

Summary of Community Linkage Meeting: May 12, 2011

Communicating with our Latino Families

Under the [Policy Governance model](#), the [Bellingham School Board](#) is conducting “linkages” as a way to connect with the community and listen.

The School Board’s third community outreach linkage on May 12 focused on listening to and learning from our Latino families and community members about ways to strengthen connections. The percentage of Hispanic students attending Bellingham Public Schools has doubled in the last decade, currently at approximately 12 percent districtwide with some schools serving more than 30 percent Hispanic students.

The Board of Directors uses information gathered at community linkages to reshape its policies to reflect the values of the community in meeting the desired ends or outcomes for students. These Board-adopted governance policies are:

- [E-1, Strategic Mission](#)
- [E-2, Academic Achievement](#)
- [E-2.1 Academic Competence](#)
- [E-3, Life and Learning Skills](#)
- [E-4, Personal Attributes and Ethics](#)

Board member Dr. Scott Stockburger welcomed families in English and Spanish. The essential questions the Board explored with the group were:

- How can we better support the Latino community?
- What are we doing that is working?
- What can we do better?

Interpreters assisted the School Board in communicating with Spanish-speaking families and community members who attended the meeting, held at Shuksan Middle School.

“On behalf of the School Board, we want to thank our families and community members who attended,” says School Board member Kelly Bashaw. “This was an important meeting to help us and our district staff better understand the desire of our Latino families to be engaged in their school communities and their children’s education, and the daily communication and other issues they encounter in making these connections.”

Linkages are expected to help the School Board with policy work and the Superintendent with operational work on topics of community interest. The Board plans to hold linkages regularly on a variety of topics related to improving student achievement.

Meeting minutes and reflections from the May 12 community linkage are posted at <http://bellingshamschools.org/communityboard-linkage>