

Community Linkage Meeting: Connecting with Our Latino Families May 12, 2011

Strategic Mission (Policy E-1)

Academic Achievement (Policy E-2)

Academic Competence (Policy E-2.1)

Life and Learning Skills (Policy E-3)

Personal Attributes and Ethics (Policy E-4)

The School Board welcomed family members of the Latino community, interpreters and school administrators. Director Scott Stockburger stated that the purpose of the community linkage is to discuss and explore how the District can support students and families of the Latino community in meeting the desired ends or outcomes for students. He proposed three essential questions:

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

What can we do to better support the Latino community and help students and families feel more comfortable and connected to your schools?

- Treat Latino students and families with respect.
- Need to have principals/administrators of color.
- When there are student issues between students, the school should ask the parents to meet with the school and other parents to discuss and help resolve the issue.
- Teachers should not punish students just because they are Latino, they should be treated like other students.
- A parent of a student who was reading below grade level talked with the school and was told the only option was Special Education. Student just needed help with reading.
- A student was told there was a rule not to speak Spanish in school. This is not true. Administrators at school work with staff and assist the parents who inquired.
- An incident with a bus driver toward Latino students caused the students to feel discriminated against.
- Parents should not leave behavior monitoring children to the schools. Parents should make sure children are not bringing anything to school that they shouldn't.

What are we doing that is working?

- It is good that there are interpreters at Shuksan Middle and Squalicum High schools.
- Sports and extracurricular activities are good. They help students stay busy after school.
- Likes Shuksan because Isabel Meeker is there to help as well as other Spanish-speaking staff. At Sunnyland Elementary School there is no one who speaks Spanish.
- Likes Shuksan because there is an after-school homework assistance program.

- The communication between the school and families is good but needs to be expanded to other schools.
- Very happy with the high school makeup class. It helps students get to graduation.

What can we do better?

- Use Latino parents to help supervise students. Parents would feel more connected to the school.
- Bus service from where she lives is too far, students have to walk 25 minutes. District staff will investigate.
- When new students move to the school, schools should know if they have gang history.
- Have all papers that are sent home translated to Spanish (permission forms, health forms, etc.). The registration form is in Spanish, but it said to answer in English.
- Parent is not able to help child with homework since it is in English.
- Parent does not always get a response from the school.
- Need to add security cameras at schools.
- Respect comes from the top down. Those in charge should show respect and it will be passed down.
- Have Shuksan monitor the park behind the school. (The park is not school property so the school cannot monitor it or prevent students from going there before and after school.)
- There needs to be more supervision in school to help control the gang influence. Perhaps an undercover person.
- Suggested teachers be in the halls during passing and outside before and after school to monitor students.
- Students don't report other students because they would lose their friends. Children do share information with their parents.
- Start a Latino Ready Station.
- Promote these ideas in all schools.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Baker summarized the comments he heard:

- Diversity and ethnicity of staff is important. The District needs to keep improving in that area.
- Respect was a key focus. Respect comes from getting to know people and knowing who they are, whether on the bus, in the classroom or in extracurricular activities.
- Communication is important and Spanish-speaking families need to know who to speak with to have their voices heard.

Dr. Baker thanked families for attending and sharing their thoughts and concerns. Their comments are important as the District strives to make our schools outstanding for all students. He also thanked the School Board for wanting to engage the Latino community in this dialogue and thanked Isabel Meaker for event coordination and translating as well as other staff for translating.

Families thanked Dr. Baker and the Board for providing this opportunity for them. They requested more meetings.