



Bellingham
Public Schools
a collective commitment

Our Budget Development Process

Working Together to Balance Available Resources

in Support of The Bellingham Promise

Last Updated Feb. 28, 2020



the Bellingham Promise

vision

We, as a community, make a collective commitment to Bellingham's children. We will empower every child to discover and develop their passions, contribute to their community, and achieve a fulfilling and productive life.

mission

We collectively commit that our students are cared for and respected, and that they will graduate from our schools prepared for success. All students will be exceptional in their own way, with strong character, a passion for learning, and ready for the widest range of educational and vocational options to support a diversity of life choices.

core beliefs

We believe:

- all children should be loved,
- the whole child is important,
- every child can learn at high levels,
- early learning and development are critical,
- learning is lifelong and essential to a high quality of life,
- compassion and service build community,
- teaching children to do their best involves self-reflection and reaching higher,
- diversity enhances a strong and healthy community, and
- together we achieve more than alone.

outcomes

We develop students and graduates who are...

KNOWLEDGE

- readers and writers,
- scientists and mathematicians,
- historians and global thinkers,
- artists and performers,
- artisans and technicians,
- multilingual readers and speakers,
- skilled users of technology and information,

CHARACTER

- leaders, collaborators and team players,
- dependable and responsible people,
- confident individuals who continuously challenge themselves,
- respectful and compassionate humans,
- honest and ethical individuals who act with integrity,

ACTION

- healthy, active individuals,
- critical thinkers and problem solvers,
- effective communicators,
- innovators and creators, and
- well-rounded community members engaged with the broader world.

key strategies

We will accomplish this by focusing on...

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We envision and strive for a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organization. Focus areas include, but are not limited to, race and ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, language and culture.

Innovation and Flexibility

We support the diverse needs and learning styles of our students by being innovative and flexible. We embrace change and creative thinking and know that this requires a high level of trust and engagement with our community.

Great Teaching with Strong Support

High quality instruction occurs every day in every classroom, where we establish a safe and engaging learning environment. We support culturally-responsive instruction through effective leadership, ongoing staff learning, and a diverse staff reflective of our students.

Early Childhood Education

We support students and families from prenatal through graduation. We invest in a strong early childhood program because of its powerful long-term return for our students and community.

A One Schoolhouse Approach

Our schools are part of a larger One Schoolhouse, and we focus on taking care of each other. We provide an equitable distribution of resources and services to ensure excellence for all students.

Student, Family, and Community Engagement

We develop partnerships and engage with a wide variety of stakeholders, including families and community partners, to support the success of all students.

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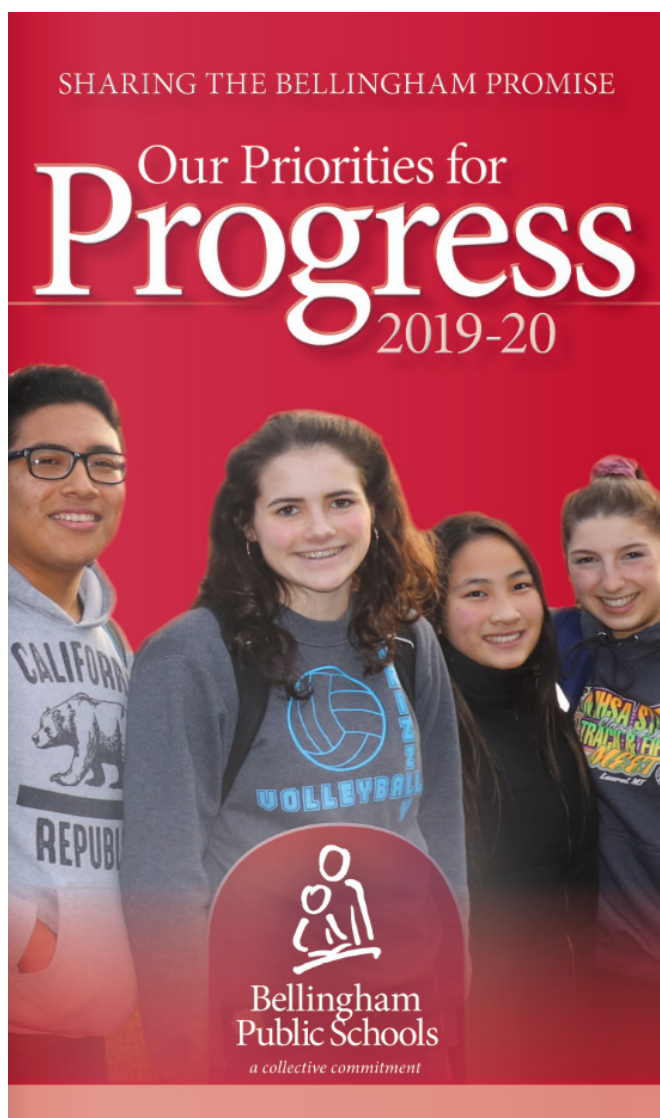
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Bellingham Public Schools take steps to assure that national origin persons who lack English language skills can participate in all education programs, services and activities. For information regarding translation services or transitional bilingual education programs, contact the Department of Teaching and Learning, (360) 676-6502. Bellingham Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability in its programs and activities. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX Coordinator, Deputy Superintendent, (360) 676-6512; Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, (360) 676-6500; and Compliance Coordinator for 28A.640 and 28A.642 RCW, Director of Human Resources, (360) 676-2783 at Bellingham Public Schools, 1306 Dupont St., Bellingham, WA 98225.

Using Desired Outcomes and Priorities for Progress to Make Budget Decisions

Our central mission is to improve student learning. To that end, The Bellingham Promise, our strategic plan created collaboratively with our community and adopted by the Board of Directors, will serve as the primary guide for making budget decisions.

In addition, we will use the following philosophy and criteria to assist in making budget decisions that:

- Advance and support The Bellingham Promise, our strategic plan;
- Do not violate the law or negotiated agreements;
- Protect the safety of students, staff and community;
- Take stakeholder input into account;
- Align with actions of the state Legislature;
- Identify strategic savings rather than across-the-board reductions;
- Promote additional operational efficiencies;
- Consider nonemployee-related expense reductions before personnel reductions;
- Consider reducing local subsidies of state and federal categorical programs;
- Continue to work with our community to pursue alternative or additional revenue sources; and
- Support the One Schoolhouse approach by differentiating resources to support all schools.

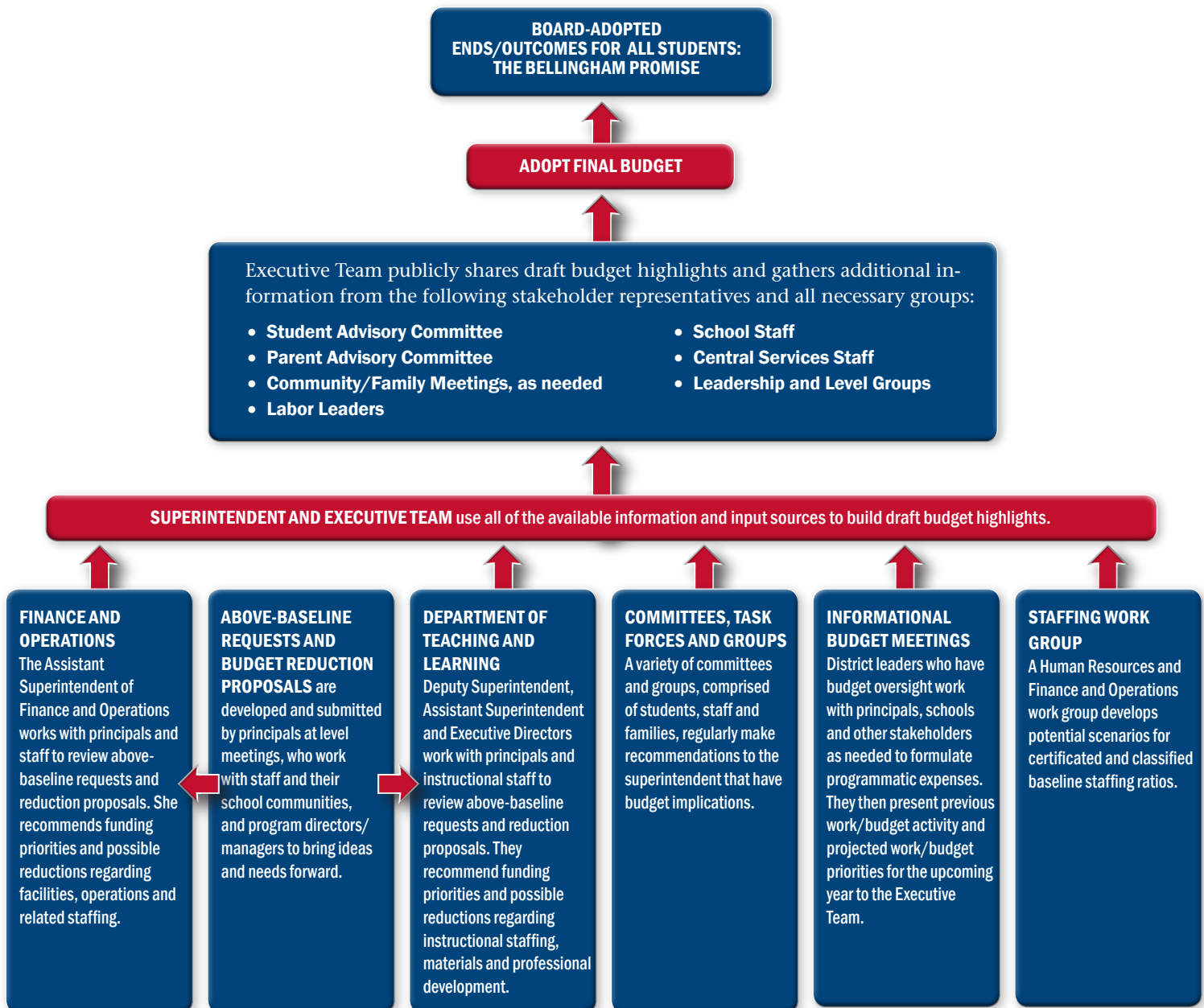
In the event of state and/or federal revenue reductions, we may want to enhance programs, staffing or items in exchange for implementing other reductions.

In these cases, we will:

- Be strategic and intentional in the enhancement of programs, staffing or items based upon their value-added to achieving the previously identified academic ends/outcomes for students;
- Prioritize enhancement of programs, staffing or items based upon their value-added to implementing the district graduation's requirements and preparing PreK–12 students to meet those requirements;
- Continue to promote operational efficiencies; and
- Ensure compliance with state and federal reform and accountability requirements including the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which include proficiency and readiness to learn for all students and targeted support for students not yet at standard, low-income, special education and English Language Learners.

Budget Process

This budget reflects investment of resources aligned with The Bellingham Promise. The resources and spending sustain current programs and services in addition to program enhancements and recommendations coming from our budget process and district committees.



Process for Submitting Above-Baseline Requests and Budget Reduction Proposals

An above-baseline request is a proposal for enhanced funding for next school year (staffing, instructional materials or facility improvements/operational needs) by a specific program director or principal beyond what is currently being funded in the current year. A budget reduction proposal is an idea for saving funds by reducing/eliminating programs, materials/supplies or staffing.

Principals/district leaders will work with their stakeholders and staff members to develop needs and ideas for above-baseline requests or budget reduction proposals. The request will specify what is expected to be achieved with the use of those resources in the coming year.

Central Services administrators and principals then work together by level and team to prioritize needs. They then submit the highest priority requests or proposals for the upcoming school year to either the Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning for instructional-related requests or the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations for facility and operational requests. They will review the requests and work with staff to recommend priorities to the Executive Team for further evaluation and consideration.

Allocation of Reserves

As a part of the process to determine the amount of resources available for prioritization, the district will calculate the unreserved, undesignated reserves at year-end and determine if it exceeds target levels which are currently 3.0% to 5.0% of expenditures, per administrative policy 6022. To the extent that the estimated unreserved, undesignated reserves does exceed that target, a portion of this amount will be available for inclusion in the draft budget proposal, taking into consideration future state and federal revenue and our ability to sustain ongoing financial commitments. Use of any budget surplus allocation will generally be restricted to "one time only" budget requests because of the uncertainty of these funds being available in future years.

Bond and Levy Funds

In November 2016, voters approved a school bus levy. During the 2017 legislative session, the state legislature changed the funding mechanism for school districts. The local operations levy was reduced beginning with collections in the 2018 calendar year and then partially increased for collections starting in the 2020 calendar year. In February 2018, voters approved a bond for construction projects, including the replacement of three elementary schools. In February 2020, voters approved an operations levy and a technology capital levy that together account for nearly 25 percent of the district's annual budget.

Budget Presentations

All Central Services leaders who have responsibility for a program budget will meet with the superintendent and executive team to review their current budget and recommend projected reductions or above-baseline requests for 2020-21 as aligned with the academic achievement ends and priorities.



Bellingham Public Schools

a collective commitment

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