

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS): Key Communications Sept. 27, 2018

Each school has two representatives on this committee. Laura Lawyer and Jami Pitman are co-chairs:

- We are here to learn, have discussions and give input to the superintendent. **Please bring information back to each of our schools, share it and take back questions or concerns from other parents.**
- Please arrange for a parent substitute to attend PACS if you are unable to attend.

Welcome and Introductions

Laura Lawyer and Jami Pitman, co-chairs, welcomed attendees and asked them to introduce themselves and share their wows and wonders from the beginning of the year. The room was nearly full.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Baker thanked people for attending and welcomed attendees' reflections and questions:

Program Updates:

- **Forest School** is a new program for third graders that we're starting this school year at the Gordon Carter Environmental Education Site. This new field trip is a cooperative program between our district and North Cascades Institute. We are working on designing a new facility there to complement Forest School and allow all-weather access.
- **Traffic Safety (Driver's Ed.):** We are the only district in the state to bring back driver's education. We currently have 400+ students enrolled, and by providing this program at our high schools, we are helping each of those students' families save more than \$400.
- **Preschool at Options:** We have expanded our childcare opportunities for our GRADS students, and we now have a new preschool at Options to address the childcare gap; we were previously caring for kids from birth to three.

Capital Projects: **Sehome High School** is on target to open (early) in late Jan. 2019. We plan to move students and staff into the new school at the start of second semester; the rest of the Sehome campus won't be complete until Aug. 2019, which is consistent with our original schedule. Our new **Central Kitchen** is nearing completion, and we anticipate serving more whole, fresh foods to students starting in 2019. We are getting an appraisal for a potential site for a new **district office**. **Parkview, Alderwood and Sunnyland** elementary schools are slated to be rebuilt and open by 2022. Design advisory groups for Parkview and Alderwood met last spring, and we're currently working with the city and county on some complexities around land use.

Budget: The McCleary decision, the legal case brought before the State Supreme Court in 2011, has changed the state funding landscape for preK-12 education, and it's still evolving. You may have seen in the news that teachers' labor groups negotiated raises across Washington state (not just Bellingham) after our legislature gave a one-time bump in funding to school districts. The Washington Educators Association (WEA) saw this additional funding as an opportunity to push for raises for teachers. Many districts around the state gave larger than anticipated raises and now many, including Bellingham, are looking at ways to reduce spending. We are hopeful that the state will step in to allow us to continue to collect the same amount of money through local levies that we have been able to collect in the past.

1:1 Technology: Dr. Bill Palmer, director of teaching and learning who focuses on technology integration, and Kurt Gazow, the executive director of educational technology, gave an update on the 1:1 technology initiative, which provides one laptop to each student at all middle and high schools. Currently, Roosevelt and Carl Cozier elementary schools have one device per student (at school only) for grades 3 to 5. They discussed and answered questions about digital citizenship, the student technology ambassador program, internet filtering, the Apparent app (which allow families to check their child's laptop use at home), assistive technology and STEM labs.

Brainstorm Topics for the Year

Members got together in small groups to discuss topics they'd like to learn more about this school year.

Announcements

- Squalicum High School PTA is doing a donation drive from 9 a.m. to noon on Sept. 29 for items smaller than a coffee table. Bring goods to the lower parking lot.
- Whatcom Farm to School is looking for volunteers in school cafeterias. If you're interested, contact Cindy Scott.
- Sunnyland Dash is Sept. 28.
- Middle school PTA fundraiser kicks off Oct. 1.

Next Meeting: Nov. 1, 2018, District Office, Board Room