

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS): Key Communications Dec. 12, 2019

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

- We are here to learn, have discussions and give input to the superintendent. Please take information back to each of your schools to share.
- Please work with your principal to arrange for a parent substitute to attend PACS if you are unable to attend.

Welcome and Introductions

- What do you do to reduce your stress level?
- Share an experience with your child when questions arose about the birds and the bees.

Superintendent's Updates, Questions and Answers

- The district recently sent out a [facilities update](#), including news and updates regarding the new District Office in Barkley Village and an adjustment made to our Parkview plans.
- We recently hosted "Celebrating our Students," a family night to celebrate our exceptional students districtwide. It was held at Bellingham High School, and it was a fun and meaningful celebration of The Bellingham Promise in action.
- Request for input: Dr. Baker said that the district is interested in streaming graduation ceremonies. We are exploring hiring a local contractor to stream within our schools (e.g. a school's graduation ceremony is in the gym; this would allow us to stream to the Commons so more people can attend), and on YouTube. Overall, PACS members were supportive of the idea, saying that they wanted to increase access to an important event. They also said expanding the visibility of graduation ceremonies could positively impact graduation rates.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Sexual Health Education

Director of Wellness Jessica Sankey and several guests, including representatives from the Health Department and Sehome students, presented about a variety of wellness-related topics.

Whatcom County Health Department program specialist Joe Fuller shared a presentation, which included data from the Healthy Youth Survey. The bi-annual student survey covers a number of topics including mental health and substance abuse.

A group of Sehome students in the class Peer Centered Outreach (PCO) shared results from an anonymous student survey, which asked kids "what do you wish your parents would talk with you about?"

Here are some of the answers:

- Sex. My parents didn't talk to me, they gave me a book. A book is not a substitute for an open, honest conversation or a relationship.
- More transgender/gay/lesbian information with regards to relationships, identity and within sex education. I wish I had more information about consent, especially at an early age.
- More information about healthy relationships, and how to best define them. These include parent/student, friend/friend and romantic relationships, including power dynamics, balance, insecurity, manipulation, abuse, resources and jealousy.
- There was a lot of emphasis on open and honest relationships with parents and their children, whether the topic is drugs, alcohol or tobacco use; peer pressure; mental health; how to love yourself; eating disorders; depression; anxiety and asking for help.

PACS members enjoyed this presentation and many are asking for additional opportunities to hear from these students.

Announcements

- One parent referenced [Great Conversations](#).
- Bellingham Public Schools Foundation is reminding you can give a YES card via donation to the BPSF as a holiday gift.
- The [elementary equity project](#) is continuing with its pilot project and recently gave money back to PTAs and parent groups, which is helping provide some balance for schools that don't raise as much money as others.

Next Meeting: 9:30 – 11:30 am on Jan. 23, 2020