



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE STUDENT ROUNDTABLE SPECIAL MEETING  
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
November 6, 2019 2:00-3:00 p.m.**

**Linkage Attendees:**

- Students from Kulshan Middle School
- Directors present: **Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hackler, Jenn Mason**
- Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools **Greg Baker**
- District Leadership and Staff: Assistant Superintendent **Steve Clarke**; Executive Director **Jay Jordan**; Assistant Superintendent **Bob Kuehl**; Executive Director **Kurt Gazow**; Executive Director **Kristi Dominguez**; Executive Director **Jackie Brawley**; Assistant Superintendent **Simone Sangster**; Kulshan Middle School Assistant Principal **Kevin Terpstra**; Director of Teaching and Learning **Charisse Berner**; Early Childhood Specialist **Debbie Haney**; Doctoral Resident **Lance Huffman**; Executive Administrative Assistant **Sheri O'Day** (notetaker).

**Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions:** School Board President Camille Diaz Hackler called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Superintendent Greg Baker welcomed attendees and invited all to introduce themselves and describe their connections to the school district and community.

**Meeting Purpose – Explanation of Community Linkages:** School Board Director Jenn Mason thanked everyone for taking time to be here this afternoon. Student roundtables give the school board an opportunity to strengthen the connection with our students, and the school board is excited to hear what students have to say about their experiences. She shared that the school board and district are also interested in seeking input on the goals we have set for our students through the board policies expressed in our strategic plan, [The Bellingham Promise](#). There are eight guiding questions located on each table, and the hope is for each group to discuss at least four of the eight guiding questions.

**Small Group Discussion with School Board Members and Facilitators:** For discussion purposes, student attendees, board members and executive team members were divided into five groups, facilitated by Doug Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hackler, Jenn Mason, Kristi Dominguez and Jay Jordan. The small groups focused on the following guiding questions:

1. In looking at The Bellingham Promise, what stands out for you as important?
2. What are the biggest differences between elementary school and middle school?
3. What is one thing that surprised you about middle school?

4. Have you joined a club or sport? How is that going?
5. What can we do to improve the middle school experience?
6. What was it like going from elementary to middle school? Please share reflections about WEB, challenges, supports and any orientations/events that you attended.
7. Thinking about your daily schedule, what is it like in your classes?
8. How does our 1:1 (laptop) initiative support your learning?

At the end of the small group time, Dr. Baker asked each table group to share briefly about their small group discussions. Following is a summary of responses to the guiding questions:

- Sixth graders have more ability to participate in sports.
- The transition to middle school was easier because of eighth graders, particularly the WEB (Where Everybody Belongs) program.
- There are additional freedoms in middle school, such as more time to pass between classes. Some sixth graders adjusted better than others to more freedom.
- Teachers can edit students' OneNote, but students cannot edit the teachers' OneNote entries.
- There is more opportunity for involvement in activities, sports and clubs.
- The WEB group is helpful for sixth graders because it gives us another student to interact with, and they understand what we are going through.
- Middle school is a place where students try on different personalities.
- It feels like there is more trust in middle school than in elementary school.
- Not convinced that homework is a good thing.
- Challenges associated with the move from elementary school to middle school include homework and stress about keeping a laptop in good condition. The upside is that all students have computers, they can sleep later and have made new friends.
- Additional safe biking and walking routes would be good.
- The WEB program is very helpful; additional activities for students to connect at the beginning of the school year would make it even better.
- The food is good.
- Riding a bus and using a hamster pass provides students with more responsibility and independence.
- Students have missed their bus because they couldn't find their hamster pass.
- Hamster passes are less efficient than they were meant to be because it takes a long time to scan the passes.
- The lunches taste great and are good for us. They are definitely better than last year.
- Why did we add EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) to [The Bellingham Promise?](#)
- Everyone should be treated fairly no matter what their background is.
- Sixth graders must read 30 minutes at home, but eighth graders are able to do their reading in class.

Dr. Baker thanked everyone for being here this afternoon. Student voice is important and helps the school board and district determine how to make things better.

Ms. Diaz Hackler also thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 2:56 p.m.

**Approved:**



Camille Diaz Hackler, School Board President

**Attest:**



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

*Minutes approved:* November 20, 2019