



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY LINKAGE SPECIAL MEETING  
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
March 27, 2019 6:00-7:00 p.m.**

**Linkage Attendees:**

- Representatives of community agencies
  - Lydia Place: **Emily O'Connor**
  - Brigid Collins House: **Jenn Lockwood**
  - Northwest Youth Services: **Page, Dan Reese**
  - Whatcom Detention Center: **Lani Brogan, Steve Dahl**
  - Opportunity Council: **David Webster**
- Directors present: **Kelly Bashaw, Camille Diaz Hackler, Jenn Mason, Quenby Peterson**; absent: **Douglas Benjamin**
- Deputy Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools **Mike Copland**
- District Leadership and Staff: Assistant Superintendent **Steve Clarke**; Executive Director **Kristi Dominguez**; Executive Director **Jay Jordan**; Assistant Superintendent **Bob Kuehl**; Assistant Superintendent **Simone Sangster**; Executive Director **Kurt Gazow**; Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Family Engagement **Isabel Meaker**; Director of Teaching and Learning **Trina Hall**; Communications Manager **Dana Smith**; Early Learning Specialist **Debora Haney**.

**Dr. Baker** sent regrets as he was attending a school event with one of his children.

**Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions:** School Board President Camille Diaz Hackler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland 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 evening. She shared that the school board and district are very interested in learning how to best support families, and community linkages are an opportunity to strengthen the school board's connections with our students and families. More specifically, the board is seeking input on the goals we have set for our students through our board policies expressed in [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#).

**Small Group Discussion with School Board Members and Facilitators:** For discussion purposes, attendees divided into four groups, facilitated by Isabel Meaker,

Kristi Dominguez, Steve Clarke and Mike Copland. The small groups focused on the following guiding questions:

1. How do you see [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#) connected to your work in supporting our families through challenge?
2. What is working well for our students and families?
3. What is missing or needs improvement?
4. What do you see with our families that maybe we're not seeing?
5. How can we better work together?

At the conclusion of the small group time, Dr. Copland asked each table group to share briefly what they discussed. Following is a summary of responses to the guiding questions:

- Whatcom Detention Center (WDC), as a school, can be more calming for students than a traditional school.
- [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#) demonstrates how we care about children, teaching them to be their best selves.
- Students entering WDC are assessed and typically learn a year's worth of math and language arts content in 90 days.
- Students need to be recognized, but WDC cannot issue credit or graduate students.
- It is important to continue strengthening the relationship between WDC and Bellingham Public Schools. Because of the nature of detention, WDC is able to learn a lot about what is happening in their students' lives while the students are under their care.
- WDC would like to continue the partnership with Bellingham Public Schools, including staff training.
- A "rapid response team" should be considered (homeless liaison, counselor, etc.).
- Executive Director Jay Jordan read a poem written by a WDC student.
- A collective buy-in is needed to do all that we can to help students and families.
- The increased family engagement team is working to level the playing field for families.
- The elimination of school fees helps to ease families' minds.
- [\*The Bellingham Promise\*](#) is flexible and does not reflect a cookie-cutter approach.
- More staff training is needed to support students with challenging behaviors and living in difficult circumstances.
- There was discussion regarding the loss of academic traction for students over the summer, with an interest in a longer school year.
- Where are we reducing opportunities for students to feel "less than"?
- There is power in the relationships between teacher and child, child and parent.
- Students who have experienced trauma benefit from firm boundaries.
- All school staff, not just teachers, should receive interactive training and coaching around challenging behaviors and how to be an advocate for kids.
- LGBTQ youth typically struggle with a lack of family acceptance.

- Curriculum and expectations need to be tailored to students.
- The new portions of [The Bellingham Promise](#) are important for students to hear and be reminded of.
- The district is committed to facilitate change.
- “Teaching” refers to all staff (custodians, food service, paraeducators), not just certificated staff, so it is important to communicate with and train all staff.
- It’s important to have adults use preferred pronouns, etc.
- There is some discrepancy in the referral rates to Northwest Youth Services by school.
- More parent engagement is needed for parents of LGBTQ youth.
- Whatcom Youth Pride is June 9.

Dr. Copland thanked everyone for being here this evening. The notes from this meeting will be added to the website and will be a part of our district’s history. He shared that the learnings from this evening will be referenced in many settings including future school board meetings and executive meetings.

Ms. Mason also thanked all who attended.

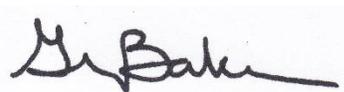
Ms. Diaz Hackler adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

**Approved:**



Camille Diaz Hackler, School Board President

**Attest:**



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

*Minutes approved: April 17, 2019*