

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

January 15, 2014

Parents: Parents attended representing 15 schools – 10 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 2 high schools.

Executive Team/District Staff:

Superintendent Greg Baker

Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland

Assistant Superintendent Steve Clarke

Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Tanya Rowe

Director of Teaching and Learning Amy Carder

Director of Food Services Mark Dalton

Director of Teaching and Learning Michelle Kuss-Cybula

Note Taker:

Sheri O'Day, Executive Secretary to the Department of Teaching and Learning

Welcome:

Joanna welcomed everyone, and introductions were made around the room.

Superintendent's Update and Pressing Questions:

- Birchwood Elementary School is scheduled to open this fall. Last week it was announced that Matt Whitten will be the new principal at Birchwood. As the Birchwood planning principal, Matt will remain at Geneva part-time as he also works to open Birchwood. Steve Ruthford from Sehome High School will be working side-by-side with Matt at Geneva as the Dean of Students for the remainder of the 2013-14 school year. Steve is an outstanding instructional leader who is great with staff and students. A parent asked why Mr. Ruthford was pulled from the classroom immediately. Mike Copland noted that Steve may be out of the classroom for one or two days per week until the end of the first semester and will transition full-time to Geneva at the beginning of second semester. Phyllis Textor at Sehome is working to find a great replacement for Steve at Sehome.
- **Committee Update:** The [Attendance Area Committee](#) shared a proposal before winter break, followed by an online survey and a family input meeting to get feedback about where Larrabee students will attend (Happy Valley or Lowell) beginning with the 2014-15 school year. The committee plans to submit their recommendation to the superintendent by the end of January, with communication to families about a decision by the end of February. The [Repurposing Larrabee Think Tank](#) is currently looking at criteria to evaluate ideas for how to use the Larrabee facility in the future, and what the process will be for gathering those ideas. The group will then assess the pros and cons of the ideas submitted to provide this input to Dr. Baker. There was a question about the timeline for the Think Tank. There is not currently an end date set, as it is a very dynamic process.
- **Budget:** The state is currently in the first year of its biennium budget and is fine-tuning the budget for next year. The governor has stated that there will not be a large influx of new

funding for next year. The Supreme Court ruled against the state regarding education funding (the state is only supplying approximately 65% of our budget) and has stated that by April 30 there must be a plan to fully fund education. In the meantime, the district still needs to go forward with the budget process. Our budget development process will be similar to what we've done in recent years – gathering feedback on our priorities, sharing a draft springboard for more input, developing a draft budget and finalizing the budget.

- **Instructional Hours:** The state has come forward with a refinement regarding instructional hours beginning with the 2014-15 school year. Elementary students will need 1,000 hours per year, and secondary students will need 1,080 hours. Dr. Baker explained that districts will no longer be able to average hours across all grade levels. If students are in class for 6.5 hours per day, they will be at 1,080 hours. That does not account for staff professional development time, which is not funded by the state. Professional development is currently held during early dismissal times. Another state requirement coming in the future is that students will need 24 credits to graduate. Our high schools are currently on a semester schedule with a 6 period day, so if students pass all of their classes they will just meet the 24 credit requirement. There currently is not enough room in the schedule for all students to take all of the classes that they would like. Some school districts offer 7 or 8 period days, which allows students to take more classes (and they do not have to choose between music and Spanish, etc.). This may be our district's opportunity to increase our instructional time and also offer students the opportunity to take more elective classes. We will need to determine when professional development will occur. Many decisions will need to be made soon that will impact the school calendar and early dismissal schedules. A parent commented that there was a recent [article](#) in the Atlantic Monthly regarding a school district in Texas that eliminated all sports and how that decision has resulted in students receiving better grades and lower drop-out rates. Another parent asked if there will be further changes/scenarios, in light of the calendar survey that just went out. Dr. Baker answered that the start date will likely remain the same, but the end date is still not determined, nor is the length of the school day or early dismissals.
- **Snow Day:** There was a snow day on Dec. 20, and we need to determine how to make up that day. Our collective bargaining agreement with teachers states that the first two days will be made up at the end of the year. The June calendar presents a challenge because this moves the last day of school to a Monday. However, adjusting the calendar to move the make-up day to another holiday/no school day between now and June is also challenging because families and staff may have already made plans. No matter when the day is made up, Dr. Baker expressed his desire for staff and parents to provide modeling and leadership to make it an outstanding day for students.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPEP) Update:

Dr. Baker introduced Amy Carder, a Director of Teaching and Learning. One of the major projects Amy is involved with is TPEP (Teacher Principal Evaluation Project). Amy gave an update on how Bellingham Public Schools is implementing this new mandate through a growth and feedback model. Most teachers like the new criteria, which will reflect growth between two points in time. Principals will also be evaluated on student growth. A parent asked if past instruction (with a former teacher) will be taken into consideration when looking at student growth. Amy answered that it is recognized, but at this point it will not have a huge impact on

the teacher's evaluation. Mike Copland added that part of the challenge with growth measures is that state tests change from year-to-year, and not all teachers teach a grade level and/or subject that are tested. Amy reviewed the UW CEL 5D Instructional Framework, which will be used by the Bellingham Public Schools (districts were given 3 choices of frameworks) and passed out the "Smart Cards" (she pointed out that there is more specific information that is not contained on the smart card). For 2013-14, 25% of teachers at each school will be evaluated under the new system. Principals and teachers are training side-by-side (5 days of instructional framework training). A parent asked if all teachers will eventually be trained. Amy indicated that yes, our district has decided that all teachers should be trained. Amy provided a comparison of [current versus revised evaluation criteria](#).

Farm-to-School and Centralized Kitchen Update

Dr. Baker introduced Mark Dalton, Director of Food Services. Mark handed out brochures for the Bellingham Farm-to-School Promise and Whatcom Farm-to-School program, as well as a snack (yogurt/blueberry/granola parfaits). He shared that Food Services (73 employees) prepares and serves more than 1.1 million meals per school year (6,275 meals per day, at 23 locations throughout the district). Menus are prepared each month (a different menu each for elementary, middle and high school). There is Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program at all five Title I schools (Alderwood, Carl Cozier, Cordata, Roosevelt and Sunnyland), at a cost of \$0.33 per child, per day (funded by the district; there is no cost passed on to the students). The snack program helps students to stay focused in the classroom and maintain their energy. Teachers receive a bowl of snacks each day – some teachers structure the snack time, some teachers have the snacks available for students throughout the day. Title I schools were chosen for equity reasons, and it is the hope that at some point it could be expanded to more schools. There is also an After-School Dinner Program, which is held Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 5:00-5:30 at Shuksan Middle School. The dinner program's average participation is 80 students each evening. Anyone age 2-18 is free, adults are charged \$4 each.

Mark talked about the Farm to School Advisory Committee, which is a great committee formed to encourage healthier eating in schools. The Whatcom Farm-to-School is heavily involved with the Bellingham Farm-to-School. Volunteers hand out samples in the cafeterias and develop Farm-to-School materials. Mark sends PowerPoint presentations (instructional information around food/harvest of the month) each month to all teachers. Mark then shared the Bellingham Farm-to-School Promise, which is the guiding principle for the work he and his department are involved in. Volunteers (Bellingham Farm-to-School Champions) are always needed in the schools. If you know of people in your school who might be interested in this role, please have them contact Mark Dalton. There are many options and ways to participate. Salad bars are beginning to be introduced.

Not all schools have cooking kitchens (only serving kitchens). With the approval of the bond and funding for a Centralized Kitchen, we have an opportunity to make a huge change. At this time, there are cooking clusters, with 4 schools that prepare food for several schools. The food is cooked by 8:30 in the morning, and some students do not eat lunch until 12:30. The central kitchen will become the main food production facility for the district. All schools will have the capability to cook the food in their own kitchens. A parent asked if there would be an

opportunity for culinary arts instruction in the schools. Mark explained that the design of an industrial kitchen does not provide a good match for a culinary arts program.

Mark Dalton's Power Point presentation can be found [here](#).

Highly Capable Program Review Update

Michelle Kuss-Cybula asked everyone to stand and talk with their neighbor about what they know about the HCL program of the past, and what work is being done in the HCL program currently. She then shared that currently the district is reviewing the student identification process for the program, as well as highly effective service models. That committee is working to establish a vision, mission and plan. The committee will work to align new practices and procedures to the WAC (Washington Administrative Code); create an implementation plan and timeline to support the committee's recommendations; and will submit a recommendation to the superintendent by March 1. The committee's mantra is "many voices, one mission". A consultant was hired this summer (Dr. Gail Hanninen) to review the HCL program. Dr. Hanninen has met with parents, students, and teachers, and has reviewed data from the Bellingham Public Schools. Michelle overviewed the WAC connected to HCL. The committee is using research from the National Association of Gifted Children in their work. Michelle reviewed the identification process used by the district in the past. She also talked about "district enrollment by ethnicity", as well as "highly capable enrollment by ethnicity". The goal is that these will be the same. The district is working to develop a system to support the individual need of the student's area of giftedness, and to provide equal opportunities across the system. A parent asked if Dr. Hanninen's report can be made public? Michelle indicated that it can and will be. There are several different definitions for "giftedness". Bellingham Public Schools is working on what giftedness means in our district. Questions are being asked about the nomination process and when that will process be available. Michelle indicated that the process is not ready yet. Dr. Baker thanked Michelle, Veronica and others who are engaging in this process.

Meeting summary and announcements

- There will be a "cyber safety" presentation at Whatcom Middle School, open to parents of all ages, on Wed., Jan. 29. It is encouraged that parents of students in 4th-12th grade attend.
- There is a Healthy Youth Committee meeting tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. at the St. Lukes Education Center.
- There was a question if we are looking at having more District Resource Officers in the district. Dr. Baker worked on a grant for a second DRO with the Bellingham Public Department and the Mayor of Bellingham, but that grant was not received.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Next Meeting: Feb. 19, 2014