

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS): Key Communications

Jan. 23, 2020

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

- Share one of your favorite elementary experiences; OR
- Share a 2020 goal or New Year's resolution

Superintendent's Updates, Questions and Answers

- **Acknowledgment of the tragedy** of Sunnyland Principal Lynn Heimsoth's death that occurred over winter break. Thank you to those of you who have reached out and asked how they could help. Sunnyland is doing ok and continues to heal and support students, families and each other.
- **We had four snow days last week.** We know that when we close school, it has a significant impact on our families. Dr. Baker had a lot of communication with parents and families; he appreciates the feedback he received, and he says it can impact his thinking and approach to closures and delays. The overwhelming feedback last week was positive and many shared their appreciation for Dr. Baker's messages that inject humor and help give context to his decision-making. The last day of the school year will likely change, but no official announcement has been made.
- **We have two replacement levies** on the ballot for our special election Feb. 11. Our [operations and technology capital levies](#) are not new; they replace levies set to expire this year. These levies make up nearly 25% of our budget, and if approved, these levies will continue to support many important initiatives, programs and efforts across our district.

Elementary Equity Project

Our district, Bellingham Public Schools Foundation and elementary PTAs have started an initiative called [the Elementary Equity Pilot Project](#). It invites all elementary parent groups to continue their fundraising events and efforts, including jog-a-thons and auctions, then share 10 percent to an "[equity fund](#)." Funds are shared with all participating parent groups based on the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. This project acknowledges that each school has children in need and puts a greater emphasis on the schools with higher needs. The [Bellingham Public Schools Foundation](#) has received two large corporate donations that will go into this special fund.

Homeless Youth

We have a number of incredible staff who support our students and families in our district who are experiencing homelessness. This school year, we have 360 students who are experiencing homeless. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that guarantees all children and youth the right to an equal education regardless of their living situation. Protection under the McKinney-Vento Act extends to those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. They are guaranteed immediate enrollment to our schools, free school meals, transportation to school and Title I access (e.g. clothes, tutoring, etc.).

Staff shared barriers and limitations our families and students face, as well as services we offer. Our district's goal is to be proactive and to engage and support families by connecting or providing services or items in need. Contact Katherine.Koruga@bellingshamschools.org if you have questions or items to donate.

Announcements

- Contact Friends of FRC if you're interested in running a personal care item drive at your school
- Free Zumba class at 5 p.m. on Mondays at Birchwood; all are welcome.
- Shout out to the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation's Think Big Event last week. Student clubs competed for funds; it was an amazing night.

Next Meeting: 9:30 – 11:30 am on Feb. 27, 2020