

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

December 10, 2020

Each school has two representatives on this committee.

Samantha Dang and Elizabeth Walther 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

- Samantha Dang welcomed the group. Samantha thanked Elizabeth Walther for volunteering to co-chair the group.
- The group used the chat function to answer the icebreaker question: “What’s something you’ve found helpful during this pandemic that supports the health and well-being of your own child/children?” Common themes included: spending time outdoors, connecting with friends and loved ones over Zoom and other technology, game and movie nights, pets, hobbies like music and crafts, finding a pod/bubble to see in person safely and regular physical activity.

Superintendent’s updates, questions and answers

- Superintendent Dr. Greg Baker welcomed the group.
- Dr. Baker shared the following [updates on the big picture](#):
 - Students in person currently include K, 1 and some specialized or focused populations (e.g. special education programs, “internet café” model).
 - Plans for possible next groups: second grade and Promise K planned tentatively for January, with grades 3-12 yet to be determined.
 - Reflections on the teamwork between and roles of school districts, health authorities and the governor’s office.
 - Some photos of in-person school and family support services.
- Dr. Baker facilitated an open Q&A time. Topics included: extension of the USDA waivers for food box program through Sept. 2021, staff morale, timeline for middle and high school students returning to in-person school/activities, social-emotional well-being of students, special education services, and reasoning for returning one grade at a time.

Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health Support

- Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Trina Hall and district mental health specialist Laura Burke presented our district framework of [supports for social-emotional learning and mental health support](#).

- The group split into breakout groups to share what has been challenging for their family/children regarding social-emotional wellness, and what resources they wish were available or would suggest.
- The group shared out discussion takeaways and resources in the chat. Resources shared included:
 - [Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids \(and Their Parents\)](#) by Eline Snel
 - The [Boys and Girls Club](#), which a group member noted is providing a socially distant, sanitized way to socialize with other kids while getting homework support
 - Mental health and wellness resources on BPS website: <https://bellingshamschools.org/resources/mental-health/>

Announcements and Celebrations

- Cindy shared her excitement about the new Parkview walls going up! (Note: check out the progress of all our current building projects at our [facilities projects page](#) and on [our work cameras](#).)
- Kim Lund shared the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation's excitement about the [YES card program](#).
- Online spirit wear stores for schools are awesome!
- Jessica Sankey shared we have a system for considering in-person programs and activities.
- We celebrate the nature we see out our windows! (Unless it blows the transformer at the district office...)
- Isabel Meaker celebrated our Family Resource Center and the support it is receiving from our community. Hundreds of families will be receiving food and other needed supplies before winter break.

Next Meeting: January 14, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.