Imagine my surprise when I heard on the news that Lieutenant Elfberg was being reassigned to oversee the CCSDPD Training Bureau.

I have seen additional stories that the appointment was pulled after a leak to the media and, I imagine, also due to the backlash from the community.

I am trying to process and make sense of such an appointment. It lacks a level of sound judgment from Chief Black Eye and anyone that works intimately with him that this appointment was able to move forward without being questioned or given a second thought.

Furthermore, I would like to read the statement from the district that is tone-deaf in nature and doesn't appear to address the matter directly, and as a matter of fact, includes a bit of gaslighting of concerned citizens:

"The Clark County School Police Department often adjusts staffing to best meet the of our community and our schools. The document you are referencing has been revised several times and will continue to change as we work to put the right people in the right seats. Lieutenant Jason Elfberg will continue serving in the same administrative role. We are focused on opening our schools so they are safe in the coming school year. For example, we are implementing the walking school bus initiative and cameras on school bus arms to better protect our students when they go to and from school."

After reviewing all of the personnel in the department, is Lieutenant Elfberg the best that CCSDPD could do? Someone that cost the district \$1,000,000?

Are our students really safe? I am beginning to question whether or not the leadership of CCSDPD has the ability to make sound decisions. We need to be better and do better. Thank you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. Ms. Diane?

Diane Henry:

My name's Diane Henry, H-E-N-R-Y. Regarding problems with the safety of artificial turf, please allow me to refresh your memory on some history regarding CCSD's prior use of synthetic turf fields.

Diane Henry:

In 2019, Darcy Spears and Channel 13 News Investigates uncovered serious issues with the artificial turf fields at five local high schools. This prompted the fields to be shut down for the season at Rancho and Clark until the turf could be replaced. Fields at three other schools were also scheduled for replacement.

Compared to the prior natural grass, concussions and brain injuries on these fields increased 300% due to this unforgiving hard surface. G-Max tests, which measure impact when an object hits a surface, showed Rancho had readings of 240 and 250. Anything over 200 Gs is considered unsafe.

Issues were surfacing about the toxicity of this crumb rubber infill that was being used at the time. Lawsuits were filed, and municipalities began to ban it.

While the newer types of plastic turf no longer have the highly toxic fill from years past, the core, fiber, and sand infill now used eventually breaks down and comes with dust and inhalation hazards of its own. And no matter the infill used, this material is still made from synthetic chemicals and plastics.

Our children should not be exposed to potential carcinogens, microplastics, growth-inhibiting chemicals, and other health hazards. You have a responsibility and liability here. As you've heard, constant maintenance is required to combat mold and bacterial growth, which makes these artificial surfaces even less healthy. Cleaning along with cooling requires water, which negates much of the water and cost savings you're hoping to achieve by spending tens of millions of dollars replacing all these fields.

Natural grass is cool and forgiving. Plastic turf gets as hot as asphalt in the sun and continues to cause problems such as heat exhaustion, burns, and abrasion injuries due to skin contact. Asthma and breathing problems have also been reported. Why must we expose our children to this?

Madam Vice President, if I may submit a written copy of my comments, it contains the link to the article that I reference by Channel 13 Investigates.

Trustee Zamora:

Yes, you will be able if you visit... The young ladies over here, they will give you an email or you can hand in the copy as well.

Diane Henry:

Thank you. And thank you, Board and Superintendent.

Trustee Zamora:

Norm?

Norm Schilling:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam Vice President. My name's Norm Schilling. I'm a horticulturalist here in the valley. I've been practicing horticulture and arboriculture for about 35 years.

Part of my background: for nine years, I was the lead groundskeeper for the Water District, and I took care of the Desert Demonstration Gardens, which was the predecessor to the gardens at the Springs Preserve. I was very proud to be part of the Water District, which is an amazing, wonderful organization, and very proud to be part of their conservation department at the time when this town first started talking about going from all of the lawns that we have into desert landscaping.

I do a radio show in which my tagline is, "This is Norm Schilling, your desert gardener." So please understand, I'm very environmentally conscientious.

In my work, I think a lot about... I do a lot of consultations. I go to a lot of communities and individual homes. I talk to people about what their options are and how to get from where they want to be to where they want to go.

About two years ago, I was at a property, and I looked across the street, and there were two gardeners with their blowers blowing the leaves off of artificial turf out into the street, which is a normal maintenance process. And as I watched that, it occurred to me, it just came like a thunderbolt.

I ride my bicycle out in the desert sometimes. When I do, I like to pick up some trash, bring it home, put it in the recycling, just help the environment a little bit. One of the things I try to do is I try and get the plastic before the plastic breaks down into smaller parts that I can no longer remove from the environment.

What's happening with all of that artificial turf that we see going into our communities and now into the school district and our children's playing fields is it is breaking down into microplastics and nano plastics. You do not see them, you're not aware of them. They're in your body. They're in your body today. They'll be in your body tomorrow.

When our children play on those fields, they are exerting themselves heavily. They're breathing very heavily. They tackle, they fall, and that material, all of this plastic, all of us who have lived here for any period of time understand that plastic in this hot, dry environment and high UV breaks down quite rapidly. And so, we are ingesting that. Our filtration systems and our buildings don't get rid of it. And the last thing we want to do is give a concentrated amount of this to our children to play on. So that's part of it.

The other thing is that some of the things that have been missing in the discussion up until this point is the effect that this has on our environment, including our landscapes.

When you put in artificial turf, if you want to kill your trees at home, put in artificial turf. That additional heat load and the lack of water is often a death sentence for many species of trees and other plants.



Norm Schilling:

The plants that surround, that we want in our high schools, in our public schools, are going to be much more stressed. And as that temperature load increases, their water needs are going to increase as well.

So that's yet another way where water savings are lost because we now need to irrigate our plants more, those that survive. Those that don't survive, we now have the additional cost of going in and replacing them.

There's lots of other reasons. I wish I had another 10 minutes, but I thank you all very much for your time.

I am available. I'm pretty well-known. You can find me. I'll be happy to take a call, spend time with any of you.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you.

Norm Schilling:

I thank you all very much for your attention to this matter.

Trustee Zamora:

All right, that closes up item 3.01.

**Upcoming Meeting of the Board of Trustees – Thursday, July 10, 2025, 5:00 p.m.**

Trustee Zamora:

Now we're moving on to upcoming meeting announcement. The next meeting of Board of Trustees is Thursday, July 10th at 5:00 p.m. in this boardroom.

**Adjourn:** 6:54 p.m.

*Motion to adjourn.*

*Motion: Henry    Second: Biassotti    Vote: Unanimous*

*Motion passed.*

Trustee Zamora:

I'm now looking for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Henry?

Trustee Henry:

Thank you so much, Madam Vice President. I would like the motion to adjourn.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. I'm looking for a second. Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:

I'd like to say happy 4th of July, everyone. Stay safe. Happy Birthday, America. And I'll second the motion.

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you. I will close... Oh, we have to vote. Can you please cast your vote? That motion passes, six to zero. We have adjourned at 6:54 p.m. Thank you.