



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
February 10, 2021**

1.0 OPENING ITEMS

1.1 Meeting Date and Location:

February 10, 2021 – via remote Zoom meeting.

1.2 Call to Order/Roll Call:

Ms. Mason called the meeting to order at 6:01p.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:

- Dr. Baker asked Director of Teaching and Learning Amy Carder to give an update on the Connections program, which has been supporting students by providing them with an outdoor-based learning program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vamos Outdoors and Wild Whatcom have partnered with the district in this work, and Amy introduced Andy Basabe of Vamos Outdoors and Licia Sahagun of Wild Whatcom. Amy, Andy and Licia each shared information about Connections and the positive impact the program has had on students. They then responded to questions from the board.
- Promise Kindergarten started Jan. 25, 2021 at Alderwood, Birchwood, Cordata, Geneva, Happy Valley, Northern Heights and Roosevelt elementary schools. Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Kristi Dominguez shared that this is the district's eighth Promise K cohort. With 118 enrolled students, it is the largest cohort thus far. Family engagement is a high priority in the program, and this year Zoom calls were held with families so they could help design and learn protocols. A remote option for is also being provided at each school site, with the teacher meeting weekly with families. Kristi responded to questions from the board.
- Director of Capital Projects Curtis Lawyer gave an update on several capital projects, sharing photos and design timelines for Alderwood, Parkview and Sunnyland elementary schools; Bellingham High School fields (phase 2); Shuksan Middle School gym and the District Office. Alderwood and Parkview are scheduled to open fall 2021, and Sunnyland is expected to be complete by fall 2022. Each of the three elementary schools and the

district office will be approximately 50,000 square feet, at a cost of approximately \$30 million each. Curtis and Dr. Baker answered questions from board members.

- Dr. Baker gave a reopening update. Since the last board meeting, Promise K and grade 2 have begun in-person learning. Last Friday the expected return dates for grades 3-8 were announced, and Dr. Baker received a lot of feedback after that announcement, with many advocating for dates and details about grades 9-12. The district continues to work with labor partners on what the rollout will look like. COVID-19 cases have been on a slow decline over the past few weeks, and the area within our district's boundaries continues to remain under 200 cases per 100K. Dr. Baker responded to questions from board members.
- Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Bob Kuehl, who oversees high school athletics and activities, gave an overview of the activities and athletics recent start up and shared that in the first season of the school year, over 800 students are participating in activities.

2.0 CONSENT ITEMS:

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

2.1 Approval of Minutes of the Jan. 13, 2021 Regular Meeting

2.2 Approval of Expenditures and Payroll – January 2021

2.3 Resolution 5-21, Request to Transfer Funds from the Capital Projects Fund to the General Fund

2.4 EL-4 Monitoring Report – Staff Treatment, Compensation and Evaluation

2.5 Approval of Updated Policy 2418

2.6 NWRDC Student Support Services Contract (#2021-086)

2.7 VNN Sports Contract (#2021-093)

2.8 Allied Arts of Whatcom County Agreement (#2021-102)

2.9 YMCA Before and After School Care Agreement (#2021-108)

2.10 Meng Analysis Agreement (#2021-109)

2.11 Personnel Recommendations

Unanimous affirmative vote.

3.0 POLICY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

3.1 Monitoring Report Ends 2.1 (Part 1) – Student Competence

Dr. Mike Copland, Deputy Superintendent, and Brian Rick, Director of Research and Assessment, discussed the [report](#) and [data set](#) and answered questions from the board.

4.0 BOARD RESPONSE TO MONITORING

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

There was discussion regarding the summary of the board responses to the EL-7 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 A).
Unanimous affirmative vote.

4.2 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-9, Asset Maintenance and Protection
There was discussion regarding the summary of the board responses to the EL-9 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 B). Unanimous affirmative vote.

4.3 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-3, Treatment and Communication with Public, Parents and Students

The board discussed the feedback contained in the combined monitoring responses for EL-3 (Attachment C). Ms. Mason will provide a final summary version of this document which will be submitted for approval at the March 10, 2021 regular meeting.

4.4 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-10, Race and Equity

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

5.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

5.1 School Board Directors’ Reports. Highlights of comments:

- Ms. Diaz Hackler enjoyed listening to Flo Simon, interim police chief for the Bellingham Police Department, speak at the YWCA Women of Color series. Ms. Diaz Hackler encouraged everyone to email input about important qualities and characteristics for the next police chief to the City of Bellingham. She enjoyed the presentations by staff this evening and is grateful as a community member for the effort put forth for kids.
- Ms. Bashaw shared that she attended a community meeting where Chris Cochran, the district’s new mental health coordinator, gave a great overview of how the district is working with community partners.
- Mr. Benjamin recently attended an introductory interview with state auditors in connection with the annual audit. He noted that he is impressed with the number of capital projects that are occurring at the same time and shared that he has been fascinated by statements regarding how remote learning can remove barriers for some students.
- Ms. Rose viewed a forum regarding homelessness and housing in the community and was reminded of how grateful she is for the district’s partnership over the summer to help some of the most vulnerable members of our community.
- Ms. Mason noted that members of the board spend a lot of time between meetings reading feedback from the community, and she appreciates that people take the time to share their experiences and perspectives, especially those of our students.

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

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

n/a

7.0 CLOSING ITEMS

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

7.2 **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Mason", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Jennifer I. Mason, Board President

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Baker", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

Minutes approved: March 10, 2021

Monitoring Response Document

Policy Monitored: EL-7, Budget Planning and Execution
 Date Report Submitted: 12/9/2020
 Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 1/13/2021

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>
1. The Board finds that the Superintendent: <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* 	1. The Board finds that the Superintendent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>is in compliance.</u> 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.

The Board recognizes continued progress in the district’s community relationships and partnerships. This includes relationships at all levels, from working with the Lighthouse Mission to state-level workgroups that provide recommendations to the legislature. The Board appreciates staff efforts to serve our students and families during this difficult year. Additionally, the district’s work to increase the number of grant requests demonstrates a continued commitment to diversifying and expanding resources to meet student needs.

3. Comments on the report itself.

The Board appreciates the timelines, highlights and detailed information in this report and recognizes the work that goes into its compilation. It was noted that a consistent term for the budget report/workbook may help with ease of reading this report.

4. Comments on the report itself.

n/a

Monitoring Response Document

Policy Monitored: EL-7, Budget Planning and Execution

Date Report Submitted: 12/9/2020

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

5. Possible changes to the policy.

n/a

Monitoring Response Document

Policy Monitored: EL-9, Asset Maintenance and Protection

Date Report Submitted: 12/9/2020

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

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. <u>is in compliance.</u> 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 recognizes impressive outcomes in this area during a challenging year. We appreciate the flexible staff focused on preventative maintenance while also finding innovative ways to adapt spaces for improved safety upon reopening. Commendable progress was made in the areas of energy conservation, elimination of toxic chemicals, completion of facilities and projects and food waste management.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

No suggested changes.

4. Comments on the report itself.

The Board appreciates the clarity, depth and attention to presented that is especially evident in this report. It was noted that having data terms consistent between data sets and reports may help with ease of reading this detailed information.

5. Possible changes to the policy.

No changes identified.

Monitoring Response Document – INITIAL COMPILATION

Policy Monitored: EL-3, Treatment and Communication with Public, Parents and Students

Date Report Submitted: 1/13/2021

Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 2/4/2021

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 b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* KR d. is <i>not</i> in compliance or 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:

- Having to move all operations online. Dr. Baker and his staff have had to pivot this past year and communicate out to staff and families. I am thinking some of the biggest lifts have been food distribution as well as technology. Graduations were online for the first time for all four of our high schools. BPS is in the process of building three new elementary schools, turf fields and planning for a new district office. The community supported our technology and operations levy last February by 71% pass rate.

DB:

- Like other forms of communication, the work done here by the superintendent and his team is exemplary. It is comprehensive, timely and nimble— as evidenced by curve balls like the pandemic, social unrest and staff tragedies. Yet, the communication with the public and outside stakeholders remains comprehensive and sharp. The superintendent spends countless hours ensuring that public, staff and students are heard and get a personal reply. The work done by the district in this area could easily be a model of how it can and should be done. (This board member rated the report as showing “in compliance” only because “exceeds compliance” was not an option.)

JM:

- Impressive work to entirely retool communications in response to the pandemic, including through Qualtrics, website redesign and virtual ground-breaking/budget

presentations/graduations. Continuing to effectively engage families even while in-person contact is extremely limited is a testament to the District's strength in this area.

- During the reporting period, the district as a whole dealt with multiple, highly impactful situations, including social justice/police in schools and closures due to the pandemic. The district and superintendent communicated expertly through these situations, providing leadership, transparency, intention and thoughtfulness during extremely challenging times.
- The hashtag campaigns added a lovely human element to communications at a time when people were very disconnected from each other. The use of storytelling across platforms and showcasing the efforts of our staff/community brought a much-appreciated level of depth to communication.

KR:

- Commendable efforts in dispersing information and superintendent perspective over many nuanced and deeply felt topics over the last year.
- Use of Qualtrics is a great step in intentionally gathering feedback and reviewing at a systems level—hope to see this expanded in the future.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

KR:

- The report lists many examples of one-way communication to the community and stakeholders. While these efforts are commendable, best practices in communication dictate the need to establish a “two-way street” and the few examples of stakeholder participation given (e.g. community meetings held during working hours, specialized committees for student and parent participation) seem, at face value, to ignore issues of equity and access. While not included in the report, there are also troubling challenges in timing and opacity (including messages in regards to school opening dates, and communications around district resource officers).
- Additionally, despite family engagement being one of the most critical aspects of student success social media communications in particular focus heavily on district/school perspective and rarely include a student or family perspective. In addition to the lack of inclusion of stakeholders vital to student success, the sole focus on district employees on social media also erases the community role in schools—in addition to the engagement priorities included in EL-10, the district is also public asset. Yet the community is rarely reflected in the communications most likely to reach them. Communication is only effective if it reaches the target audience, and the report fails to include evidence of this occurring for many stakeholders of the BSD community. Which is not to say current communication strategies are not effective, just that the report doesn't include evidence that it is. Information like demographic data in website traffic or social media audience would be helpful in identifying potential gaps in which audiences are or are not consistently accessing or being exposed to these communications.
- Finally, EL-3 while the report answers ”affirmative” that there is “a process in place to address student, parent, and stakeholder concerns in a timely manner”. It includes as evidence the decrease in complaints reaching the school board (although there is no data that indicates this) and cites team members as responding to parents and others with concerns as a “proactive” approach. It's confusing how responding to concerns is considered proactive. Additionally, while a decrease in complaints reaching the board *may* indicate a decrease in

concerns, it is not by itself evidence of that. There are many reasons individuals may not be using the listening post, including anecdotal statements assuming concerns sent to the Superintendent are always shared with the board (which, it would seem, they are not).

4. Comments on the report itself.

KB:

- Very lengthy and detailed report that supports the superintendent is in compliance. Appreciate the use of examples from past publications.

DB:

- Very thorough. Overwhelming with evidence of outstanding work.

JM:

- Thank you for all the visuals and examples! It's fun to see elements of this report in action.

KR:

- Given the mandate is around taking actions that are reasonable and prudent typical for similar and highly effective organizations, it would be helpful to include what some of those actions may be (this information has been included in other EL's if I recall correctly). Otherwise, evaluation is mostly likely based on board member experience and individual perception—it's easy to assume if a communication is effective for oneself it's easy to assume it's effective for everyone.

5. Possible changes to the policy.

JM:

- Minor change to consider, adding the word "accessible" to the policy?
 - *The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that non-employee stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity throughout the organization and are provided with accessible communications regarding district events, plans and actions.*

KR:

- Is the current policy clear enough on the goal of communications? Is the goal to have effective communications that result in stakeholder engagement and understanding to disperse information?

Monitoring Response Document – INITIAL COMPILATION

Policy Monitored: EL-10, Race and Equity
 Date Report Submitted: 1/13/2021
 Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 2/4/2021

Below are my responses in connection with the report:

<u>Ends Reports:</u>	<u>Executive Limitations Reports</u>
1. The Board finds that the Superintendent: <ol 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* 	1. The Board finds that the Superintendent: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. is in compliance. KB DB JM b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* KR d. is <i>not</i> in compliance or is <i>not</i> making reasonable progress toward compliance.* e. cannot be determined*
<i>*see comments below (No. 3)</i>	

2. Please note commendable progress over the last year.

KB:

- The hiring of Dr. Janis Velasquez Farmer as Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to help move the work forward
- Dr. Chris Cochran, new Mental Health Coordinator.
- Affinity groups up and running.
- Partnership with Lighthouse Mission and City of Bellingham to relocate the shelter due to COVID-19.
- Ethnic studies course in partnership with WWU.

DB:

- Creation and staffing a new executive level position of Director of EDI.
- Innovative to add EDI expertise to MRT.
- Good progress increasing the hiring of minority status staff.
- Addition of a Mental Health Coordinator.
- Recognition of how the pandemic exacerbated inequities (e.g. remote access).
- Nice progress with new publications and outreach (e.g., multiple languages, Family Engagement)
- Expanded efforts in increase focus on racial equity/justice in curriculum, by teachers and in professional development.

JM:

- The addition of the Director for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and subsequent hiring of Dr. Janis Velasquez Farmer demonstrates commitment to addressing inequities at the institutional level. This is a wonderful addition to the team.
- The Board has had many discussions about student mental health; the addition of the Mental Health Coordinator is a major step for addressing student need in this area.
- Adding to the Family Engagement Team so that each school has a point person is so important for our historically less connected families, particularly during the pandemic. Wonderful work by this team to make personalized efforts to connect and meet the specific needs of our families.
- The addition of the Ethnic Studies course across high schools
- Equity is a major issue in the pandemic and this report highlights the many ways that the district continued work to identify and interrupt inequities during this time.

KR:

- Excellent steps forward in creating new positions around mental health and DEI work and through hiring of Dr. Janis Velasquez Farmer as Director of Equity, Diversity and Dr. Chris Cochran, new Mental Health Coordinator.
- Appreciate continued partnerships with WWU in ethnic studies and BSD acting as a community partner with Lighthouse and the City to provide shelter to vulnerable community members due to the pandemic.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

KB:

- Continuing to apply an equity lens to the district's initiatives.

KR:

- Despite the report covering a time period that includes the largest civil rights and racial justice protests in a generation, during which the board and district received considerable feedback on BSD policies around police in schools, this is relegated to one bullet point about learning about student perspectives of color. Not addressed at all beyond student conversations, despite one area of focus being to engage families and community partners in culturally appropriate ways to ensure cultural perspectives are elevated and valued.
- Mental health coordinator is a great first step, however despite being listed as a reason for re-opening, many families describe feeling unsupported during the pandemic and other crises.

4. Comments on the report itself.

KB:

- I appreciate the links provided in the report.

DB:

- The point-by-point approach with interpretation and evidence sections made for a very clear and focused report.

JM:

- Appreciated all of the examples. This report demonstrates the importance of EL-10's recent addition as it effectively monitors issues around race and equity.

5. Possible changes to the policy.

DB:

- Since this is a relatively new EL policy, the Board would appreciate hearing any superintendent/staff recommendations for additions or revisions.