



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
May 12, 2021**

1.0 OPENING ITEMS

1.1 Meeting Date and Location:

May 12, 2021 – via remote Zoom meeting.

1.2 Call to Order/Roll Call:

Ms. Mason called the meeting to order at 6:00 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.

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

- A few years ago, the district made an investment in a grant writer position that is now shared by Gretchen Pflueger and Amelia Vader. It was a beneficial investment that has resulted in the district and its community partners being the recipient of many grants. Washington state has put an emphasis on early childhood education for several years, and the district recently applied to the state for a grant made available by the federal American Families Plan. The purpose of the grant is to encourage businesses to build on-site early learning centers. The new district office will include an early learning center, and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Kristi Dominguez, Ms. Pflueger and Ms. Vader shared details about the grant and answered questions from the board.
- A board member had requested additional information on behavioral health following the last meeting, when a contract linked to a CARES Act grant was submitted for approval. Dr. Baker introduced Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Trina Hall, who in turn introduced Chris Cochran, mental health coordinator; Laura Burke, mental health specialist; and Stevona Burks, Meghan Lever and Selene Meza, prevention intervention specialists. The team reviewed the framework that outlines mental health supports available to students, which include weekly check-ins with students in need of emotional support; peer support; in-house resources and community resources. Other services available include a weekly wellness support group that meets via Zoom and peer-centered outreach, a club that was student initiated. Ms. Burke spoke about professional

development related to mental health and how she supports students who need intensive intervention. The team then responded to questions and comments from board members.

- The state legislature has finished its session and finalized the state budget, and now OSPI and attorneys are working to interpret the impact to school districts. The district continues to review the feedback received regarding its 2021-22 budget and will bring a refined budget to the board to review at its June 9 meeting.
- Our district, staff and a member of our board received national attention last week after a web post went viral about the book, I Am Jazz about a transgender girl. Many staff have been engaged in responding to inquiries. The national feedback has been mainly negative, with local feedback being more supportive. It has sparked conversations, and staff will continue to engage with families, staff and others who have questions or comments. Dr. Baker believes it is important that students and families see themselves in literature.
- Dr. Baker will be attending an upcoming meeting with the health department and Whatcom County superintendents. There have been questions about whether school districts will require students and staff to be vaccinated. That requirement would come from the state, who looks to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for guidance. At some point, vaccination may be mandated by the state Department of Health and the governor. With the expectation that all students will be able to return to school full time in the fall, online learning will continue to be offered for families who believe that is the best option for their family. New guidance is expected about masks, social distancing, etc. Dr. Baker responded to questions from board members.
- Dr. Baker presented a PowerPoint highlighting retiring staff.

2.0 CONSENT ITEMS:

Ms. Diaz Hackler indicated that an immediate family member is employed by Construction Supply Co., and agenda item 2.2 contains an invoice from Construction Supply Co. To avoid a conflict of interest per RCW 42.23.030, Ms. Diaz Hackler will recuse herself from voting on item 2.2 (Approval of Expenditures and Payroll). Mr. Benjamin made a motion to vote on item 2.2 separately. Ms. Bashaw seconded the motion. Unanimous affirmative vote.

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

- 2.1 Approval of Minutes of the April 14, 2021 Regular Meeting**
- 2.3 Resolution 11-21, Request to Transfer Funds from the Capital Projects Fund to the General Fund**
- 2.4 Resolution 12-21, Delegation of Authority to WIAA**
- 2.5 Award Following Request for Proposal (RFP) and Contract – Security Enhancements Phase 1**
- 2.6 Approval of Sunnyland Elementary School Value Engineering Study**
- 2.7 Authorization to Execute Utility Easement for Sunnyland Elementary School Rebuild Project**
- 2.8 University of Washington Site Access Agreement for Seismic Monitoring (#2021-110)**
- 2.9 Pluto Solutions Limited Service Agreement (#2122-010)**

- 2.10 Seesaw Learning, Inc. Agreement (#2122-011)
- 2.11 Bureau of Internet Accessibility Agreement (#2122-012)
- 2.12 NWRDC Contract for Business Services (#2122-013)
- 2.13 Personnel Recommendations
- 2.14 Personal Services Contracts

Unanimous affirmative vote.

Ms. Bashaw made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rose, to approve the following consent agenda item:

2.2 Approval of Expenditures and Payroll – April 2021

Affirmative votes: Ms. Bashaw, Mr. Benjamin, Ms. Mason, Ms. Rose.

Abstention: Ms. Diaz Hackler.

3.0 BOARD RESPONSE TO MONITORING

3.1 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 Ms. Mason. Following discussion, Mr. Benjamin made a **motion**, seconded by Ms. Diaz Hackler, to approve the monitoring response document ([Attachment A](#)). Unanimous affirmative vote.

3.2 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-6, Academic Standards & Provisions

The board discussed the feedback contained in the combined monitoring responses for EL-6 ([Attachment B](#)). Ms. Mason will provide a final summary version of this document which will be submitted for approval at the June 9, 2021 regular meeting.

3.3 Board Response to Monitoring – EL-8, District Calendar

The board discussed the feedback contained in the combined monitoring responses for EL-8 ([Attachment C](#)). Ms. Mason will provide a final summary version of this document which will be submitted for approval at the June 9, 2021 regular meeting.

4.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

4.1 School Board Directors' Reports. Highlights of comments:

- Mr. Benjamin read a statement he had prepared which addressed the threatening and intimidating communications that have been received by the school board and district staff over the past week. He noted that hate and exclusion directed towards certain classes of people should not and will not be tolerated. These events are evidence that the district's equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts are necessary.
- Ms. Bashaw thanked Mr. Benjamin for his statement. She expressed her support of district staff in their efforts to be inclusive of all students. The Bellingham Promise states that we love all children. She strongly supports Ms. Mason and feels that the district is fortunate to have her serving on the school board.
- Ms. Diaz Hackler stated that she agrees with the other board members, noting that some people have tried to hide their hate by incorrectly citing bible verses.
- Ms. Mason recognizes that it takes a lot of time, resources and energy to respond to issues that draw media attention, and she thanked everyone who has turned their time

and attention on this recent matter. She noted that students are watching and learning from us.

4.2 GP-7.2 – 2020-21 Annual Board Agenda, Revised – general review.

4.3 Annual Affirmative Action Progress Report – no action needed.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 n/a

6.0 CLOSING ITEMS

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

6.2 Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Approved:



Jennifer I. Mason, Board President

Attest:



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

Minutes approved: June 9, 2021

Policy Monitored: Ends 2.1, Part 2, Student Competence
Date Report Submitted: 3/10/2021
Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 4/14/2021

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 <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. b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* d. is <i>not</i> in compliance or is <i>not</i> 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 the significant work to continue improving dropout rates and long-term trends of increased graduation rates. Overall, the superintendent’s work has moved BPS from graduation rates near the state average in 2010 to above average in 2019. Graduates with IEPs are also enrolling in higher education at rates higher than the state average. In particular, there has been commendable progress in improving graduation rates for students receiving free/reduced meals and Hispanic/Latinx students. The board appreciates the work done to encourage and add opportunities for students to participate in dual credit courses. There has also been a significant increase in the number of students earning industry certificates.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

While overall graduation trends are on a long-term positive trajectory, the board hopes to see graduation rates for ELL students and students who receive free/reduced meals to continue improving.

4. Comments on the report itself.

The board appreciates the data and graphs included in the report, as well as the information about why students have dropped out.

Policy Monitored: Ends 2.1, Part 2, Student Competence
Date Report Submitted: 3/10/2021
Date of Board's Monitoring Response: 4/14/2021

5. Possible changes to the policy.

No changes identified.

Monitoring Response Document – INITIAL COMPILATION

Policy Monitored: EL-6, Academic Standards and Practices

Date Report Submitted: 4/14/2021

Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 5/12/2021

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 CDH JM b. is in compliance, except for items(s) noted.* c. is making reasonable progress toward compliance.* 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:

- Appreciate all that the District has had to do of constantly pivoting during this pandemic.
- Edgenuity for secondary level and Accelerate Education program for elementary for continued online learning.
- DreamBox (supplemental tools) for math. A high majority of third, fourth, and fifth grade students on track this year. Both DreamBox and Lexia are able to generate real time data for assessing students.
- Purchase of devices for P-2.
- Promise K up to 8 sites with 124 students.
- Work progressing with the hire of a Mental Health and EDI Coordinator.

DB:

- Remarkable ability to reimplement digital resources in order to continue learning during the abrupt shift to at-home during the COVID-19 pandemic, and cope with dramatically shifting demands, e.g., growth at BFPP and fully remote options.
- In spite of the pandemic the superintendent continued to progress in initiatives that were started previously. Most notably the hiring of an EDI director, expansion in mental health, wellness and math instruction.
- The evidence shows how advantage was taken from the “push” of the pandemic demands to accelerate the exploration of many new instructional methods and platforms.

CDH:

- The board acknowledges the hard work the superintendent has done towards implementing hybrid learning experiences.
- We commend the work done towards mental health and wellness efforts.
- The board is impressed with the Promise K work. Having eight sites open this year is amazing!

JM:

- Implementing new online teaching and assessment tools like Dreambox and Lexia to adapt instructional practices and standards to remote/hybrid learning.
- Increased enrollment in Promise K and becoming a model for other districts in this kind of programming.
- Massive amount of work by teacher and administrators to open schools remotely and have the technology, knowledge and planning to do so successfully.
- Continued progress around EDI with the hiring of Dr. Valesquez-Farmer.
- Overall, this school year pushed the limits of adapting academics and everything that goes along with it to remote/hybrid learning, often at an incredibly rapid pace. Much appreciation for all staff in this effort and the leadership it takes in these major system shifts.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

4. Comments on the report itself.

KB:

- Appreciated pointing out what was new and what was an update.

DB:

- Thank you for the reminder that we actually had school visits and linkages!!

CDH:

- Really great!

JM:

- Thank you for the reminders about which reports contain more information.

5. Possible changes to the policy.

Monitoring Response Document – INITIAL COMPILATION

Policy Monitored: EL-8, District Calendar
 Date Report Submitted: 4/14/2021
 Date of Board’s Monitoring Response: 5/12/2021

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 CDH JM 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*
<i>*see comments below (No. 3)</i>	

2. Please note commendable progress over the last year.

KB:

- Staff did an amazing job during a pandemic and I appreciate everything that everyone has done during this crazy and stressful time.
- Social Emotional Learning the ½ day training with Character Strong.
- The relationships with community partners that worked with our GRADS students to provide educational opportunities to support them as parents.
- Update on our students receiving special education services and the stronger connections made with students and families.
- EDI workshops and training (REACH, Culturally Responsive Training and Intro to Cultural Identity and Diversity).

DB:

- As with other areas, there has been remarkable agility to adapt to the demands forced suddenly upon the entire school system due to the pandemic and a move to online/hybrid learning. This is evidenced by the major schedule adjustments and incorporation of unexpected professional development.
- Impressive to see the percentage of out of class professional development continue to drop.
- There is clear evidence of a remarkable amount of ongoing communication out to the community on the many evolving changes due to the pandemic. This is consistent with feedback from other sources.

CDH:

- In normal times, the superintendent and his team do a very good job in notifying stakeholder groups about the calendar. However, the board is very impressed with the engagement and outreach the superintendent has performed in this unprecedented time.

JM:

- The addition of snow makeup days to the calendar to help keep the last day of school more consistent.
- Being flexible and forward-thinking by adjusting the calendar to allow for more staff learning days prior to the start of the school year, which began in full remote learning.
- Developing professional learning opportunities to support the seismic shift into doing remote and hybrid learning.
- Continued reduction in absences for professional learning.
- Coordinating getting supplies, food, Wi-Fi, and other necessities to help students and families stay engaged, safe and supported during the pandemic; the home visits were clearly impactful on both staff and students.
- Special Education teachers building stronger connections with families during the pandemic both through family outreach and assistive technology that can be used across home and school.
- This was an especially tumultuous year of calendar changes due to the pandemic; communication was prompt and provided as much clarity as possible in a rapidly shifting environment.

3. Please note areas for additional improvement.

4. Comments on the report itself.

KB:

- Appreciated including comments from staff dropping off food and supplies for students and families. Love this quote from a teacher “I’m strengthening connections not just with my students, but with their entire family.”

DB:

- Thank you for including personal voices in this report. It truly reflects the learning and innovation that has occurred due to the pandemic.

JM:

- The quotes brought a nice human element to the report.

5. Possible changes to the policy.