

Call to Order

Rob McElroy, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm, welcomed the group and introduced Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent.

Committee Members present:

Rob McElroy

Simone Sangster

Kurt Gazow

Rae Anne Thon

Patrick Buckley

Kevin Terpstra

Kirsten Wert

Steve Ruthford

Tanya Rowe

Isabela Padilla

Rick Nicholson

Ethan Berschauer

Jonah Stinson

Mary E. Anderson

Kim Brown

Richard Drost

Drew Graham

(Lindsay Ahrens, recorder)

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Baker offered thanks for gathering and invited people to introduce themselves and explain why they are interested in participating in the group.

Dr. Baker explained to the group that Washington state law mandates school districts provide transportation for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or students in special education. Even though that is the only legal requirement, as a community we consider general education bussing as valued.

Transportation has been highlighted in many recent district conversations including the bond approved by voters in 2013, which includes plans for improvements to the Transportation Garage. We place a high value on students and learning. Some of the district's support systems need attention to continue our current level of service and provide the services we desire for all students as a part of The Bellingham Promise. Initial thinking and analysis give us reason to believe we need more buses. There are ways this can be accomplished and one of the best ways might be a levy. With a specific transportation levy, more of our general fund dollars can be directed to teaching and learning.

Dr. Baker asked group members to look carefully at the topic and return with a recommendation for the levy.

Dr. Baker reminded everyone of their importance on the advisory group because of their unique perspective on this issue. He encouraged everyone to ensure their voice is heard and, when the time comes, also step back from personal perspectives to view the big picture.

Context: The Bellingham Promise, Transportation Levy

Rob McElroy reviewed the strategic plan for the district, [The Bellingham Promise](#).

Review of Charter, Team Norms, Consensus Process

Rob reviewed the [charter](#) of the group and [team norms](#), or agreements how we will work together. He also reviewed the use of a “Parking Lot” list for questions as they come up so we can continue to move through material but not lose the opportunity to hear insightful inquiry (see **Attachment A**). Questions will be recorded to ensure they are answered. Rob suggested that decisions be reached by consensus, if possible.

Where are we now?

Simone Sangster, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, offered a welcome to the group and provided a summary of the planned work.

Rae Anne Thon, Director of Transportation, took the group through a [Bellingham Public Schools’ Transportation](#) presentation about how we’re currently using buses. Simone talked about the current condition of the fleet – age, mileage, and vehicle replacement schedule and summarized the need for buses.

Funding School Buses in Washington State

Simone Sangster described what a levy is and how bus purchases are funded in the [Pupil Transportation – Buying School Buses](#) presentation.

Group Q&A, Discussion, Questions

Rob encouraged group members to identify questions or research they need to learn more about to do their work .

BPS – Transportation Levy Planning Advisory Group

Transportation Office

Wednesday, April 20, 2016 3-5 pm

Debrief

What worked well today?

- Efficient
- Diversity of group

What can we do differently next time?

- Quieter location

(Moving to the district office was proposed but it was agreed that it makes sense to stay at the Transportation Office to accommodate the staff who might need to respond to urgent matters.)

Next meeting

May 4 1-5 pm at Transportation - 611 Meador Ave

Closing

Rob McElroy closed the group at 5:04 pm

Attachment A – Parking Lot Questions

These items will help inform future meeting agendas:

- a. Spare bus ratio
- b. WTA – Opportunity
Will the district/WTA conversation be concluded before the group develops the recommendation?
- c. \$ Ridership & Mileage
- d. State efficiency – formula
What are the state funding amounts based on ridership and efficiencies? What are the state efficiency formulas?
- e. Depreciation – why when not state required service – law?
Is there case law around state depreciation? If so, is there any way to push back on the state to fully fund depreciation?
- f. How long – do we want to go out solving problem?
If we are looking at a 10-25 year outlook, do we want to think about how transportation technology might change and what the community will expect?
- g. Safe walk route
How will we address safe walk routes within this scope?
- h. # of students in a 2 mile
How many students do we bus in a 2-mile radius? What impact would it have if we changed the level of service from our current 1-mile radius?
- i. Level of service in 1 mile – eg. Roosevelt – Alabama
Can we review the attendance area (boundary) criteria to understand how those decisions are made?
- j. Type of bus – propane, electric, hybrid or shift w/in 15-20 yrs
Contract req'ts
Cost, envt impact
Is there an electric bus market for school buses? Can we have that data? Propane, electric, solar, etc.
- k. Boundary – walking

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Will new schools built in the next 10 years affect this conversation?

- l. Tech – know who is on buses
Can we have conversation about what technology might exist to tell who is on the bus at any given moment and how communication occurs when there is a difficulty (such as an accident or break down)?

- m. Sched change – impacts
ES – HS switch
MS impact / why more buses
How does the bus schedule change with bell time schedule change?

- n. Extra curric w/ outside bus services
What happens when school activities use charter buses instead of a school bus?

- o. Levy model
What are the tax rate impacts for families according to various amounts of levy dollars requested?

- p. Timeline of levy – other jurisdiction
What would the levy timeline be?
What other county and city levies might be on the next ballot?

- q. Op budget – district
Dept
Can we have an overview of the entire transportation budget and the entire percentage of general budget for transportation?

- r. Learnings from other districts on levy
Is there a community like ours who has posed a transportation levy recently that we might model or learn from?

- s. Other options than school buses for McK-V
Are there other ways to transport McKinney-Vento students besides school buses?

- t. Efficiency
Setting attendance area criteria
Scl loc. New scl in about 10 yrs
1 mile radius
Safe walk

- u. Ways of supporting Promise through levy e. technology, conservation site

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Examples of crossover beyond transporting students (for example, parking a bus with wife in a neighborhood with limited access)?

v. Profile of field trips - # miles, # req, # low-high

What are the field trip profiles and how might they be served in other ways (biking, walking)?

w. Limits on growth – facility, staff, op cost

What kind of growth can be handled at this facility? What are the implications of other costs, for example staffing, etc.

x. Ongoing costs of new replacement buses