



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY LINKAGE SPECIAL MEETING  
BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
May 29, 2019 2:30-3:30 p.m.**

**Linkage Attendees:**

- 16 student leaders from Bellingham High School
- Directors present: **Kelly Bashaw, Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hackler, Jenn Mason, Quenby Peterson**
- 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**; Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Family Engagement **Isabel Meaker**; Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations **Jackie Brawley**; Executive Director of Capital Projects **Ron Cowan**; Bellingham High School Principal **Linda Miller**; Bellingham High School Teacher **Ben Goodwin**.

**Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions:** School Board President Camille Diaz Hackler called the meeting to order at 2:34 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 Doug Benjamin thanked everyone for taking time to be here this afternoon. He shared that the school board and district are interested in seeking input on the goals we have set for our students through our board policies expressed in our strategic plan, [The Bellingham Promise](#).

**Small Group Discussion with School Board Members and Facilitators:** For discussion purposes, student attendees and board members divided into five groups, facilitated by Steve Clarke, Ron Cowan, Jay Jordan, Bob Kuehl and Isabel Meaker. The small groups focused on the following guiding questions:

1. What resonates in The Bellingham Promise?
2. What is missing?
3. How does The Bellingham Promise and its outcomes apply to you?
4. How could Bellingham Public Schools better meet the needs of students?

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

- We zeroed in on what it means to have healthy, active students – including mental health.
- Of the three sections of outcomes (knowledge, character, action), our group feels we don't put enough emphasis on character. How do you teach character? If you wait until tenth grade, that's too late.
- It's sometimes hard to enjoy school, but it's important that students enjoy school.
- We've seen posters for The Bellingham Promise but haven't known what is included in the actual document.
- Happy to see gender identity and sexual orientation called out.
- Healthy is not just running and fitness, it also includes mental health.
- It seems that there is a lot of emphasis on character-building for younger students, but for older students, academics and grades are more of a focus.
- There are no pictures of older students on The Bellingham Promise.
- It would be helpful for students to know who the school board members are.
- Would like to see more staff diversity. Students of color would appreciate more staff of color.
- More staff training around gender identity and sexual orientation is needed.
- All students should offer feedback, not just those who are a part of clubs and sports.
- Teachers matter for student outcomes, maybe more than the actual subjects that students take. Teachers make a big difference.
- Time should be spent building student confidence to come to high school, ease fears and reduce anxiety about high school.
- Being able to build healthy relationships with others is important.
- Extra-curricular and elective courses are important in achieving outcomes.
- Happy to see equity, diversity and inclusion included.
- Access to snacks and breakfast should be in all classes, except where it would not be safe (e.g. science labs).
- Elementary school parents who are active in PTA/PTO know about opportunities for their child, but in high school the students need to be given information on what activities and clubs are going on.
- We believe making sure kids have access to proper resources such as clothing and food should be included in The Bellingham Promise.
- Maybe there could be more teachers of diversity to connect with students of diversity.
- It's important for young kids to feel loved and part of the community.
- Some of the wording in the document is targeted for a different generation; perhaps some of the language could be changed.
- We like that the opportunity to follow passions is included.
- Likes that all children should be loved; all students should be cared for and loved by all teachers.

- Students found out this year how much they are cared about after the death of a Bellingham High School student.
- The design of the document is appreciated.
- We appreciate the way that equity, diversity and inclusion is clearly called out.
- Class buddies are great for younger students.
- Actions speak to the values included in The Bellingham Promise.
- Because there are only photos of younger students, it may seem that the document is meant for a younger audience.
- Would like to see an expansion from the term “teachers” to “staff.”
- Preparation for life after graduation could be called out more.
- We want students to want to be in school, so school should be an environment where students want to participate.
- The Bellingham Promise helps to support different interests.
- We appreciate that there are staff who help us problem-solve how to take advantage of classes at different locations (another high school, Running Start).
- The expanded eight-period high school schedule has expanded options for students and relieved some of the homework stress.

Dr. Baker thanked everyone for being here this afternoon. The notes from this meeting will be added to the website in the coming weeks.

Mr. Benjamin stated that the board is interested in hearing student voice, and he thanked all who attended.

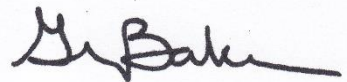
Ms. Diaz Hackler adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

**Approved:**



Camille Diaz Hackler, School Board President

**Attest:**



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

*Minutes approved:* June 19, 2019