



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
January 13, 2021**

1.0 OPENING ITEMS

1.1 Meeting Date and Location:

January 13, 2021 – via remote Zoom meeting.

1.2 Call to Order/Roll Call:

Ms. Mason called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. She acknowledged that this meeting, while attended from various locations, is being held on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people. Present: Directors Kelly Bashaw, Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hackler, Jenn Mason (President), Katie Rose, Superintendent Greg Baker and Sheri O'Day (recorder).

1.3 Audience:

Ms. Mason noted that, because of our current emergency status due to COVID-19, public participation is limited to written submissions only, and all written comments received will be shared with the school board directors. Each board member has seen all messages received.

1.5 Superintendent's Announcements and Report: Summary of Dr. Baker's comments:

- Second grade students are scheduled to start in-person learning tomorrow, joining students in PreK-1, special programs, internet cafes and some high school athletics. Dr. Baker reviewed the health guidelines districts are using when deciding which students to bring back to in-person learning. In comparison to some smaller districts, we have been taking a slow approach. Larger districts, such as Seattle and Spokane, are taking an even slower approach. Dr. Baker responded to questions from board members.
- Vaccines for health care workers are being received across the state, and our school nurses have appointments for their vaccinations. The current vaccine schedule would likely mean that educators above 50 years of age will be eligible to receive the vaccine in Feb., with other employees likely not being vaccinated until sometime in April. There is strong advocacy for all educators to move up on the schedule so they can be vaccinated sooner. To accelerate the vaccination schedule, federal recommendations now advise that states not hold back second vaccine doses. There is a possibility that the district will work with the county to provide district space for vaccinations to occur.
- Grade 3 students could possibly begin in-person learning at the end of January. Because class sizes are larger in grades 4 and 5, it is more complicated to bring them back than for those in grades K-3. Elementary principals would like all students to be back in the classroom four days per week, although space may limit grade 4 and 5 students to two days per week. The district is looking at alternative locations that may allow the students to attend four days per week. Middle school students may not return until after all

elementary students are back, although there is a possibility, due to space constraints, that students in grade 6 would come back prior to grades 4 and 5. The most challenging level to bring back will be high school due to the number of students. Dr. Baker recently met with staff members from Bellingham High and Kulshan Middle schools to process what it will look like to begin bringing middle and high school students back. Dr. Baker responded to questions from board members.

- Dr. Baker reviewed sample modified hybrid schedules (two days per week) for high school and middle school. Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Jay Jordan provided additional information about the schedules and the timing of bringing students back.
- The state legislature is now in session, so it's likely we will begin to get some indications about state funding. We have been conservative with spending, and some legislators may wonder why Bellingham and some other districts have higher fund balances than other districts. Staffing decisions will begin to be made in the spring. The state superintendent has shared out some of his recommendations for the education budget.
- Following the sharing of photos of students and district staff who are now receiving in-person instruction in our schools, Dr. Baker noted that January is school board recognition month. He shared a presentation in honor of the school board directors.

2.0 CONSENT ITEMS:

Mr. Benjamin made a **motion**, seconded by Ms. Diaz Hackler, to approve the following consent agenda items:

- 2.1 Approval of Minutes of the Dec. 9, 2020 Regular Meeting**
- 2.2 Approval of Expenditures and Payroll – December 2020**
- 2.3 Resolution 1-21, Acceptance of the Bus Garage Renovation Project**
- 2.4 Resolution 2-21, Acceptance of Squalicum High School Turf Fields Phase 2**
- 2.5 Resolution 3-21, Request to Transfer Funds from the Capital Projects Fund to the General Fund**
- 2.6 Resolution 4-21, Unlimited Tax General Obligation Bonds, 2021**
- 2.7 Award Bid for Bellingham and Squalicum HS Athletic Buildings, Part 1**
- 2.8 Award of Bid and Agreement for #2021-0540 Shelf-Stable Foods**
- 2.9 EL-3 Monitoring Report – Treatment and Communication with Public, Parents and Students**
- 2.10 EL-10 Monitoring Report – Race and Equity**
- 2.11 AESD Accreditation Contract (#2021-081)**
- 2.12 Argus Pacific Contract (#2021-100)**
- 2.13 Personnel Recommendations**
- 2.14 Personal Services Contracts**

Unanimous affirmative vote.

3.0 POLICY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

3.1 Review and Discuss Possible Revisions to GPs 1-6

Governance Process Policies GP-1 through GP-6 are reviewed annually in January. After discussion, it was agreed that no changes are needed at this time.

4.0 BOARD RESPONSE TO MONITORING

4.1 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-1, Expectations of Superintendent

There was discussion regarding the summary of the board responses to the EL-1 report that was prepared by Ms. Mason. Following discussion, Mr. Benjamin made a **motion**, seconded by Ms. Rose, to approve the monitoring response document ([Attachment A](#)). Unanimous affirmative vote.

4.2 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-5, Communication and Counsel to the Board

There was discussion regarding the summary of the board responses to the EL-5 report that was prepared by Ms. Mason. Following discussion, Mr. Benjamin made a **motion**, seconded by Ms. Bashaw, to approve the monitoring response document ([Attachment B](#)). Unanimous affirmative vote.

4.3 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-7, Budget Planning and Execution

The board discussed the feedback contained in the combined monitoring responses for EL-7 ([Attachment C](#)). Ms. Mason will provide a final summary version of this document which will be submitted for approval at the Feb. 10, 2021 regular meeting.

4.4 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-9, Asset Maintenance and Protection

The board discussed the feedback contained in the combined monitoring responses for EL-9 ([Attachment D](#)). Ms. Mason will provide a final summary version of this document which will be submitted for approval at the Feb. 10, 2021 regular meeting.

5.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

5.1 School Board Directors’ Reports. Highlights of comments:

- Ms. Bashaw expressed her gratitude for district staff who continue to work diligently for students and families.
- Mr. Benjamin is planning to attend the upcoming legislative conference and inquired whether other board members would be attending. Tonight’s tribute to the board was amazing, and he thanked Dr. Baker for his continuous communication with the board.
- Ms. Diaz Hackler shared that it has been an extremely difficult time for her family. Many of her family members have been infected with COVID-19, with a number of them having passed away. She referenced some of her takeaways from the WSSDA conference.
- Ms. Rose noted that national events of the past week have given us all a lot to think about, and she has noticed conversations occurring within her children’s classes.
- Ms. Mason plans to attend a portion of the Whatcom Human Rights conference this weekend and will report back at a future meeting. She thanked Dr. Baker and staff for taking such good care of our school community and for bringing joy to our lives.

5.2 GP-7.2 – 2020-21 Annual Board Agenda, Revised – General review.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Benjamin shared that he and Ms. Rose were charged at the Dec. 11, 2020 regular board meeting with looking at some language in EL-5 (Communication and Counsel to the Board). They will be meeting soon with Dr. Baker and other staff members and should have a proposal to present at the next regular meeting.

7.0 CLOSING ITEMS

7.1 Board Assessment of Meeting: Ms. Mason assessed the meeting, with an overall rating of 4 (*commendable*).

7.2 Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Approved:



Jennifer I. Mason, Board President

Attest:



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

Minutes approved: February 10, 2021

Monitoring Response Document

Policy Monitored: EL-1, Expectations of Superintendent

Date Report Submitted: 11/4/2020

Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 12/9/2020

The Board has received and reviewed the Superintendent’s Monitoring Report referenced above. Following the Board’s review and discussions with the Superintendent and his representatives, the Board makes the following conclusions:

<u>Ends Reports:</u>	<u>Executive Limitations Reports</u>
<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has achieved the goals established in the policy. b. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals. c. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals, but a greater degree of progress is expected in some areas.* d. is not making reasonable progress in achieving the goals established. * e. cannot be determined* 	<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is in compliance. b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* d. is not in compliance or is not making reasonable progress toward compliance.* e. cannot be determined*
<p><i>*see comments below (No. 3)</i></p>	

2. Please note commendable progress over the last year.

The board notes that the superintendent’s work in putting into place the policy review cycles is achieving its goal. At the same time, there is continued refinement on policies that are on the book. This report demonstrates the volume of work done to align BSD policies with WSSDA, ensure the board is well-equipped for its role in governance, and continue to develop policy governance even in the midst of the pandemic.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

No areas identified.

4. Comments on the report itself.

The report is well-organized and written, with the spreadsheet methodology offering a clear and efficient review of progress of policy maintenance.

5. Possible changes to the policy.

No changes identified.

Monitoring Response Document

Policy Monitored: EL-5, Communication and Counsel to the Board

Date Report Submitted: 11/4/2020

Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 12/9/2020

The Board has received and reviewed the Superintendent’s Monitoring Report referenced above. Following the Board’s review and discussions with the Superintendent and his representatives, the Board makes the following conclusions:

<u>Ends Reports:</u>	<u>Executive Limitations Reports</u>
<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has achieved the goals established in the policy. b. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals. c. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals, but a greater degree of progress is expected in some areas.* d. is not making reasonable progress in achieving the goals established. * e. cannot be determined* 	<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is in compliance. b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* d. is not in compliance or is not making reasonable progress toward compliance.* e. cannot be determined*
<p><i>*see comments below (No. 3)</i></p>	

2. Please note commendable progress over the last year.

The Superintendent highly excels in this area and does an exceptional job of keeping the board apprised of high-level activities as well as his schedule. Communication through email updates and other channels is timely, articulate, transparent, and appropriately thorough. During the pandemic, the Board was kept well-informed through a sizable increase in communications, even when the context was rapidly changing. The Superintendent’s willingness to engage in in-depth, sometimes challenging conversations is very much appreciated by the Board, as are community linkages and study sessions that allow the board the chance to dive deeper into issues and experiences.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

No areas identified.

4. Comments on the report itself.

The Board appreciates the thoroughness of this report.

Monitoring Response Document

Policy Monitored: EL-5, Communication and Counsel to the Board

Date Report Submitted: 11/4/2020

Date of Board's Monitoring Response: 12/9/2020

5. Possible changes to the policy.

The Board has made a suggestion to potentially change the wording regarding “The superintendent shall not fail to: a. timely inform the board of circumstances of interest, which includes items that will reasonably be reported to the press or of a concern to *a majority* of the community.” A Board committee will do more research into this possible change.

Monitoring Response Document – INITIAL COMPILATION

Policy Monitored: EL-7, Budget Planning and Execution

Date Report Submitted: 12/9/2020

Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 1/13/2021

Below are my responses in connection with the report:

<u>Ends Reports:</u>	<u>Executive Limitations Reports</u>
<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has achieved the goals established in the policy. b. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals. c. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals, but a greater degree of progress is expected in some areas.* d. is <i>not</i> making reasonable progress in achieving the goals established. * e. cannot be determined* 	<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is in compliance. KB DB JM KR b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* d. is <i>not</i> in compliance <u>or</u> is <i>not</i> making reasonable progress toward compliance.* e. cannot be determined*
<p><i>*see comments below (No. 3)</i></p>	

2. Please note commendable progress over the last year.

KB:

- Superintendent appointed Krisi Dominguez to work to strengthen relationships with community partners. BSD rose to the challenge when faced with the pandemic in working closely with community partners. BSD worked with the City and County and the Lighthouse Mission to open the doors of Bellingham High School to provide shelter to our homeless community. The Central Kitchen and many staff stepped up and continue to provide food boxes to our families in the community. All of these efforts have happened and are continuing based on staff coming together to come up with solutions to problems. It should be noted that while last year was a challenging time for a different reason no one could have ever predicted that this year would be even more difficult. The Board knows that these are challenging times and appreciates all that staff have done to continue to figure out ways in how to serve our students and budget is an important part of that.

DB:

- The District has dedicated resources and participated on State-level workgroups to provide leadership and recommendations to the legislature on funding formulas.
- Strong alignment with GFOA best practices.
- As required by policy the District has received a clean audit most recently and has for the past consecutive 16 years.

JM:

- The District’s work to build relationships and partnerships with local partners over the years was hugely critical during the pandemic. Through this excellent work, many services and programs were able to be developed, maintained, and/or adapted for our students in the 2019-2020 school year. Much appreciation for the work of the Superintendent, Executive Team, and staff who were able to serve our students and community members in this way.
- -Despite uncertainty in projections due to changing formulas/funding levels, a coherent, carefully developed budget was developed that helped to offer confidence, even during a time with many unknowns.

KR:

- The report shows a tremendous increase in grants worked on this year (63 compared to 37)—the effort it takes to seek out new funding sources, explore viability, and prepare a proposal shows a commitment to seeking new funding and innovation. The year also highlights the importance of community partnerships—appreciate that partnerships not only help meet student needs, but also show the role of the district as a broader public structure.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

4. Comments on the report itself.

KB:

- Excellent. Appreciative of the many hours of work that goes into these reports especially when there are so many other things that staff is continuing to work on during this time. Thank you for the timelines and highlights provided in the report.

DB:

- Thank you for the italicized highlights.

JM:

- None

KR:

- The budget report is referred to by several different names in the report and on the website (budget report, budget book, 2020 Budget Book Final by Communications, Final Budget Fiscal Year 2020-21) being consistent with the name and moving away from jargon like “budget book” would be helpful for accessibility.

5. Possible changes to the policy.

Monitoring Response Document – INITIAL COMPILATION

Policy Monitored: EL-9, Asset Maintenance and Protection

Date Report Submitted: 12/9/2020

Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 1/13/2021

Below are my responses in connection with the report:

<u>Ends Reports:</u>	<u>Executive Limitations Reports</u>
<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has achieved the goals established in the policy. b. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals. c. is making reasonable progress towards achieving the goals, but a greater degree of progress is expected in some areas.* d. is not making reasonable progress in achieving the goals established. * e. cannot be determined* 	<p>1. The Board finds that the Superintendent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is in compliance. KB DB JM KR b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* d. is not in compliance or is not making reasonable progress toward compliance.* e. cannot be determined*
*see comments below (No. 3)	

2. Please note commendable progress over the last year.

KB:

- Elimination of toxic chemicals. Replacement of 42 buses. Carpentry staff altering spaces at our schools due to COVID protocols. Replacing fluorescent lights with LED at several of our schools. Food to Flowers Program impressive in being able to divert food from our landfill. Solar ready roofs to be able to accommodate solar panels. Continued appreciation for our staff. This has been a challenging time and this department has been tasked with doing things that they have not had to do in the past. this report highlights the many things that our community has done to improve our schools

DB:

- Busses received ‘excellence’ ratings in the bi-annual Washington State Patrol inspections and ‘100% Transportation Efficiency Ratings’ from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Nice to see an obvious emphasis on energy savings, such as retrofitting light and sustainable practices, PSE recognition, lower energy costs, sustainable food practices etc.
- An impressive list of completed facilities and projects.

JM:

- The Food Share Shelves Program is a great idea and sounds like a win-win, in terms of eliminating food waste and helping provide extra food for kids.
- Great to see all of the efforts made to conserve energy across sites, including sizable savings through the PSE grant and food waste programs.

KR:

- Impressive outcomes in a wild year—appreciate the flexible staff focused on preventative maintenance while also finding innovative ways to adapt spaces for improved safety upon reopening. Especially impressive in the face of staffing reductions and general mayhem of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

JM:

- Not really for improvement, but will be interested to see outcomes of changes made to lower the EUI at Options and Sehome.

4. Comments on the report itself.

KB:

- The Board appreciates all of the data required.

DB:

- Thank you for the bold highlights.

JM:

- Very thorough, particularly appreciate the outline depth of information about sustainability efforts, as we know this is an important shared District and community value.

KR:

- Overall, very clear and comprehensive report, and I appreciate the bolded areas highlighting key points. Possible areas for improvement: given that this report covers topics outside the purview of the average member of the public (and at least one current board member), it would be helpful to keep the language about data consistent with the included data set (example: data set refers to employee injuries, but in the report they're referred to as staff accidents). Additionally, as there are well-documented societal systemic bias issues in the medical field, it may be useful to include data or other evidence for assertions about changes to L&I just to avoid the potential appearance of bias in district assessment.

5. Possible changes to the policy.