



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
April 22, 2020**

**1.0 OPENING ITEMS**

**1.1 Meeting Date and Location:**

April 22, 2020 – via remote Zoom meeting.

**1.2 Call to Order/Roll Call:**

Mr. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He acknowledged that this meeting, while attended from various locations, is being held on the ancestral homelands of the Coastal Salish people. Present: Directors Kelly Bashaw, Douglas Benjamin (President), Camille Diaz Hackler, Jenn Mason, Katie Rose, Superintendent Greg Baker and Sheri O'Day (recorder).

**1.3 Audience:**

Mr. Benjamin noted that, because of our current emergency status due to COVID-19, public participation is limited to written submissions only. Any written comments received will be shared with the school board directors. He also noted that it is Administrative Professionals Day and thanked Sheri for her support of the school board, and Dr. Baker who serves in the capacity of official secretary to the board.

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

- Everyone is working very hard, and students, staff and families are experiencing varying levels of stress as we go through this time. It is difficult work, and anxiety is higher than normal due to the uncertainties and unknowns. Our first priority is around safety, and we have worked hard to have staff working remotely rather than in district facilities. While some members of our community are uncomfortable with the Lighthouse Mission being located at Bellingham High School, most feedback from the community has been supportive. Staff will ensure that the facility is cleaned and returned to the condition that it was in prior to students and staff leaving in March.
- Food Services has been preparing 2,500 weekly meal boxes to be picked up from 16 locations. Beginning on May 4, we will shift to serving seven days of food rather than five days, due to a change in what government funding will allow. We have been delivering food to families who are not able to go to one of the pickup stations. Staff has also been preparing food for the childcare programs and the Lighthouse Mission that are in our facilities. Dr. Baker expressed appreciation to all staff making this possible.
- The district is working with partners to provide child care for children of first responders. Child care is a big challenge across the country, and there are a lot of questions, such as what that care will look like in the summer.

- Staff is working to prepare learning opportunities for students. There are many nuances to this, such as what a high school credit looks like right now. Graduation is also a big topic and Dr. Baker and others have been meeting with student groups to process graduation. Although graduation ceremonies will very likely not occur in June, there will be opportunities to get together at some point to celebrate the students' accomplishments. Our team is brainstorming how to deliver diplomas and celebrate with our seniors the best that we can. It will be a unique experience, unlike the experiences that their parents and older siblings had.
- Grading at the high school level is very complex, and the state superintendent has come out with guidance. Over the next few days, districts will begin communicating their approaches to grading. There is not a clear-cut answer that is the right answer for all. Grading did not work for everyone before the virus, and it is an even bigger challenge now. Our highest priority is to do no harm, and we likely will put some ideas out for feedback in the next few days. The state superintendent made it clear that students will not receive Fs, and a pass/no pass option is not an option. Districts will be using either an incomplete or a letter grade of A, B, C or D. We will not be rushing to an answer for grading, as there are many circumstances of students to consider.
- There is much discussion about synchronous vs. asynchronous when it comes to students participating in classes at defined times. One model is to have teachers send assignments to students on Monday and Tuesday, with students having the rest of the week to complete assignments. We are continuing to try things out, learning and adjusting as we go, and being careful about our approach.
- We continue to refine our thinking in order to limit the need for students and families to pick up supplies from school. It may be that a delivery model of some sort will be put into place.
- Some of our 12,000 students do not have access to technology or WiFi. That is not a problem that is quickly solved, but we are working to get devices and WiFi to households.
- A virtual conversation is scheduled via Zoom for this Friday afternoon. Questions are being submitted from the community, and there will be a capability to submit questions during the live event.
- The state legislature wrapped up its session and included some additional funding for preK-12 public education, however, many of those earmarked funds were vetoed by the governor, who cited the many financial challenges and unknowns due to the pandemic. We are waiting to see what the impact of the lost revenue will be and how it will affect our state funding. This will necessitate a more conservative approach to district budget planning, including some positions not being filled. Special Education enrollment has increased, and we will be hiring some specialist positions as well as a Director of Special Education. It was hoped that we would be hiring additional math TOSA (teacher on special assignment) support, which will not occur now, although Title I funds will allow some positions to be filled. It is anticipated that we will be making some improvements to radio systems on buses and in schools. Once budget feedback has been received from the community, refinement to the proposed budget will be made.

**2.0 CONSENT ITEMS:**

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

- 2.1 Approval of Minutes of the March 25, 2020 Regular Meeting**
- 2.2 Approval of Expenditures and Payroll – March 2020**
- 2.3 Resolution 3-20, Authorization of Warrant Signature**
- 2.4 Resolution 4-20, Emergency Suspension of Policy**
- 2.5 Resolution 5-20, Emergency Waiver of High School Graduation Credits**
- 2.6 Authorization to Call for Bids – Alderwood Elementary School**
- 2.7 Whatcom Community College – College in the High School Agreement (#1920-110)**
- 2.8 Whatcom Discovery Program Interlocal Cooperative Agreement (#1920-158)**
- 2.9 Personnel Recommendations**

Unanimous affirmative vote.

**3.0 BOARD RESPONSE TO MONITORING**

**3.1 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-4, Staff Treatment, Compensation and Evaluation**

There was discussion regarding the summary of the board responses to the EL-4 report that was prepared by Mr. Benjamin. Following discussion, Ms. Bashaw made a **motion**, seconded by Ms. Mason, to approve the monitoring response document ([Attachment A](#)).

Unanimous affirmative vote.

**3.2 Board Response to Monitoring – Ends 2.1, Part 2, Student Competence**

There was discussion regarding the summary of the board responses to the Ends 2.1, Part 2 report that was prepared by Mr. Benjamin. Following discussion, Ms. Diaz Hackler made a **motion**, seconded by Ms. Bashaw, to approve the monitoring response document ([Attachment B](#)). Unanimous affirmative vote.

Mr. Benjamin noted that all remaining monitoring reports will be suspended for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year so that Dr. Baker and his team can focus on the work necessary to support district students and families as a result of the pandemic. The board will use information from the monitoring reports received thus far for the superintendent’s evaluation summary. Mr. Benjamin will ask board members to send him their thoughts regarding Dr. Baker’s work in response to the Covid-19.

**4.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**4.1 School Board Directors’ Reports.** Highlights of comments:

- Ms. Bashaw is appreciative of the updates that Dr. Baker sends to keep the school board directors informed. It is helpful as a board member to know about some of the behind-the-scenes work that is happening.
- Ms. Mason shared that, from a parent perspective, she is appreciative of her daughter’s morning Zoom meetings and feels very supported by school staff. She has appreciated the inside look into her daughter’s classroom. The school supply pickup process was very smooth.

- Ms. Rose noted that, while she appreciates that her elementary students do not have homework in normal times, she is now getting a better understanding of what her children are working on day-to-day. She is hopeful that the video interactions will continue, as it does alleviate some of the loneliness.
- Ms. Diaz Hackler shared that this is a stressful time for a lot of people who are either working from home and trying to supervise student learning or are just worried about the effects of Covid-19. She appreciates how Dr. Baker and State Superintendent Chris Reykdal have addressed the importance of people. She is curious about what the beginning of next year will look like and also how this will affect the construction of Parkview Elementary. She loves the messaging with a focus on taking care of self and family.
- Mr. Benjamin misses visiting the schools, as those visits are always so enjoyable and informative.

**4.2 GP-7.2 – 2019-20 Annual Board Agenda, Revised** – General review.

**5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

**5.1 New Business:**

- Mr. Benjamin noted that there was discussion at the school board retreat in February regarding a longevity clause in the superintendent’s contract. That will be put on hold for now, and the discussion of the superintendent’s contract will continue at a future date.

**6.0 CLOSING ITEMS**

**6.1 Board Assessment of Meeting:** Ms. Rose assessed the meeting, with an overall rating of 3 (*commendable*).

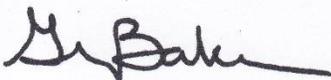
**8.2 Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

**Approved:**



Douglas Benjamin, Board President

**Attest:**



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

*Minutes approved: May 13, 2020*