



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY LINKAGE SPECIAL MEETING  
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Shuksan Middle School  
October 30, 2018 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

**Linkage Attendees:**

- Families/Students
- Directors **Kelly Bashaw, Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hackler, Quenby Peterson**
- Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools **Greg Baker**
- District Leadership and Staff: Deputy Superintendent **Mike Copland**; Assistant Superintendent **Steve Clarke**; Executive Director **Kristi Dominguez**; Executive Director **Jay Jordan**; Assistant Superintendent **Bob Kuehl**; Assistant Superintendent **Simone Sangster**; Executive Director **Kurt Gazow**; Executive Director **Jackie Brawley**; Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Family Engagement **Isabel Meaker**; Director of Teaching and Learning **Bethany Barrett**; Spanish Interpreter **Erika Quintanilla**; Russian Interpreter **Oleg Shuvalova**; ELL Specialist **Kathe Koruga**.

**Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions:** School Board President Kelly Bashaw called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Dr. Baker welcomed attendees and invited all to introduce themselves and describe their connections to the school district.

**Meeting Purpose – Explanation of Community Linkages:** School Board Director Camille Diaz Hackler thanked everyone for taking time from their busy lives to be here this evening. She shared that the school board and district are very interested in learning how to best support families, and community linkages are an opportunity to strengthen the school board's connections with our students and families. More specifically, the board is seeking input on the goals we have set for our students through our board policies expressed in [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#).

**Small Group Discussion with School Board Members and Facilitators:** For discussion purposes, attendees divided into four groups, facilitated by Isabel Meaker, Kristi Dominguez, Steve Clarke and Mike Copland. The small groups focused on the following guiding questions:

1. What resonates in [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#)?
2. What is missing?
3. How does [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#) apply to your child and your family?
4. How could Bellingham Public Schools better meet the needs of students who receive ELL services?

At the conclusion of the small group time, Dr. Baker asked each table group to share briefly what they discussed. Following is a summary of responses to the guiding questions:

- We want kids to have the privilege to keep speaking their native language.
- Students need to be more challenged more.
- The teacher makes a big difference for students.
- There needs to be more focus on diversity. We talk about diversity, but it does not filter down to the classrooms.
- Diversity that happens in the classroom between teachers and students and between students and other students is important.
- Students may be treated very well by teachers, but still feel like they are on the outside. As an example, a sixth grade student who is very bright but struggles because he feels he is on the outside wants to move back to Mexico, while his parents want to remain here.
- Some students of color see each other but don't necessarily feel connected with one another.
- What stands out in [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#) is a passion for learning and strong character.
- Connections with different people in our organization are important.
- It's the words that matter.
- There has been a big shift in a lack of homework. Families feel there is now less information going home. Homework can encourage parents to learn alongside students.
- Kids can grow up in a bubble. Community service is good for students to learn empathy.
- Having a go-to person in the school made a difference in a graduate's journey through school.
- It is helpful to have help with translation when families are struggling.
- There is a need for students and families to be able to connect with a counselor in their first language.
- A student's first language needs to be valued at school. A family described their daughter feeling like speaking Spanish is a detriment, but a teacher helped to overcome that feeling.
- I don't want my kids to lose their first language.
- Are there things we can do to support families who want to learn English in the home?
- Advanced ELL class for students are needed.

Dr. Baker thanked everyone for being here this evening. The notes from this meeting will be added to the website and will be a part of our history. He shared that the learnings from this evening will be referenced in many settings including future school board meetings and executive meetings. We likely won't be able to fix everything that was talked about tonight, but you helped to improve things for students and families.

Ms. Diaz Hackler also thanked all who attended. She asked that families stay in touch; the school board can be accessed via the district website. Families can also talk with or email teachers and principals. She noted that continued discussion will help us to be better informed; this conversation was not long enough.

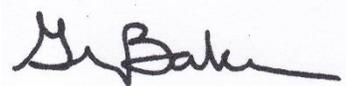
Ms. Bashaw thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

**Approved:**



Camille Diaz Hackler, School Board President

**Attest:**



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

*Minutes approved:* December 5, 2018