

**Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) to the Superintendent Meeting**  
**September 24, 2015 - 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 this year's co-chairs.

Quotable quote: "I'm only filling in today, but I love these meetings so much I just couldn't stay away!"

**2015-16 meeting dates:** 10/22, 12/10, 1/21, 2/25, 3/24, 4/21, 5/19

**Superintendent's Update:**

- Welcome and orientation: the **PAC is an advisory group** and is one of the many ways the superintendent shares his thinking, collaborates with, and gathers input from parents. This meeting is also used as an opportunity for parents to learn more about topics of interest to the group.
- **The Bellingham Promise** is our school district's strategic plan, developed collaboratively with the entire community, including students, parents, staff, and community members. It takes *all* of us working together to achieve the commitments we have made to Bellingham's children. More information is available on the district's [Promise website](#).
- We **started school before Labor Day** this year; a major driver was the goal to better align our schedule with Advanced Placement testing windows. One of the unexpected benefits was that Labor Day became a more relaxing three-day weekend rather than a "last push" to get ready to start school. Parents shared feedback and asked for more information in future about how the Purple Fridays (staff learning days) will be used.
- This year's **budget** includes a lot of new investments, particularly to reduce class sizes at the elementary and middle levels. Project Free Education continues to expand and address additional areas of school-related costs.
- We continue to focus on improved **safety and wellness** in our schools; Superintendent Baker introduced Jonah Stinson, our new Director of School Safety and Emergency Management. He will work closely with staff, parents, students and the community to help us prevent, mitigate and prepare for potential emergencies.
- A **Food Services Advisory Group** is working with students, parents, community partners and district staff this autumn to develop a vision for our food services program in preparation for building a central kitchen.
- This is a **levy renewal year**. The state does not fully fund the costs of educating students so school districts depend on local levies to pay for about a quarter of the day-to-day costs of running schools. Our Programs and Operations Levy and Technology Levy are scheduled to expire next year, so replacement levies will be on February's ballot. Expect to see more information about these levies in the coming months. Note: by law, the bonds our community approved a couple years ago can only be spent on the construction projects for which they were approved, and cannot be used to pay other costs.
- Speaking of the Technology Levy, funds from previously-approved Tech Levies have been used to rebuild the district's technology infrastructure to meet modern needs; they have also paid for new hardware (computers, etc.) in our schools and for improved staff and teacher training. A **Technology Think Tank** has been working together in recent weeks to consider what to include in the next Technology Levy. Among other ideas, they are looking into the logistics, benefits and risks of possibly adopting some form of a 1:1 program (which would provide a tablet or other device to every student in certain grades, programs, or subjects).

**Brainstorming Session: Future PAC topics, speakers, and / or activities**

Anda Adams from Teaching and Learning led the group through a brainstorming session to identify potential topics and activities for future PAC meetings. The work was organized in five parts: people

we'd like to meet, places we'd like to visit, as well as elementary, middle, and high school areas of interest. A sixth page was added as a catch-all for ideas that didn't fit into the other categories. Co-chair Dawn Brand collected the chart pages with members' ideas. The planning team will analyze the input and report back to the group in October.

**Announcements:**

- The **Washington PTA Region 8** hasn't yet scheduled its fall conference and is looking for a school to host the event. If your school is interested, please contact Lily Salas at BHS, [ptareg8@wastatepta.org](mailto:ptareg8@wastatepta.org).
- The **fifth grade strings** program is underway. There are 680 students involved and the program is looking for more instruments and financial donations. Violins, violas and 3/4-size cellos are particularly needed. Donations can be channeled through the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation.
- **Superintendent Baker welcomed invitations** to come talk with small groups (clubs, neighborhood associations, gatherings of parents and/or community members) about educational topics of interest. If you would like to invite Dr. Baker to a meeting or host a gathering, please contact his office at 676-6501.
- The Whatcom Community Foundation and Whatcom Farm to Schools have issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide **grants of up to \$10k** each to increase fresh, local food in schools prior to the Sehome rebuild. Letters of interest must be submitted by October 1. The [Farm to Schools webpage](#) includes details and applications forms.
- Please **mark your calendar** with the meeting dates listed at the top of these notes. Note that there is no November meeting this year; it has been rescheduled to December.