

## Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)

September 21, 2011

### Schools Represented:

#### Elementary Schools:

Alderwood  
Carl Cozier  
Columbia  
Cordata  
Geneva  
Happy Valley  
Larrabee  
Lowell  
Northern Heights  
Parkview  
Roosevelt  
Silver Beach

Sunnyland  
Wade King

#### Middle Schools:

Fairhaven  
Kulshan  
Shuksan  
Whatcom

#### High Schools:

Bellingham  
Sehome  
Squalicum  
Options

Co-Chairs: Sharon Stahl and Rachel Williams

District Staff: Superintendent Greg Baker  
Executive Team & Department of Teaching & Learning Program Administrators

Note Taker: Janet Kennedy, secretary to the Director of Communications & Community Relations

### Welcome

Co-Chairs Sharon Stahl and Rachel Williams extended a welcome to all. PAC members introduced themselves and the school they represent. Members also shared an area of interest.

### Announcements

Mark Dalton, Food Services Manager, announced the continuation of the Farm-to-School Advisory Committee to help improve the quality of food and educate children about how food is produced. The district will be offering Harvest of the Month beginning September 21 and will be held every third Wednesday to introduce farm fresh produce to students. Cherry tomatoes are being featured in September. Mark asked for volunteers who are willing to help in the cafeteria, serving or passing out samples. If you know someone who is interested, have them contact Food Services.

Dalton also announced "Taste Washington Day" on Wednesday, September 28. Lunch will be served using local organic chicken, bread, fruits and vegetables.

### Superintendent's Message

Dr. Baker encouraged PAC members to be key communicators to families in order to promote transparency and inclusion. Four main areas were identified as the district's focus through last year's Entry Plan community engagement process: 1) early childhood education (including full-time kindergarten); 2) flexibility and innovation at the secondary level (including online learning); 3) concept of One Schoolhouse (balanced and equitable opportunities for all students; and 4) system support for quality teaching and learning (Department of Teaching and Learning and support from Central Services). The District will continue to provide high quality education for students, even though we are experiencing diminishing resources. This has resulted in higher class sizes this year.

The District is making every effort to balance class sizes and was able to use the supplemental levy to help offset the impact on class sizes.

### **Leadership Team**

Dr. Baker asked his Executive Team to introduce themselves and to tell something about their role and scope of work in the district: Director of Communications & Community Relations, Tanya Rowe; Assistant Superintendent for Business and Accounting, Ron Cowan; Executive Director of Human Resources, Nora Klewiada. In the Teaching & Learning Department: Deputy Superintendent, Tom Venable; Executive Director for Teaching and Learning, Steve Clarke; Research and Assessment Manager, Brian Rick; Program Administrator of Special Education, Bethany Verner; Program Administrator for Title I/LAP, Trina Hall; Director of Curriculum, Jim Facciano; Program Administrator for ELL, Amy Carder; and Program Administrator of Special Education, Sue Thomas.

Dr. Baker asked PAC members to share one thing they appreciated about the district and one idea on how to make the district stronger.

#### **Appreciate About the District**

- Full-time kindergarten
- Support of administration
- Quality teaching and staff
- Direction of District
- One Schoolhouse
- Equity across schools
- Improved communication and visibility from the district level
- Leadership changes at Central Services
- Willingness to address concerns of parents
- Communication through SchoolMessenger
- Re-opening Whatcom early
- Communication between teachers and parents
- Push for pre-school education
- School Board
- Transparency and decision-making
- Commitment to evaluate groups (administrative, teachers)
- School supplies
- More collaboration with parents

#### **Ideas to Make District Stronger**

- More playground supervision
- Shorter school day
- Expansion of Bellingham Virtual Learning program
- Integrating needs of students/parents & volunteers
- Standardizing curriculum across the district
- Increased technology
- More focus on high achieving students and enrichment opportunities for all students
- Continued support for teachers in the classroom
- World language and art curriculum in all schools
- Building for Options
- Year-round school
- More challenges in high schools
- More rigor in the curriculum for grades 3-5
- Encouraging kids who are behind
- More integration of teams at middle school level
- More support for students transitioning from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- More positive leadership
- Coordination of volunteers from one-year to the next

Dr. Baker offered to meet with parent groups to share what is happening in the district and answer questions. He would also like to have a districtwide volunteer coordinator in the future.

### **School Calendar**

Dr. Baker distributed a copy of the revised 2011-12 School Calendar. The start and end times changed this year. Elementary started earlier and middle school later. The other significant change

was the elementary early dismissal schedule on Wednesdays at 1:15. The change resulted in an increase of three instructional days at the elementary level. The schedule eliminated the five early dismissal conference days before Thanksgiving for elementary students. The schedule retained the five parent-conference days at the middle school level as part of negotiations. Three on-site teacher workdays were embedded into the calendar. One teacher workday was put at the end of the school year to allow teachers to finish out the year. Tom Venable explained about the teacher workdays and responded to questions.

### **Brainstorm Topics for 2011-12 PAC Meetings**

Sharon Stahl asked PAC members to share topics of interest for 2011-12. The topics will be prioritized as guidelines for the chairs. Some of the topics listed were:

World Language

Volunteer Organizing

Advanced Learning/HCL

Individual Learning Levels

Experiential Learning

Transitions from Elementary, Middle & High

Academic (Social/Emotional)

Equity

- Enrichment program
- Schoolwide equity
- Reputation/school

Year-round school

Bullying/respect for differences and promoting understanding

High school fundraising across multiple schools

RTI (Response to Intervention)

### **Vote on Topics**

Sharon will add the topics and repeat the survey.

### **Announcements**

Gennie Clawson of the Bellingham Schools Foundation announced the “Race for Education” on Saturday, October 8 that will help raise funds for schools.

### **Next Meeting**

9:30 a.m. October 19, 2011, District Office Board Room.