

## **Board Summary: Community Linkage Meeting Connecting with Parents of Homeschooled Students May 3, 2013**

The Bellingham School Board and Superintendent Greg Baker welcomed parents of homeschooled students and district staff to a linkage meeting on May 3, 2013.

The purpose of the meeting was for the Board to engage in a discussion about how The Bellingham Promise connects with homeschooled families and to learn more about why families choose to homeschool. The Board asked attendees to respond to the following questions:

- What in The Bellingham Promise resonates with regard to homeschooled families, and how might it be improved?
- What are some of the reasons families choose to homeschool?

Parents expressed appreciation for The Bellingham Promise, and several said its mission and vision mirrored their own goals in homeschooling their children. Some agreed with a parent who suggested it represented an ideal vision, but it is limited by real world constraints, including a shrinking pool of funds, mandated standardized tests, and by some parents who seem to believe schools are solely responsible for producing good citizens. Several concurred with suggestions that a reference to the support of a safe environment be added, along with the need to foster independent thinkers and self-motivated learners. The advantages and challenges of using regional homeschooling partnership programs were also discussed. Attendees were in agreement that if the district created a partnership program, it would be welcomed by many; however, others suggested that the district needs to be cognizant of the fact that many homeschooled families desire no interaction with public schools. Some in the group asked that the district try to figure out how to be more welcoming towards homeschooled parents and students, and they suggested that an individual with homeschool experience who could serve as a district/homeschool liaison would go a long way towards fostering a solid partnership.

To view the complete notes from the meeting, please [click here](#).