

BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Bellingham, Washington

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent

**DATE:** May 20, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Ends 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 Monitoring Report 2015-16

I am pleased to submit this Ends monitoring report to the school district's board of directors. This report includes a summation of our work this year in Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0. Monitoring reports are intended to provide members of the school board, and the community we serve, with a snapshot in time of our progress toward the mission, vision and outcomes defined within our district's strategic plan, *The Bellingham Promise*. This year, we've taken a similar approach to last year's concluding report on Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0, but with added attention to requests from the board that we provide a more balanced report in terms of presenting both qualitative and quantitative data. So, as with last year's report, we have embedded opportunities for board review of stories and examples that highlight different *Promise* outcomes observed throughout regular 2015-16 meetings, school visits and linkages. We have also relied on the archive of examples of the district's work in each of the outcome areas that are highlighted on the *Promise* website. With this approach, our staff has generated a final report that offers a brief definition and a quality example or two in each outcome area, but does not recount every possible example. In addition, we've included some newly available quantitative data in a number of outcome areas. The report attempts to paint a balanced picture for the board, showing examples of where we know we have strengths, but also highlighting areas that we need to continue to grow and pursue to make our school system work better for students. The report closes with a look ahead, and outlines some future work for focus.

By way of reminder, this Ends monitoring report is intended to serve as both an analytic and evaluative tool that allows us to:

- Demonstrate a reasonable interpretation of Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0, focusing specifically on evidence of progress;
- Identify areas where our interpretation does not align with our mission and outcomes;
- Use evidence of various kinds to demonstrate progress toward achievement of these Ends; and
- Review our Ends to ensure they remain relevant and inspire meaningful work throughout the organization and community.

## Introduction

The report details evidence on Ends 1.0, Ends 2.0 and Ends 3.0. To review, the Ends policies are as follows:

### Ends 1.0: Strategic Vision and Mission

Vision: We, as a community, make a collective commitment to Bellingham's children. We will empower every child to discover and develop a passion, contribute to their community, and achieve a fulfilling and productive life.

Mission: We collectively commit that our students are cared for and respected, and that they will graduate from our schools prepared for success in the global community. Each will be exceptional in his or her own way, with strong character, a passion for learning, and ready for the widest range of educational and vocational options to support a diversity of life choices.

### Ends 2.0: Academic Achievement

Bellingham Public Schools is committed to developing students and graduates who are:

- Readers and writers
- Scientists and mathematicians
- Historians and global thinkers
- Artists, performers and trades people
- Healthy, active individuals
- Multilingual readers and speakers
- Skilled users of technology and information.

### Ends 3.0: Skills and Attributes

Bellingham Public Schools is committed to developing students and graduates who are:

- Critical thinkers and problem-solvers
- Effective communicators
- Leaders, collaborators and team players
- Dependable and responsible workers
- Innovators and creators
- Confident individuals who continuously challenge themselves
- Respectful and compassionate humans
- Honest and ethical citizens who act with integrity
- Well-rounded community members engaged with the broader world.

In the paragraphs that follow, the report details the sources of evidence used, how that evidence was compiled and analyzed, and provides examples culled from that analysis to highlight the school district's work on Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 in separate sections. The report concludes with a reflection on progress to date and some suggested guidance for how the school district should respond in the future to what was learned through this process about identified needs in specific outcome areas.

## Data Sources and Analytic Process

Staff approached the development of this report as a natural outcome of what has been a year-long effort to embed examples of outcomes in all regular school board business. This included the board linkages and visits to schools. In addition, we gathered information from other individual accounts that came through emails or direct observation. In total, evidence sources included:

- Board visits, linkages, superintendent's reports on work occurring in the district;
- *Promise* website stories;

- Other examples that came through individual reports, sometimes sent directly to a member of the leadership team, and sometimes observed in practice;
- Additional quantitative data sources now available via the Healthy Youth Survey and the Panorama surveys being given at many of our schools.

All of these examples were compiled into one lengthy document containing dozens of stories, anecdotes, observations, data and reports gathered from across the year. Our staff pored over this raw material and selected a few representative examples to include in this report. Examples were chosen to highlight evidence of the results we are seeing across our schools at multiple levels including district-wide, level-specific (high school, middle school and elementary school), individual schools and classrooms, as well as striking a balance between qualitative and quantitative information.

### **Ends 1.0: Definition and Examples**

The vision that guides *The Bellingham Promise* clarifies that the work of developing students and graduates extends beyond the doors of our twenty-two schools to include the whole Bellingham community. It further specifies that as a community, we will empower every child to discover and develop a passion, contribute to their community and achieve a fulfilling and productive life. As we considered examples of the vision in action, we wanted to highlight those aspects of our work as a school district and community that seemed most connected.

The mission statement in the *Promise* states that we “collectively commit that our students are cared for and respected and that they will graduate prepared for success in the global community.” The mission goes on to note our intention that “every child will be exceptional in his or her own way” and that we are focused on developing “strong character” and preparing students for a wide range of life choices.

We were interested in including examples that give some insights as to how the *Promise* vision and mission translate into action. Our focus for the report this year is to elaborate on a few new ways that the school district “cares for” all students--specifically about how we are moving to address many kids’ basic needs of healthy eating and sleeping. One of the things we know as educators is that students who are hungry or who do not get adequate sleep come to school with two big road blocks to learning already in the way. This year our efforts to serve all kids included new work in both directions.

First, this has been a landmark year in envisioning and ensuring more healthy food for Bellingham children. Early in the year, the committee working on our central kitchen project engaged with Chef Ann Cooper and her Lunch Lessons team from Berkeley, CA to consult with staff on a new vision for food services. This consultation will result in a plan that helps the district move toward a central kitchen that improves the quality and nutritional content of meals served in Bellingham’s school cafeterias. Read more about Chef Ann and our connection here: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/02/02/nationally-celebrated-chef-ann-cooper-visits-bellingham-shares-thoughts-on-school-lunch-reform/>. Additionally, several of our schools eligible for federal funding support from Title 1 have moved to a “breakfast after the bell” model

this spring with the support from our food service staff. This effort serves a healthy breakfast to all kids in those schools in their classrooms right at the start of the school day.

Second, our effort to shift the high school start and end times was rooted in strong evidence from medical research about the importance of adolescent sleep patterns and needs. Our community weighed in with a high level of feedback as proposals for shifting the schedule were vetted, considered and revised. With every last pebble of feedback examined this spring, we finalized a decision to move to a more humane start time for high school students beginning in the 2017-18 school year. Additionally, as the year wound on it became known to Isabel Meaker (our Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Family Engagement) and her team that many students were sleeping on the floor or other compromised arrangements during home visits with some of our families. Isabel and her team members brought these concerns to the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation (BPSF) to see if the Foundation could assist with the purchase of student beds and other basic needs. In order to serve the immediate needs of families, the Family Support Fund was created. This fund will offer same-day payment to help students' families that meet qualifications, including providing beds to many families who are without good sleeping arrangements for their children. "We want this fund to be a hand-up, not a hand-out." noted Kathe Koruga, ELL and migrant advocate for the school district. "We want to build up the families to create a partnership that fosters success." More about this effort can be seen at: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/04/18/bpsf-and-generous-donors-help-find-beds-for-families/>.

While healthy food and quality sleep may not at first glance seem like core work driven by the vision and mission of our school district, more and more we are called by the *Promise* commitments to find ways to ensure that the basic needs of our children and their families are met. While many more examples could be included here to highlight how the vision and mission of the *Promise* came to life in our schools this year, our work to fulfill basic needs of students and families across the schools remains essential to our foundational commitments.

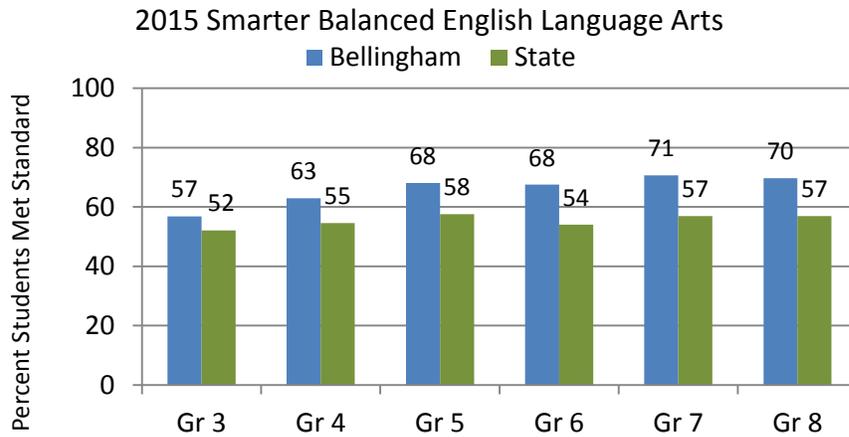
## **Ends 2.0: Examples**

Ends 2.0 focuses on seven outcomes centered on achievement. In the sections that follow, we offer an example or two of our work toward each of these outcomes. Each section concludes with a link to the specific outcomes page on the *Promise* website, where we continue to archive many great examples of work underway across the district.

- **Readers and Writers**

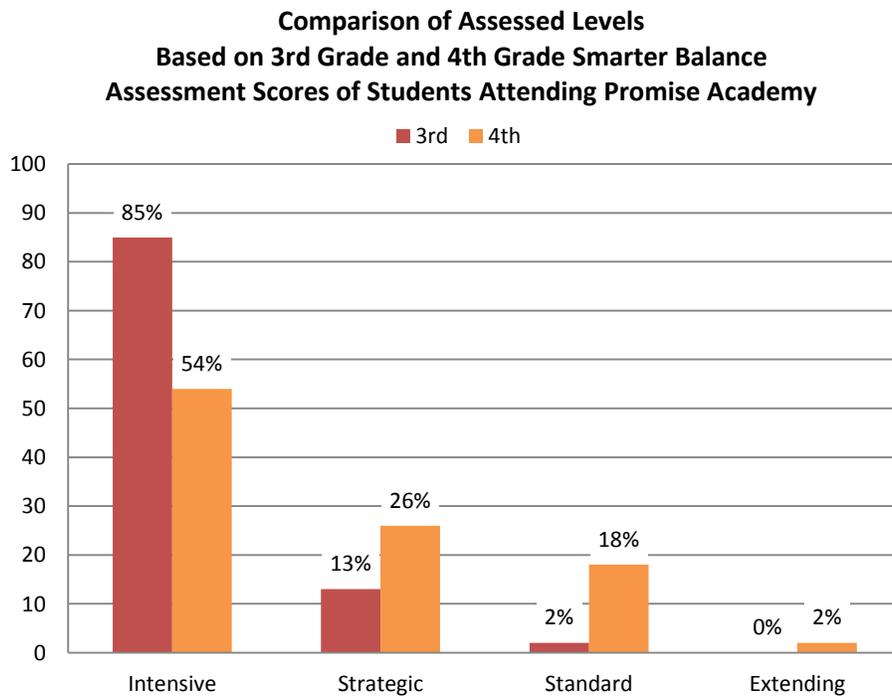
Reading and writing ability matters perhaps more than any other academic emphasis; third graders who fail to learn to read at or near standard are at a much higher risk for struggling or dropping out later in their school experience. Efforts to educate students and graduates who are able readers, writers, speakers and listeners constitute ongoing core work for teachers and for the district as a whole. Support for improving literacy teaching and learning, including material adoptions and ongoing professional development support in grades K-8 (such as Benchmark Literacy), the convening of a Teaching and Learning Advisory Group in English Language Arts, efforts to better coordinate secondary literacy programs across the schools, and the recent implementation of the Lucy Calkins units of study in elementary school writing, were all areas

we made a strong focus for 2015-16. If our efforts in literacy are having an impact, we would expect to see cohorts of students moving through our system whose achievement levels rise over time in the system.



As the graph included here shows, our students’ achievement on the inaugural Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) is shown to be above the state average in each grade level tested.

We’ve also been working to put new supports in place for students who need extra help getting to standard in literacy at the crucial step of third grade. The summer 2015 *Promise Academy*



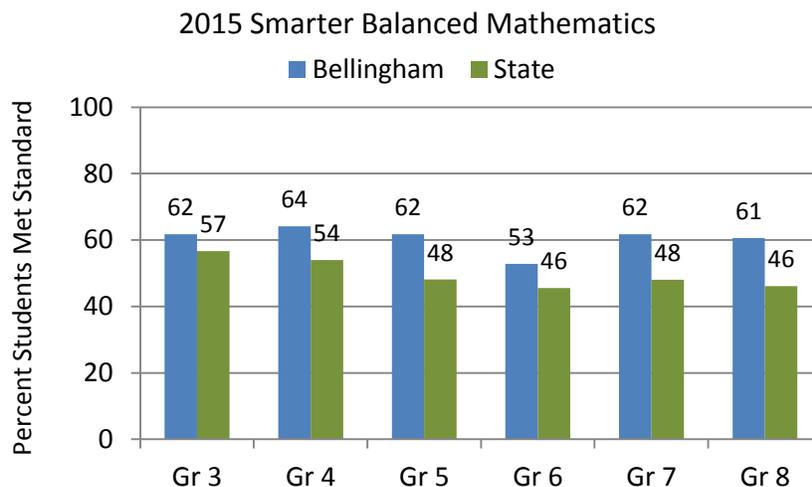
spanned four weeks and included sixty students in four classrooms who had completed third grade, but were in need of additional support to make progress toward meeting standards in

literacy during the summer break. As the graph above shows, this effort to help support our third graders who need extra instruction has resulted in many students moving from “intensive” intervention needs (students who are far below standard) toward meeting standards in literacy. The *Promise Academy* was envisioned and directed by district administrators Pam Pottle and Dawn Christiana and will be an ongoing initiative that supports closing the achievement gap with a lens on equity and excellence for all, underscoring the One Schoolhouse strategy of The Bellingham Promise. While we celebrate this good progress and support the program moving forward, the data also suggests that we still have much work to do to ensure that all third graders in Bellingham meet or exceed standard in literacy. A more detailed account of the work in the *Promise Academy* can be seen here: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2015/09/24/summer-2015-promise-academy/>.

A full listing of stories gathered regarding efforts in developing readers and writers can be found here: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/readers-and-writers/>

• **Scientists and Mathematicians**

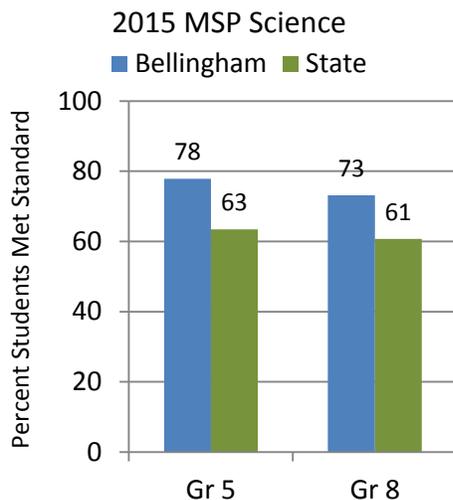
Our efforts to support learning in math and science continue in various ways this year. Math and science teaching and learning provide such an important basis for inquiry, invention and innovation, and give our students an important set of tools to support and grow their natural curiosity. Much work is underway across the district as our teachers have continued through the second year of implementation of a Pre-K through Algebra 2 curriculum adoption in mathematics, building their knowledge and skills through a series of professional development experiences at each grade level. Implementation fidelity is evident from observations in classrooms across the district; teachers are getting more familiar with the new curriculum materials as they work through the curriculum in this second year. Similarly to our work in



literacy, we’d expect to see proficiency rates above state averages and improving as students progress through our system over time. As the graph above shows, Bellingham students did significantly outperform the state average on the SBA math exam. We will continue to look at the year-over-year changes in achievement scores within specific grade level cohorts of students

over time and recognize that we are somewhat limited in our ability to track specific groups of students' progress this year, given that the SBA was newly implemented in 2015.

Proficiency on the Science MSP for 2015 was also well above state averages for those Bellingham students in the grades tested. The Developing Scientists Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee continued to meet this year to assess the current state of science instruction



and materials in the district. We know this is an area that will require continued attention next year, leading to recommendations for new or updated science curriculum and materials in the near future.

That said, there are good examples across the district of teachers engaging students in high quality science learning. Examples that stood out include a partnership with *Wild Whatcom* to create an engaging curriculum called Sehome Experimental Education and Discovery (SEED) at Sehome High School. Last year, *Wild Whatcom* received a \$6,685 grant from the Chuckanut Health Foundation, allowing two of their staff members to work with the Life Skills class at Sehome High School once each week and to lead students in science curriculum and outdoor education. Sehome teacher Connor Hegarty and *Wild Whatcom* staff members lead a group of about 10 students on a walk to the Sehome Arboretum or Connolly Creek Trail where they investigate plants, insects, decomposition and learn survival skills. More on this effort can be viewed at: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/02/01/sehome-experimental-education-and-discovery/>.

Efforts around gardens, garden education and the strong connection to science learning continue to expand across the Bellingham schools. For example, partners from *LifeLab*, a nonprofit organization based in Santa Cruz, California, led a staff development workshop called “Next Generation Science in the Garden.” Through hands-on workshops in school districts, Life Lab provides educators with information in garden-based learning. The visit by *LifeLab* staff members was coordinated by Common Threads Farm and School Garden Collective, currently a community partner to 15 schools in the Bellingham Public Schools. The professional development day for teachers was designed to demonstrate how school gardens can be used for

teaching of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Common Threads Farm has begun work with Sarah Walker, the district's science Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) to think systemically about the garden as a context for teaching life and earth science. "Some schools are already using gardens in diverse and interesting ways," says Walker. "At Shuksan Middle School, garden work is integrated into an extended learning class. At Whatcom Middle School, the garden is connected to 6<sup>th</sup> grade science and students also learn about cooking their garden harvest. Birchwood elementary has connected their garden to International Baccalaureate Units of Inquiry." Click the link for more on school gardens in Bellingham Public Schools and Common Threads Farm. <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2015/10/28/next-generation-science-in-the-school-garden/>

More stories about the work on math and science within the school district can be viewed at this link: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/scientists-and-mathematicians/>.

- **Historians and Global Thinkers**

Foundational knowledge and critical review of history expands the views of our students to help them see themselves as connected to a larger global community. Locating self and local understandings in the larger world is a critically important aspect of their preparation as citizens of the world. Last year we signaled this area as one that needed focused attention as aspects of our curriculum and materials are outdated, and in some cases in need of rethinking. Curriculum review work in social studies got underway this year, led by Directors Keith Schacht and Charisse Berner. The Teaching and Learning Advisory group on Historians and Global Thinkers has been meeting with the charge of taking stock of our current program of instruction.

Examples of work in the district this year included efforts at Kulshan and Whatcom Middle Schools to engage five international exchange students from Middle Eastern countries attending Whatcom Community College. The students shared insights into their culture and the traditions of Islam. Their visit coincided with the grade seven World Religion unit in Social Studies. The middle school students asked the visitors a wide range of questions such as "How is the culture of the United States different or similar to your own culture?" and "What is the school system like in your country?" They were asked about the type of government in their country and about their religious traditions and rituals.

During the Whatcom Middle School visit, the WCC students showed the middle school kids what Arabic looks like when written, explained their alphabet and what it sounds like when spoken. They gave examples with names of students in the classroom. Meagan Dawson, Kulshan Middle School principal, was instrumental in making the cultural exchange happen at her school. She says the most important learning to her that day was the personal contact, making global issues more understandable. "When we hear directly from people who are from various countries," Dawson says, "we learn so much more about the country and culture, rather than only learning from books, websites, or the news. Exchange programs like this help us make direct contact with people and the world." More about this effort can be viewed at: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/02/02/exchange-students-from-community-college-visit-kulshan-and-whatcom-middle-schools/>.

This powerful example notwithstanding, we know that along with science and health and fitness, the area of social studies continues to need attention with regard to curriculum improvements. With the advent of the 1:1 technology program on the horizon, we also know that any new curriculum materials, which also inform new pedagogies (e.g., the question of “how to teach”) will need to take full advantage of the technology that is coming soon. The Teaching and Learning Advisory group for Historians and Global Thinkers has begun exploring the landscape to determine what new materials and resources are available that could be incorporated as part of our approach to social studies education. Other examples of good work from this year can be found here: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/historians-and-global-thinkers/>

- **Artists, Performers and Trades People**

We have continued to make the development of our arts, music and career and technical (CTE) programs a high priority this year. Discovering and developing artistic, creative passions fulfills the whole person; as well, creating new learning opportunities for students to explore CTE programs was a major emphasis of an earlier ends report this year.

Specifically, we have continued to implement the recommendations of the Visual and Performing Arts Task Force that was convened during the 2014-15 school year. We were able to expand the strings program for fifth grade students from a 10 week experience to a 12-to-18 week experience for all students, embedded in the school day in all fourteen elementary schools. The experience includes the guaranteed use of an instrument and a method book and is well supported by community partners like the Bellingham Festival of Music and the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation. Contrary to how this program ran in its previous iteration, the experience is now part of fifth grade for every student in the school district, not just a choice for some students.

We can also find numerous examples of ways our kids are demonstrating success in the areas of music and other fine arts. Examples include the many students who audition and are accepted into state, regional or national music performance groups. For example, Izaya Taylor, a Bellingham High senior singer who was a member of the All-State Choir as a sophomore and the multi-state All-Northwest choir as a junior, was tapped to audition for the All-National Honor Ensemble and was accepted into the National Mixed Choir in Nashville, Tennessee in October of 2015. More about Izaya’s journey can be found here:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2015/10/01/bellingham-high-school-senior-qualifies-for-national-honor-ensemble-in-nashville/>.

In addition to our work in our music and arts programs, we’ve focused heavily on supporting growth in our career and technical program offerings. Toward this end, we made our efforts in CTE a specific focus of a prior Ends report this year. Among the examples that merit highlighting from this year was the story on the Bellingham Technical College (BTC) Tour Day. BTC Tour Day is only one of several opportunities throughout the school year for Bellingham kids interested in the trades. With the support of Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers, career/vocational guidance assistants and the counseling staff in our schools, students are given career exploration assessments that might identify them with an interest in the trades. Jeff Tetric, director of Career and Technical Education, noted that the district continually strives to develop ways to promote skilled and technical careers. “With an aging workforce for skilled

labor in our state and not enough skilled and technical workers to fill future open positions,” Tetrick said, “Bellingham Public Schools is committed to support students interested in pursuing skilled and technical careers through strong partnerships with Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Career and Technical Academy, and through development of our own Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.” As visioning and planning is underway for both Options High and Sehome High, Tetrick sees a bright future for CTE programs in our district. “New CTE spaces will be designed with flexibility in mind to allow programs to adapt as industry trends change,” he says. See more about this story at: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2015/11/24/exploring-the-trades/>.

We’ve also taken a hard look at how our music, arts and CTE programs serve students across the K-12 continuum, and in particular have focused on questions of equity as we’ve examined whose interests are being served in these classrooms. (NOTE: These data lag by one school year, due to the fact that they focus on completed courses.) For example, we’ve taken a closer look at proportionality reports of who participates in music, arts and drama program offerings in our high schools. The data grids presented below reveal some disparities in the composition of our high school music, art and drama programs.

As the data reveal, students in some of the subgroups we regularly track are not fully represented in our music, arts and drama program courses at levels commensurate with the percentage of those subgroups our overall population. A score of “1.0” on these indices would indicate a perfect alignment between course enrollments and the percentage of students in the identified subgroup. The data show, for example, that bilingual students, students receiving special education services and students eligible for free and reduced price meals are significantly under-represented in music and art courses, compared to the percentage of white students enrolled. Hispanic students participate in art and drama courses at about the same rate expected for that population, but are underrepresented in music courses.

### High School Students Enrolled in Music Courses, 2014-15

#### Student Sub Groups

ETHNICITY / RACE	Students	Proportions		Composition Index		
				0.0000	3.0000	
Hispanic		14.44%	9.14%	0.63		Significant
White		69.47%	74.16%	1.07		Mild

PROGRAM	Students	Proportions		Composition Index		
				0.0000	3.0000	
Bilingual Education		3.75%	1.85%	0.49		Significant
Free/Reduced Lunch		37.06%	26.82%	0.72		Significant
Special Education		13.26%	6.3%	0.48		Significant

## High School Students Enrolled in Arts and Drama Courses, 2014-15

### Student Sub Groups

ETHNICITY / RACE	Students	Proportions		Composition Index			
	Hispanic		14.44%	14.36%	0.0000	0.99	3.0000
White		69.47%	70.46%	0.0000	1.01	3.0000	Mild

PROGRAM	Students	Proportions		Composition Index			
	Bilingual Education		3.75%	2.98%	0.0000	0.79	3.0000
Free/Reduced Lunch		37.06%	32.68%	0.0000	0.88	3.0000	Significant
Special Education		13.26%	11.05%	0.0000	0.83	3.0000	Significant

The proportionality picture with regard to CTE programs is more favorable, as our programs tend to enroll students of Hispanic origin, students receiving bilingual education and special education support, along with those who are eligible for free or reduced price meals at a rate near or above what would be expected for those subgroups, compared to the overall enrollment numbers. The composition index below shows the relative composition of CTE courses by the subgroups we track. A score of “1.0” indicates a perfectly proportionate relationship of the course enrollment rates compared with overall enrollment by subgroup.

## High School Students Enrolled in Career/Technology Education Courses, 2014-15

### Student Sub Groups

ETHNICITY / RACE	Students	Proportions		Composition Index			
	Hispanic		14.44%	16.28%	0.0000	1.13	3.0000
White		69.47%	67.25%	0.0000	0.97	3.0000	Mild

PROGRAM	Students	Proportions		Composition Index			
	Bilingual Education		3.75%	3.73%	0.0000	0.99	3.0000
Free/Reduced Lunch		37.06%	38.57%	0.0000	1.04	3.0000	Mild
Special Education		13.26%	14.08%	0.0000	1.06	3.0000	Mild

More stories about the work in these areas are available at:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/artists-performers-and-trades-people/>

- **Healthy, Active Individuals**

With the hiring of Jessica Sankey as our Director of Health and Wellness, we have taken the next step in the process of opening up various aspects of our programs in health and fitness, both in terms of what students learn and what supports our teachers’ ability to teach well in the area of

health and fitness. The aforementioned Teaching and Learning Advisory in the area of Health, Fitness and Wellness has pulled together a group of district employees to examine a set of questions around our support for both staff and students. Out of this process, we anticipate a set of recommendations for next steps regarding the development of curriculum and instruction, as well as extracurricular opportunities related to this content area.

As with most years, there are some positive and inspiring stories of our kids and staff members engaged in healthy activities both within the school day and beyond. We call special attention, for example, to the recent grant to Bellingham's middle schools to support bicycle education. Led by Whatcom Middle School principal Jeff Coulter, grant funds were acquired to support bicycle education in the PE classes of all middle schools students. A classroom set of bikes, on a lockable trailer, are now available to PE teachers all over the school system for teaching bike safety and encouraging bike riding.

As a part of our data gathering, analysis and reporting this year, we've relied on some aspects of the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) that is given every other year in our system. The HYS is a collaborative effort of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, and the Liquor and Cannabis Board. It provides important information about youth in Washington that can be used to identify trends in the patterns of behavior over time. In October 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014, students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 answered questions about safety and violence, physical activity and diet, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and related risk and protective factors.

Included in this Ends report are data from the past four surveys, dating back to 2008. We've focused on two years (grade 8 and grade 10) due to the fact that somewhat different questions are asked of students at grades 6, and grade 12 data tends to not be very representative, due to a much lower student response rate (less than 50% participation). We have included data on the percentage of students participating in afterschool activities (page 1 of Appendix A) that shows more Bellingham students in grades 8 and 10 engaged in three or more days of afterschool activity than the state average. While we viewed this as positive, we also examined data on the percentages of students who met recommendations for physical activity (page 2 of Appendix A). This data paints a different perspective, revealing that relatively small percentages of Bellingham students engage in the recommended levels of physical activity each week (60 minutes per day) and that these percentages are below the state averages for physical activity. This pushes us to continue to find more and better ways to engage our students in physical activities, both inside and outside of the school day.

We also specifically examined data on high school participation rates in athletics and contrasted participation against representative levels of students enrolled in free and reduced price meal programs (page 3 of Appendix A). These data reveal that student participation in high school athletics disproportionately does not include students eligible for free/reduced price meals, suggesting, perhaps, that money is a barrier to participation in afterschool sports and activities for students from lower income homes. For us, this is another piece of information that confirms the importance of the work we have started on reducing costs associated with extracurricular activities. It is also clear that we have more to do.

More information can be accessed about our work in the area of producing healthy, active individuals at the following link: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/healthy-active-individuals/>.

- **Multilingual Readers and Speakers**

Our work with building our system efforts to incorporate more opportunities for students learning a world language has continued this year, following on from last year's committee recommendations to the superintendent for the future of this aspect of our instructional program. This year, we continued to experience growth in elementary schools offering more learning opportunities in world language, correlated at least in part to more schools choosing to participate as International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program sites. The IB program requires schools to offer at least one world language in their program of study.

We have also focused on ensuring more students have the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English and earn high school credit for that proficiency. In October 2015, we hosted a World Language Credit for Proficiency family night at Bellingham High School. Multilingual families received information about the benefits of bilingualism and proficiency assessment options. They were also able to register their children for proficiency tests as well as have the option to take a writing screening test on the spot. Students have the opportunity to earn credits if they can demonstrate language proficiency through a nationally available assessment. As a result of this effort, 269 students across the district have earned credit through this route so far this year.

Beginning this year, there are additional benefits to taking and passing these assessments for language skills. A Seal of Biliteracy from the state will now be featured on the diploma when a student graduates biliterate. We also know from anecdotal evidence that more parents are seeing bi-literacy as an advantage for their kids as it can benefit them in the future for things such as applying to college and searching for jobs. More about this effort can be read at:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2015/11/20/world-language-credit-for-proficiency-family-night/>

World language development continues to be an area for deeper focus in the district's overall instructional program. While a number of elementary schools are now offering some form of world language experience for students, some still lack such an offering. The program at the middle school needs to be expanded to a true exploratory across all three grade levels, which would be helped by an eventual move to an expanded school day and schedule. For more examples of how the district is working to prepare multilingual readers and speakers, follow the link: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/multilingual-readers-and-speakers/>.

- **Skilled Users of Technology and Information**

This fall, a broad-based committee built a set of recommendations that helped to inform our next technology levy, which received strong support from our community. With the passage of that technology levy in February of 2016, district personnel are working to develop plans for the implementation of the upcoming 1:1 student technology initiative. Three pilot schools will be identified this spring, and we will begin with staff professional development in those pilot sites this coming August. Over the next four years, with the passage of the levy, all Bellingham students in grades 3-12 will be provided with a personal computing device and teachers will

receive ongoing professional development that will help them to integrate the new technology into instructional practice and in student learning. The recent hiring of Dr. Bill Palmer, our new Director of Teaching and Learning for 1:1, means we have added another outstanding leader to our team to help direct and support this upcoming work.

There are many interesting and powerful experiences happening for students in the applications of technology across the district. For example, special education preschool teachers were in need of math materials that mirror the ones used in kindergarten but wanted them to be more age appropriate for their students. To create these curriculum materials, Director of Teaching and Learning Charisse Berner approached Career and Technical Education Director Jeff Tetrick about producing the number racks. Tetrick was happy to take the project on. Manufacturing students from Squalicum High School worked in teams to design and fabricate 3D number racks for developmental preschool classrooms around Bellingham Public Schools. In total, 14 five-bead racks and 10 seven-bead racks were created using CAD software, 3D printers, laser engravers, wood and non-toxic paint. “It was a great building project to support young learners,” said Tetrick. “I was most impressed with my students’ enthusiastic approach to take on this project and willingness to help our early childhood education programs. The students took this project very seriously and honestly cared how the racks would turn out, knowing they were for preschool children.” The number racks were delivered to schools in December and are in use at several schools including Sunnyland, Birchwood and Geneva Elementary Schools. Read more about this effort at:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/02/05/squalicum-students-build-number-racks-for-prek-students/>

More stories and examples related to this Promise outcome can be found at:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/skilled-users-of-technology-and-information/>

### **Ends 3.0: Examples**

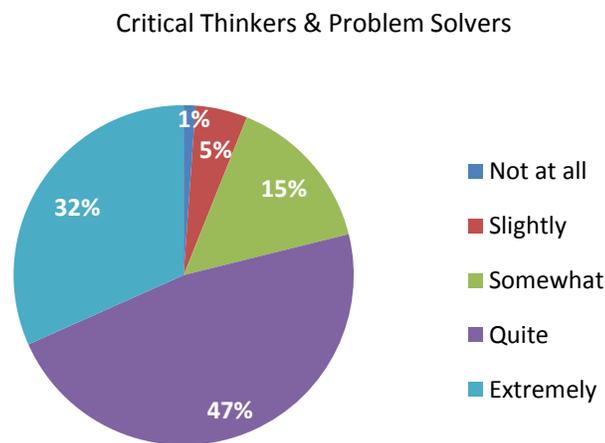
Ends 3.0 focuses on nine outcomes centered on skills and attributes that we seek to foster in our students and graduates. Benchmarking Ends 3.0 outcomes continues to be a challenging and complex task. In addition to including anecdotes from across the schools, the report this year features some additional data gathered through surveys at some of our schools. Six of our K-8 schools have started an annual effort to survey students through a partnership with Panorama, a survey consulting firm, on several dimensions of social emotional learning; overall students included in the survey number around 1150, and therefore represent over 10% of students across the whole district. We intend to continue to grow this survey effort over the next few years, as many additional schools have expressed interest in gathering and examining this data. On Page 4 of Appendix A, this additional data is arrayed by *Promise* outcomes. The survey asks students to respond to a series of questions about themselves and their schools that in many cases relate directly to *Promise* outcomes. As we move through the next few sections, we will unpack what questions students responded to in each area, and how we are interpreting this data as an additional way to measure some of these challenging Ends 3.0.

That said, we also have some stories to tell that say important things about the outcomes for many students in many settings in our district. In the sections that follow, we offer an example

or two of our work toward each of these outcomes. Each section, like Ends 2.0, concludes with a link to the specific outcomes page on the *Promise* website.

- **Critical Thinkers and Problem-Solvers**

Learning how to think critically and process potential solutions with others leads to growth in the ability to solve complex problems. New standards emphasize critical thinking in the content areas, and much work continues in Bellingham classrooms to orient student work around problem-based scenarios and to focus on developing critical thinking about issues for which there is either no clear-cut solution, or multiple possible solutions. One of the questions asked of students in the Panorama survey that some schools are now using was “Overall, how well can you figure out how to learn things?” We interpreted this question to be fundamentally about critical thinking. Almost 80% of students responding to this question answered “Quite” or “Extremely” which are the top two of five indicators. The graph below gives the array of responses.

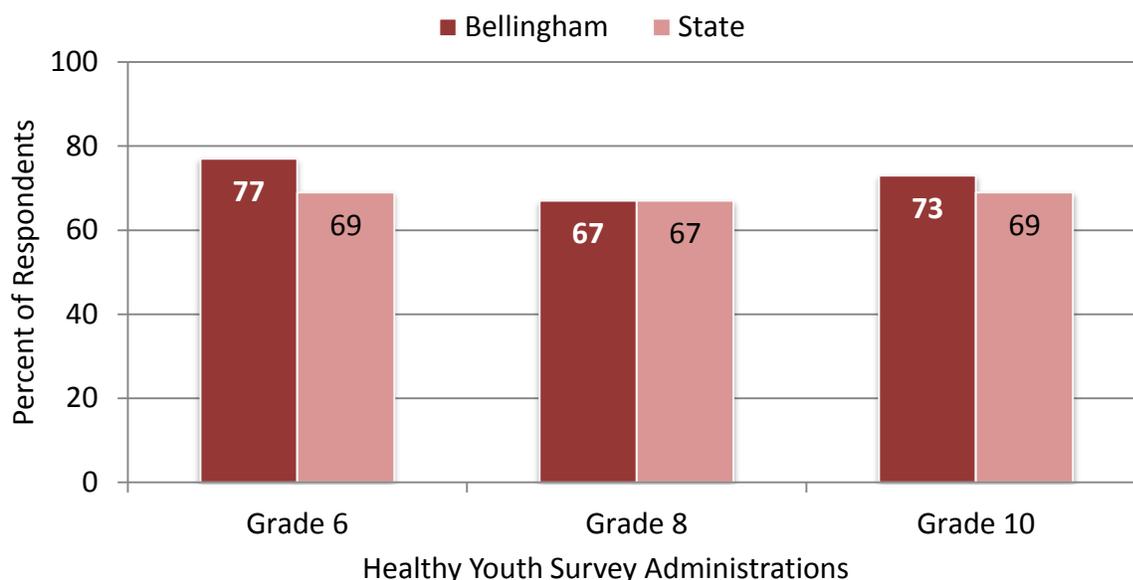


In addition, the Healthy Youth Survey, referenced earlier, includes some items that provide an additional window into how students perceive themselves as problem solvers. Questions on the survey that relate to problem solving skills included:

1. I know how to disagree without starting a fight or argument.
2. When I have problems at school, I am good at finding ways to solve them.
3. When I make a decision, I think about what might happen afterward.
4. I get along well with students who are different from me.

We aggregated these responses into one set of indicators at grades 6, 8 and 10. The possible response options for all four questions are: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly disagree. Percentages of Bellingham students who answered strongly agree or agree, and contrasting overall WA responses are displayed below:

Percent of Students Reporting to have Problem Solving Skills  
 Grades 6, 8 and 10 in Bellingham and Washington State



Results suggest that a strong majority of our students responded positively to these prompts, and those responses were at or above state averages by comparison. There are other good examples of ways that teachers are engaging Bellingham students in critical thinking and problem-solving, and our teachers continue to suggest they can use even more support in these areas of ongoing professional learning. Other examples of students engaging in critical thinking and problem-solving this year can be read at:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/critical-thinkers-and-problem-solvers/>

- **Effective Communicators**

The development of communication skills are built into the fabric of everything we do as a school system. From opportunities for students to engage with teachers and with each other in the classroom, to afterschool extracurricular opportunities, to efforts at community outreach, communication is essential for engaging in the larger world. Bellingham teachers work daily to grow and develop students’ abilities to communicate well. Learning how to listen effectively to others and share ideas, both verbally and through writing, builds healthy relationships at school, work and at home.

Sometimes our kids get more formal opportunities to present themselves as good communicators. For example, in February, Squalicum High School juniors Isa and Cyrus spoke in front of 260 local professionals at the annual Junior Achievement breakfast. The purpose of their presentation was to explain the partnership between Junior Achievement (JA) and Bellingham Public Schools and the impact it has on students’ understanding of careers and financial literacy. “Isa and Cyrus did a fabulous job speaking,” said Michelle Wilhelm, Squalicum High School teacher. “They were genuine, articulate, confident and represented our program and district very well.”

Following the breakfast, Wilhelm received an email from a local professional thanking her and her students for their presentation:

*I have attended this event for as long as they have been having it up here and for the first time, because of your words, I left feeling profoundly impacted. Don't get me wrong it is always a good event but to have you tell your story and the story of kids who are not generally associated with JA was powerful. I had no idea that JA worked in Options HS or with other at risk student populations. I am not alone having that understanding (or lack of understanding) as I found out in a separate meeting afterwards when I spoke of you and your speech. Very inspirational, Thank you.*

More on this example can be viewed at:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/04/06/students-present-at-junior-achievement-breakfast/>

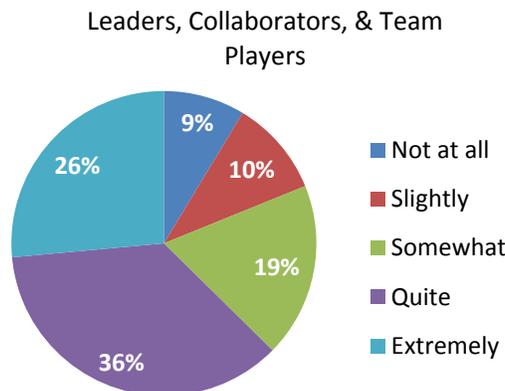
Developing students who are effective communicators continues to be a core part of the Bellingham *Promise*. For additional examples of how the district is working with students in this area, see: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/effective-communicators/>

- **Leaders, Collaborators and Team Players**

Creating opportunities in leadership and collaboration promotes positive interactions and success in school and life and builds a strong web of support in our community. Leadership, collaboration and teaming opportunities abound in our programs, whether through athletics, music, art, or academics, and many Bellingham students take advantage of daily and weekly experiences in this important realm. We looked at student survey responses to two questions on the Panorama instrument that dealt directly with participation and leadership. These questions are:

1. How much do you participate in class?
2. I have the chance to be a leader at my school.

We aggregated these responses as one way to gauge students understanding of themselves as leaders and collaborators. The results appear in the graphic below. While overall, Bellingham



students responded quite favorably, these numbers do raise our awareness that not all kids see themselves as participating well, or as engaged in leadership opportunities. 19% overall indicated either “not at all” or only “slightly” to these items.

That said, good examples of ways our students engage in leadership are evident around the schools and in the community. For example, during the past three years the Whatcom County Health Department and the Whatcom Prevention Coalition have partnered with Bellingham Public Schools in order to provide youth suicide prevention workshops throughout the county. The workshop MAD–HOPE (Making a Difference—Helping Other People Everywhere) youth suicide prevention project was developed by a group of more than sixty people. The MAD–HOPE workshop is a baseline informative training session aimed to teach people to look for warning signs and build connections. More than 1,000 high school students and adults around Whatcom County have participated in this workshop in the past two years.

The purpose of MAD–HOPE is to “eliminate youth suicide by empowering school communities with opportunities for interpersonal connectedness, accurate information about youth suicide and practical tools designed to prevent it.” The Whatcom Prevention Coalition strives to provide the community with resources that can be used to save a life by working with students and adults to present this workshop to their peers. Bellingham High School senior Kaitlyn Hurley has worked with MAD–HOPE all four years of high school. During her freshman year, she saw MAD–HOPE being started by a group of seniors and wanted to be a part of it. She found that helping others through their struggles was very rewarding. “The biggest part is getting the word out about warning signs and how to help because school is where it’s hardest for students to reach out,” Hurley says. More about this effort can be seen at:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/02/05/m-a-d-h-o-p-e-making-a-difference-helping-other-people-everywhere-youth-suicide-prevention-project/>

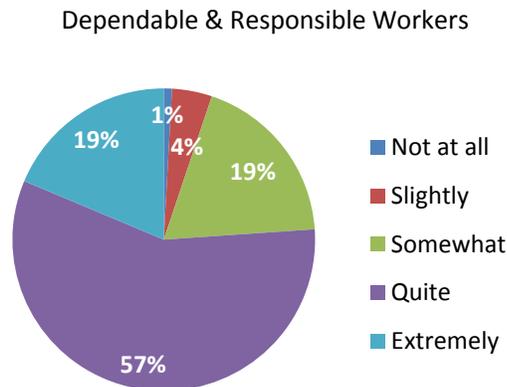
For more examples of Bellingham students engaged in leadership, collaboration and team play, click the link:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/leaders-collaborators-and-team-players/>

- **Dependable and Responsible Workers**

Demonstrating responsibility at school is crucial for helping students develop as dependable, responsible citizens and workers. Many classroom teachers build jobs and community responsibilities into the daily experience for students, expecting all to contribute to the betterment of the whole. One important set of indicators that reflect on students as dependable and responsible are indicators of attendance. Page 5 of Appendix A compares the percentages of Bellingham students who are chronically absent (defined as missing more than ten percent of school days for any reason, excused or unexcused) with the percentages across Washington State. These numbers gave us pause. Bellingham students overall are, on average, more chronically absent compared to Washington State generally, and these numbers appear to be rising over the past three years. Of particular concern are the numbers of students who are low income and those receiving special education services; the percent chronically absent have increased each of the past two years, while state averages have remained relatively flat.

We also mined the Panorama survey data to determine if we could glean any insights about students' development as dependable and responsible workers. The only question that seemed to lean in this direction asked "How focused are you on the activities in class?" The graph below reveals that a high majority of kids answered this in the affirmative:



While the attendance data says we've got more work to do in terms of supporting kids and families to be responsible and dependable school attenders, there are anecdotal examples across the system of how teachers are helping to develop these attributes in students. For examples, see: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/dependable-and-responsible-workers/>.

- **Innovators and Creators**

Creating an environment for students to explore ideas and look at situations from a fresh perspective helps them learn how to invent and create. One example highlighted on the Promise website focused on students at Lowell Elementary School who are learning how to paint still life through a project where they drew different foods that represent their class. As part of an art enrichment program, the kids learned the formal art skills needed to create their pieces. Amy Gould, the art instructor, said her goal was to teach students to paint what they saw, not what they knew. Each child had the food sitting in front of them to look at as they drew, using pencils and pastels. Although all grades participated, Gould narrowed it down to 18 final pictures that are now hanging in the school's cafeteria. "It's important to keep art in schools because it teaches the children visual literacy, allowing them to better understand problem-solving and symbolism," Gould said. This example pushes to keep the focus on incorporating art in all of our schools, both through enriched afterschool offerings for kids, but also infusing art into the classroom and curriculum throughout the school day. See the link at: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2016/02/16/lowell-students-learn-to-draw-still-life/>.

And for more stories and examples on ways that teachers are supporting innovation and creativity among Bellingham students, see: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/innovators-and-creators/>

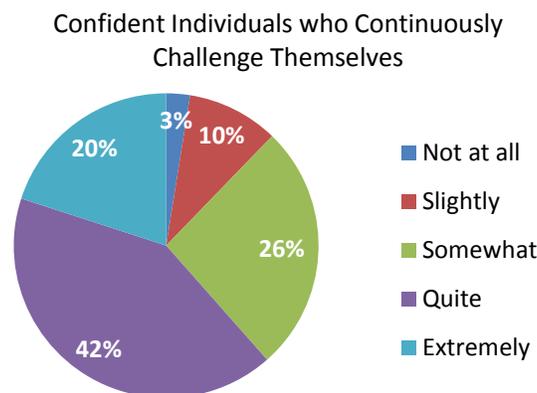
- **Confident Individuals Who Continuously Challenge Themselves**

Teaching children to believe in themselves and constantly strive for excellence are valuable lifelong skills. How efforts to provide continuous challenge manifests in student learning is sometimes immediately observable and sometimes not apparent for many weeks, months or

years. But challenge is a central idea in our instructional program, and one way to benchmark our success is to examine the kinds of opportunities our graduates head into upon leaving the system.

We again were interested to mine the Panorama survey data to see if there were indicators that might help flesh out a picture of how our kids are developing confidence and how they persevere through challenges. The graphic below aggregates data from two items on the survey:

1. If you need to do something you don't want to do in order to reach an important goal, how likely are you to do it?
2. When you get stuck while learning something new, how likely are you to try to learn it in a different way?



These data suggest that a high majority of our kids are at least “somewhat” ready to respond to challenge and persevere in learning. We’re interested to continue to track this kind of data over time.

Our students distinguish themselves as confident individuals who challenge themselves in other ways, as well. For example, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Washington Music Educators Association (WMEA) State Conference was held Feb. 11 through Feb. 14 at the Yakima Convention Center. High school musicians from Skagit and Whatcom counties auditioned and were accepted into an All-State ensemble and performed with other students that were selected from around the state. Achieving this honor reflects hours and hours of practice and perseverance. Twenty students in our high schools were selected for this honor, and performed during a series of gala concerts at the February meeting in Yakima. More about this story at: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2015/12/04/high-school-musicians-to-attend-the-43rd-annual-washington-music-educators-association-wmea-state-conference/>.

For more examples of Bellingham students engaged in continuous challenge, see: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/confident-individuals-who-challenge-themselves/>

- **Respectful and Compassionate Humans**

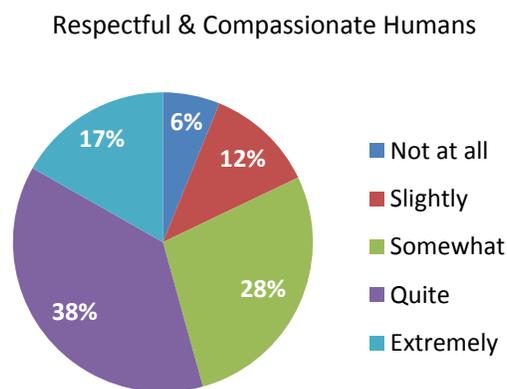
Teaching tolerance, kindness and generosity in classrooms and school activities leads to positive behavior for success in life. Evidence from across the system across the past two to three years

suggests that this outcome is getting some serious attention. As we reported last year, across our middle and high schools, out of school suspensions have been dramatically reduced, and school administrators are embracing the restorative justice approaches that help to make wrongs right through process, dialogue and principled action. That work has resulted in another drop in those rates this year.

We also looked to the Panorama data to dig into the questions that reflect on students as respectful and compassionate humans. Questions that focused in this area included:

1. How much respect do students at your school show you?
2. How often do students behave well in this school?
3. I feel safe from bullying at this school.

The graphic below represents the aggregate of all students on all responses. The high majority

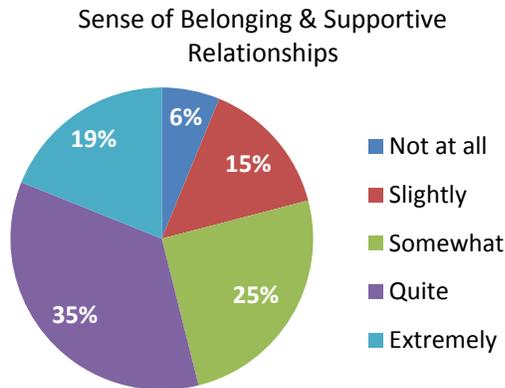


of responses were favorable, suggesting that overall Bellingham students feel safe and respected at school. That said, the fact that 18% of students responded either “slightly” or “not at all” is concerning. While we believe the system has made progress in this area, there is obviously still more to do.

Another set of responses that reflects somewhat on efforts to help our students develop as respectful and compassionate humans focused around sense of belonging and feelings of support at school. We think these data are relevant to include here as well, as they reflect on students’ perceptions of the adults and peers in the system. Questions included:

1. How much do your teachers want to learn about what you do when you are not in school?
2. How much respect do students at your school show you?
3. How much support do the adults at your school give you?
4. How well do people at your school understand you as a person?
5. If you had something on your mind, how carefully would your teacher listen to you?

The graph below displays the aggregate responses for all students on all five indicators.



Again, a high majority of our kids answered in the positive direction on these questions. However, over 20% - one in five - answered only “slightly” or “not at all” suggesting that there are still a large number of kids who lack feelings of belonging and support in our schools.

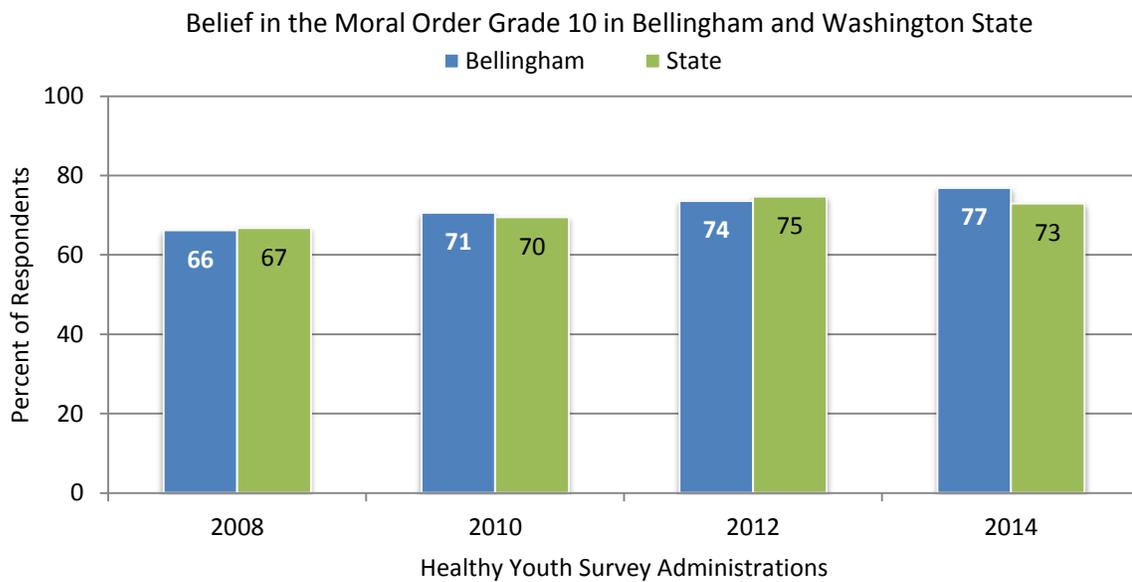
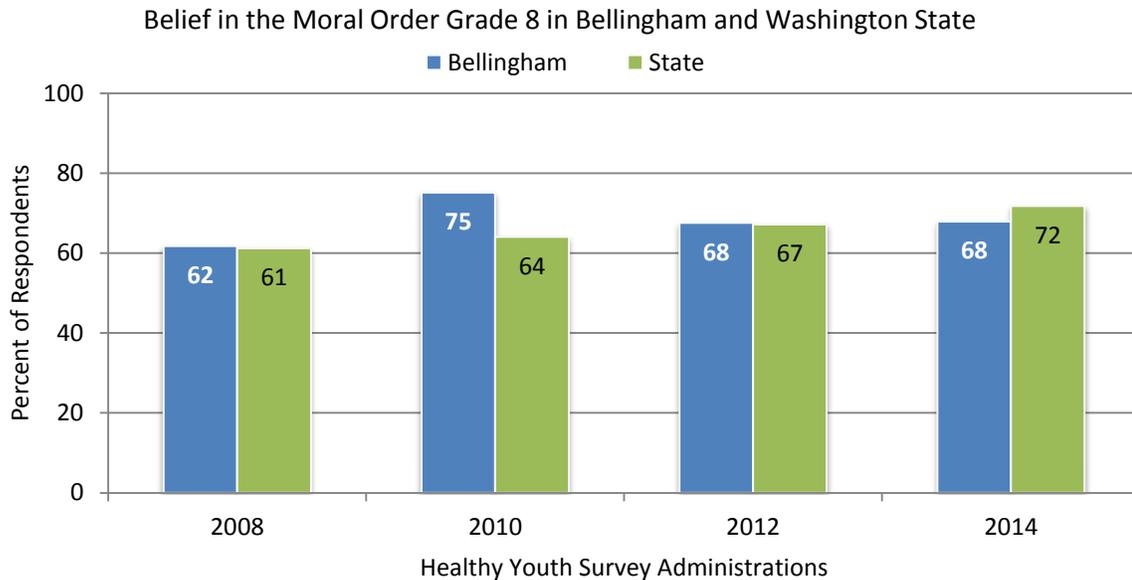
More examples of ways students are learning respect and compassion can be viewed here: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/respectful-and-compassionate-humans/>

- **Honest and Ethical Citizens Who Act with Integrity**

We’ve wrestled with how to measure honesty and integrity in a way that connects to what we are teaching and what kids experience in our schools. Obviously, teaching ethics, honoring truth and promoting upstanding behavior are tenets of a just and good society, and something we seek for all Bellingham students. For purposes of reporting on this Promise outcome, we turn once again to the Healthy Youth Survey data, and a protective factor scale that reports on the percentage of students who agree with statements that predict the ability to resist other problem behaviors. Response from four such items were aggregated into one data point that we’ve called “Belief in the Moral Order”. The items students responded to, specifically, were:

1. I think it is okay to take something without asking as long as you get away with it.
2. I think sometimes it’s okay to cheat at school.
3. It is all right to beat up people if they start the fight.
4. It is important to be honest with your parents, even if they become upset or you get punished.

The graphs below show responses from eighth and tenth graders in Bellingham and Washington State over the past four administrations of the Healthy Youth survey. Percentages reflect students who answered in the positive direction (depending on the way the question was framed, this was either a strongly agree/agree response, as with question #4 above, or a strongly disagree/disagree response, as with questions #1, 2 and 3 above).



We were pleased to see that both eighth and tenth grade student responses appear to be increasingly moving in the right direction over time; 77% of tenth graders in 2014 answered favorably, versus 66% in 2008, for example. That said, we are very limited in our ability to say specifically what caused this growth, or why that change occurred. So, while it is an interesting and seemingly positive picture, answering the question “what should we keep doing?” that might be helping this picture is very difficult at this stage of our understanding of these data.

More examples of students engaged in honest, ethical behavior can be seen at: <http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/honest-and-ethical-citizens/>

- **Well-Rounded Community Members Engaged with the Broader World.**

Preparing well-rounded community members who are ready to fully engage with the broader world upon leaving our schools is our final *Promise* outcome, and one that sums up a lot of the others. Given this deep set of commitments, the question to ask, perhaps, is “How do our schools measure up?” in terms of preparing students to be the best they can be. As with our report last year, we examined some recent evidence on how our schools measure to others around the state and the nation.

Once again, all three Bellingham comprehensive high schools earned a spot on *US News and World Report’s* Best High Schools in America list in 2016. High schools are compared to the 27,000 public and private high schools throughout the nation based on school performance data and college preparatory programs. This year, out of 885 public high schools in Washington State, all three of our comprehensive high schools were rated among the top forty. Squalicum HS came in at #13, Sehome HS was rated #20, and Bellingham HS was rated #39. Factors used to make this determination include demographic information, and numbers of students accessing advanced placement courses. For other examples of how the district is preparing well-rounded students ready to engage with the broader world, see:

<http://promise.bellinghamschools.org/outcomes/well-rounded-community-members/>.

### **Areas of Focus for 2015-16 and Beyond: What Have We Learned?**

In reviewing evidence connected to Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0, we see again this year that there are a lot of positive outcomes occurring for children and young people in the Bellingham Public Schools. Our *Promise* is alive and well, and becoming more and more of a regular focus for the work done across the district, in schools, and in individual classrooms. That said, it is important to step back and assess areas that may be in particular need of greater effort and attention for the district next year and on into the future. Looking forward, areas we noted above include:

- **Scientists and Mathematicians**—Continue into our third year in the work to implement the new PreK-12 math curriculum materials adoption. Utilize the curriculum review process to uncover needs that will establish a direction in 2016-17 for work in science instruction, curriculum, and materials.
- **Dependable and Responsible Workers** – Dig further into what is underneath the rise in chronic absences, and develop a greater focus within schools and our community for getting chronically absent kids to school on much more regular basis.
- **Historians and Global Thinkers**—Build on the beginning curriculum and materials review and alignment process underway this year to move toward a potential curriculum and materials recommendation in 2016-17.
- **Healthy, Active Individuals**—Take stock of current state of instruction in health education and use what is learned to plan deeper programmatic work for the 2016-17 school year. Begin efforts around staff wellness.
- **Skilled Users of Technology**—Begin the 1:1 staff pilot in three schools next year that will springboard new instructional practices and uses of technology in the classroom, building teachers’ skills in the integration of technologies in the content areas.

## **Concluding Statement**

We believe that this Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 monitoring report, in combination with the ongoing exploration of outcomes that occurred during the course of board meetings, school visits and linkages this year, serves as evidence of a reasonable interpretation of these Ends and is supported by data that demonstrates progress toward achievement of these Ends. Further, we hope this report serves as a useful tool in support of the school boards' ability to regularly review our ends to ensure they remain relevant and inspire meaningful work throughout the organization and community.

We appreciate the direction provided by the school board to focus on the development of exceptional students with strong character, a passion for learning and graduates who are ready for the widest range of educational and vocational options to support a diversity of life choices.