Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) to the Superintendent Meeting
March 24, 2016 – Central Services Board Room
Key Communications

Each school has two representatives on this committee. Attendees introduced themselves and shared their connections with the school district. Dawn Brand and Grace Munson are co-chairs.

Remaining 2015-16 meeting dates: 4/21, 6/2

Superintendent's Update

- **Start/end times:** We shared details this week about our plans to adjust our schools' bell schedules in 2017-18. We have been refining our plans since receiving feedback on last year's proposal, and family, staff and student input influenced some of our modifications, like our decision to start elementary at 8 a.m. (instead of the initially proposed 7:45 a.m. start). We need to buy more buses in order to make these changes work, which is why we're exploring a transportation levy. Normally, we have 45 minutes between picking up and dropping off each level. Transportation complexities impact our bell time schedules, and we want to maintain our current level of service. You can watch a video that helps explain our rationale for the change. Dr. Baker answered questions about after-school activities, high school schedules and state funding. Dr. Baker is happy to talk with families or other groups (like school PTA's) to help engage our community and explain our thinking and process.
- **Leadership Updates:** This week, we announced that Bellingham High School's new principal is Dr. Linda Wise Miller. She will begin this summer as current principal Jeff Vaughn retires. Dr. Miller has been an assistant principal of Squalicum High School since summer 2015. She previously worked from 2008-2013 as an assistant principal at BHS, both with Mr. Vaughn and Steve Clarke, and as the district's director of career and technical education. We plan to name a new Director of Teaching and Learning to lead professional development and technology integration in our classrooms and curriculum. We are currently working to fill some of our vacant assistant principal positions at our high schools, as well.
- **Budget:** We'll be sharing our budget for 2016-17 in the coming weeks. Our district's biggest annual cost is our staff; about 85% of our budget goes toward maintaining our collective bargaining agreements, state mandated cost-of-living increases and salaries. We plan to utilize some funds for one-time expenses including curriculum and materials for first grade and high school; special education program needs; and school and facility improvements.

Restorative Practices – Steve Morse

- Director of Student Services, Steve Morse, talked about Bellingham Public Schools' efforts to change the way we address student discipline. Instead of the "zero tolerance" philosophy, we're trying to make a shift toward a more inclusive, restorative process to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsion daily and annually. There is strong research that shows students' skills, behaviors, learning and graduation rates improve if/when they are given the opportunity to take responsibility and make restitution of their mistakes. Squalicum High School Dean of Students, Katie Ruthford, led the group in a culture-building activity, which is part of the proactive restorative process.

Parents Matter – Kate Foster

- Kate Foster talked about the history, future and philosophy of the organization Parents Matter. Parents Matter helps provide speakers, presentations and trainings to parent groups (like PTAs) to help empower parents (as opposed hiring professionals) with tools and tips on how to talk to their children about a range of issues and concerns, like cyber bullying, anxiety and drug/alcohol use.

Announcements

- Families are invited to attend a presentation about cyber safety at 6:30 p.m. on March 31 at Fairhaven Middle School. Potluck at 6 p.m.
- PACS is looking for a new co-chair, if you are interested, please get in touch with Dawn Brand or Grace Munson.

The meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.
Next Meeting: April 21, 2016 at the district office board room