

## *Aligning Advanced Courses in High School Task Force*

October 13, 10:30 – 12:00

District Office, Room 212

*Meeting started at 10:05*

### Introduction

Prateek Dutta, doctoral resident from Harvard University, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the taskforce.

Dr. Baker, Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools, addressed the committee after Prateek and stressed the importance of aligning philosophies and structures to make sure all advanced classes are aligned and equitable across the Bellingham Public Schools.

The group transitioned into an activity intended to set the stage for work the committee will engage in throughout the year.

### Stations

Prateek set the stage: Before digging into the work on advanced classes, the group needs to know where we currently are as a district and how effective college-prep classes are across the country.

Across the room, four different stations were set up for participants to access information. Each station had corresponding documents, primary sources, state laws, memorandums and laptops set up for members to investigate on their own.

These stations were the following:

- 1) Graduation rates and students accessing college-prep classes (disaggregated into different racial/ethnic groups, special education, free/reduced lunch, etc.
- 2) Literature on advanced courses – what does the research state on advanced course work and its relation to high school and college graduation?
- 3) Parent information – How accessible is the information for parents and students about different college-prep options at Bellingham Public Schools (Running Start vs. Advanced Placement vs. College in the High School)
- 4) What do college admission counselors believe about college-prep classes?

Each group was numbered and broken into groups of 5-6 people and rotated stations every eight minutes. At each station, group members wrote their thoughts on post-it notes and put it on a piece of chart paper. When a different group rotated into that particular station, they got to see what the previous group wrote before examining the documents on their own.

Discussion:

After this activity concluded, Prateek brought the group together and discussed their findings. Participants discussed how surprised they were about the difficulty in finding information on the website and how college counselors were not as impressed with the rigor of Running Start classes as they thought.

Participants mentioned what an incredible opportunity we had with the new high school schedule and common course catalog to really align our mission and vision on college-prep classes.

Closing:

Prateek thanked the group for their involvement in this important topic and looks forward to a lively and vibrant conversation on this topic throughout the year.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.