

BELLINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
Bellingham, Washington

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent

DATE: May 18, 2022

SUBJECT: Ends 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 Monitoring Report 2021-22

I am pleased to submit this year's final Ends monitoring report to the school district's board of directors. This report includes a representation of our progress this year in Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0, and provides a broad overview of district efforts to help our students make progress toward the 17 identified outcomes in The Bellingham Promise. Part of what you will read here is our attempt to gain some perspective on where we are, what has been accomplished, and where our students need us to focus on next as we continue to put COVID-19 in the rear-view mirror. Gonzaga University basketball coach Mark Few, in reflecting after his team was eliminated earlier than expected from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament this past March 2022, was quoted saying something to the effect of "with time, (our team) will gain perspective on their accomplishments and will be able to see that they achieved great things." The quote resonates for us in the school district, as we all – students, staff, families and community members – are still emerging from what has been a very difficult time.

As we have worked through the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, progress has been made to get back to a more 'normal' rhythm of school for students in Bellingham Public Schools. However, board members will observe the influence of the pandemic in much of the data shared throughout this Ends report. We are still in the process of figuring out the full impact, and it is clear from some indicators that our students are telling us they have been affected in significant ways. As well, our work as a school system has been impacted. While we have done our best to stay the course with existing work in line with our commitment to The Bellingham Promise, we have also let go or delayed some work streams that were planned with great expectations last summer. Students, staff and families have lived through shifting masks, social distancing and virus testing requirements that were changing literally weekly for much of this school year. Staff members have been asked to step up and play unusual roles as the year unfolded. Directors, Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA), instructional coaches and school administrators have spent many a day serving in substitute teacher and paraeducator roles to keep school going when absences related to pandemic illness spiked. Central office administrative assistants shifted their work during the early part of winter to be able to support an avalanche of COVID-19 testing needs in our schools. These and many other examples demonstrate the essence of The Promise in

action; people working together to do what needed to be done to keep school running for our students.

In prior year reports, we have often included multiple archived examples of the district's work in each of the 17 Promise outcome areas, including some that have previously been highlighted through featured stories on The Promise website. As the Board will note, for this year's report we have included fewer and more cross-cutting examples that highlight multiple Promise outcomes, and touch on progress and achievement in multiple areas. Similarly, relevant quantitative data are included that highlight progress on key Promise outcomes. Most importantly, in this report we have focused on data sources that help tell the story of the impact our students have experienced over the past two years, where we see growth and progress but also areas of continued need.

The report details evidence on Ends 1.0, Ends 2.0 and Ends 3.0 (included below) and is organized into four sections. Section 1 reports on progress toward the mission and vision of The Bellingham Promise. Section 2 includes data and analysis focused on the Knowledge outcomes from The Promise. Section 3 focuses on data that helps to tell the story of our students' experience with some of the Character and Action outcomes and incorporates some recent findings from our spring survey of students. Section 4 closes with a summary and looks ahead to 2022-23. By way of reminder, here is the language of the Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 policies:

Ends 1.0: Strategic Vision and Mission

Vision: We, as a community, make a collective commitment to Bellingham's children. We will empower every child to discover and develop a passion, 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 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.

Ends 2.0: Outcomes Focused on Knowledge

Bellingham Public Schools is committed to developing students and graduates who are:

- Readers and writers,
- Scientists and mathematicians,
- Historians and global thinkers,
- Artists and performers,
- Artisans and technicians,
- Multilingual readers and speakers, and
- Skilled users of technology and information.

Ends 3.0: Outcomes Focused on Character and Action

Bellingham Public Schools is committed to developing students and graduates who:

- Display Character
 - Leaders, collaborators and team players
 - Dependable and responsible people
 - Confident individuals who continually challenge themselves
 - Respectful and compassionate humans
 - Honest and ethical citizens who act with integrity
- Take Action

- Healthy active individuals
- Critical thinkers and problem solvers
- Effective communicators
- Innovators and creators
- Well-rounded community members engaged in the broader world

I. Ends 1.0: Focus on The Bellingham Promise Vision and Mission

The focus created by The Bellingham Promise is alive and well in the school system. The vision of The Promise calls us to empower our students. While all 17 Promise outcomes add up to the full picture of our aims, successful graduation is the ultimate representation of empowerment of the students we serve. The Promise mission states our students, "...will graduate from our schools prepared for success." Ten years' worth of data tells the story of our commitment: Bellingham students' overall five-year graduation rate has increased from 78.8 percent in 2010 to 89 percent in 2020. As we noted in an earlier Ends report, our graduation rates continued to provide evidence of growth in our analysis this year. Bellingham students' graduation rates exceeded Washington state in terms of overall graduation percentages, and, in addition, our seven-year graduation rate hit the 93 percent mark in the most recent year-to-year comparisons. We saw growth in the seven-year extended graduation percentages in most groups. Seven-year rates increased for Hispanic/Latinx students to 88 percent for the 2018 cohort. Similarly, the seven-year rate for students identified as eligible for free/reduced price meals from the class of 2018 increased to 86 percent, while the rate jumped up to 88 percent for students with individualized education programs (IEPs). This was particularly gratifying evidence of our students' perseverance toward graduation, even into the seventh year of high school.

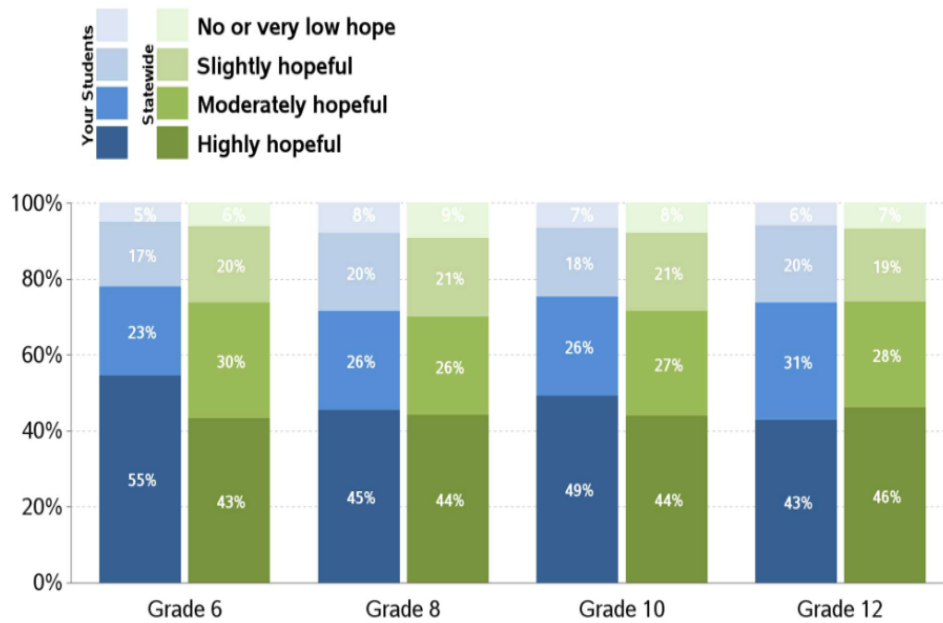
We also continue to realize progress on creating an educational program that empowers every student to "discover and pursue their passion" as The Promise vision calls us to do. Earlier this year the Board was provided with an examination of our students' participation in career and technical (CTE) programs in our district. CTE program completion numbers continued to increase, reaching over 800 programs completed in 2020-21. Given that CTE has been an area of growth and focus over several years, our prior report delved into some of the stories and experiences of recent graduates of that program. Graduates' accounts of how their experiences in CTE had enabled them to find and pursue passions hopefully helps the board with a deeper understanding of how CTE experiences in our schools have helped so many to shape post-secondary opportunities, pursue areas of passion and realize an important aspect of The Promise vision.

The vision of The Promise calls out our collective commitment, and this was well represented by our first annual Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) Job Fair held at Bellingham High School on March 19, 2022. The job fair was an example of many district staff coming together and creating a warm, welcome, and supportive environment for persons of color who live in our community and beyond and have an interest in working for our district to support students. Staff in our human resources department report being "humbled by the testimonies given by our staff of color regarding their experiences" and how it made them feel when they were offered employment by the district and their love for the students and Bellingham community.

Finally, the past months have placed a heightened challenge in front of us to support the mission of ensuring our students are cared for in terms of their health and well-being. Data from the 2021 Healthy Youth Survey helps to give us a sense of the current mindset among our students.

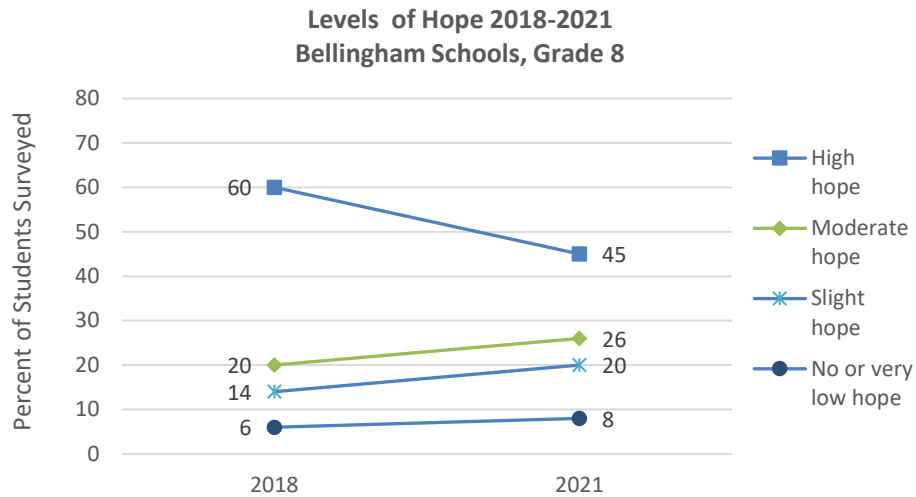
Children's Hope Scale

Hope reflects a future orientated mindset and motivational process toward attaining a desirable goal. Research has linked hope with overall physical, psychological, and social well-being.



Bellingham School District
- Source: 2021 Healthy Youth Survey

One particularly revealing aspect of the survey’s results focuses on what is referred to as the “Children’s Hope Scale.” Hope “reflects a future orientated mindset and motivational process toward attaining a desirable goal.” Psychological research on which the scale is based suggests that hope levels are linked with overall physical, psychological and social well-being. The graphic above displays the hope scale scores for Bellingham students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 compared to the state data in 2021. Darker scale colors reflect more hopeful responses, lighter colors less hopeful. Bellingham students’ hope scale scores (in blue shades) are slightly “more hopeful” than the average across the state (in green) in grades 6, 8 and 10, and slightly below par compared with the state at grade 12. That said, there are some concerning numbers here. Fully a quarter or more of our students at grades 8, 10 and 12 are only “slightly hopeful” or have “very low hope.” Moreover, when we dug into the eighth-grade trends, for example, we also observed that these numbers have dropped over time. The graphic below draws lines between the 2018 and 2021 hope scale scores for Bellingham’s eighth graders. The percentages of students responding with “high hope” have dropped from about 60 percent in 2018 to 45 percent in 2021. Correspondingly, percentages of students exhibiting only slight or moderate hope have increased.



These are trends that point us more than ever to continue to work on districtwide strategies that add support for students’ physical and mental health and well-being. Among the most notable aspects of our work in fulfilling this aspect of The Promise mission are the steps taken as a system to increase supports in health services. Under the leadership of Kim Niederhauser, our director of health services, we have realized better coordination and increased access to nursing care in our schools, including adding eight health room assistants who have provided another layer of support in our schools. Similarly, we have increased our mental health support personnel, led by Chris Cochran, our district mental health coordinator, to include more on-staff mental health specialists and increased support from community mental health providers working in our schools.

These new efforts highlight the development of a strong health services team to assure students are safe, healthy and in class ready to learn. New efforts include partnership between health services and director of athletics and activities, Laurel Peak, to reduce barriers to student access to athletics by working with local health care providers to improve access to timely sports physicals. Further, the Health Services team set up vaccination clinics in our schools when accessing the COVID-19 vaccine was available in limited supply. Chris Cochran, working with district teachers-on-special-assignment, Breann Hulford and Andrea Quigley, developed the mask lesson for use across the district to ensure clear guidance for staff and students. Chris Cochran, districtwide campus monitor Russ Robinson, and the nursing team developed an opioid overdose training and naloxone administration protocol in high schools. The health team continued support to students, families, and staff by completing hearing and vision screening across the district (an achievement given the increased workload produced by COVID-19), and partnered with Food Services to develop a consistent, districtwide process for managing food allergies and providing overall support to schools for managing student health conditions. While the pandemic added urgency to these efforts, it is important to understand these improvements as consistent with the direction we had been moving as a district even prior to the pandemic. That prior planning and effort enabled us to build on good work that had been done and rise to the challenge of caring for our kids that COVID-19 presented. And we need to see those hope numbers rising.

II. Ends 2.0: Knowledge Outcomes

Ends 2.0 focuses on seven outcomes centered on achievement and growth. Below we offer some brief examples of our work toward these outcomes. As in past years' reports, we have included some of the examples highlighted in The Promise stories that were developed over the course of this past year. It is always challenging to draw the line for inclusion in this report when considering the dozens of examples that exist. In that sense, Board members should understand that what we present below are about 10 representative examples, not a comprehensive listing. Where appropriate, we have included examples of ways Bellingham staff members have taken action to support and improve student learning, and ways our program is supporting learning in the knowledge outcomes.

- Year one of implementation of the early literacy curriculum *Really Great Reading* occurred this year in grades PK-2. This curriculum specifically addresses a need identified by our teachers for a deeper and more systematic approach to phonics and phonemic awareness that supplements our core program of language. The curriculum is proving to be engaging and effective for learning how to read and includes a fun approach to the “heart words” that do not follow the foundational skills/phonics rules. Engaging videos help students learn these special words “by heart.” We expect this curriculum addition to help students realize gains in foundation skills.
- We adopted and implemented the early literacy screener *iReady Reading* which is designed to identify students who may need support for dyslexia or other reading challenges early in their elementary years.
- Bellingham Virtual Learning efforts have greatly expanded during the pandemic period led by Jami Aeschliman and Nancy Barga at the high school level, and by Janie Overman, Kate Baehr and Stephanie Korn in K-8. Student numbers increased during the period of the pandemic, and these options continue to attract students and families who are looking for an alternative to the brick-and-mortar school.
- All middle school math students are learning math by using Desmos Math, our newly implemented curriculum this year. Teachers report high levels of student engagement and conceptual understanding. We are committed to offering rigorous, differentiated on grade-level math courses. Currently we have ninety eight percent (or more) of our students in sixth and seventh grades taking at grade level math courses. In seventh grade, we offer an independent online course that addresses the first semester of eighth grade math. Of the roughly 180 students who attempted the bridge course, eighty-eight students successfully completed it to be able to take Compacted 8/Algebra 1 in eighth grade.
- We are underway with our comprehensive Sexual Health Education Task Force. This task force includes five amazing parent and community partners who are working diligently this year to help us align our practices to the Comprehensive Sexual Health Education (CSHE) requirements and to find the best fit curriculum. All task force members are dedicated to ensuring lessons are inclusive of all students and that our teachers get strong professional learning support for the implementation of revised/updated CSHE requirements.
- The staff and the AmeriCorps volunteers of Common Threads Farm teach and garden alongside students in Bellingham Public Schools, sharing valuable lessons in plant and soil science, as well as in educating students about where food comes from. As a local non-profit, the mission of Common Threads is simple: “connecting kids to healthy food in the garden, in the kitchen and at the table.” Since 2009, Common Threads has been an important community partner working in

our schools. Their activities include outdoor learning in the gardens, as well as cooking in classrooms, preparing healthy menus that students love. (Read the full story at: <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/10/13/bps-community-partner-is-about-much-more-than-school-gardens/>).

- Our focus on the Since Time Immemorial curriculum implementation and associated efforts to bring connections with local tribes into the classroom experience continues. Seventh grade social studies students, for example, have been learning more about the Lummi Nation and Nooksack tribe. As noted by Kulshan teacher Ashlea Shepherd Rosinski:

“One thing we really try to represent in our teaching is multiple perspectives...and that students understand that history is not a singular story. We want our students to understand that the Coast Salish culture is not a thing of the past, but richly exists today, and will in the future. That their perspective is always present when we learn Washington State history.”

We are working on consistent implementation of Since Time Immemorial curriculum at elementary levels as well, with professional development led by teacher on special assignment Andrea Quigley, and instructional coaches Michelle Hornof and Kirsten Jensen.

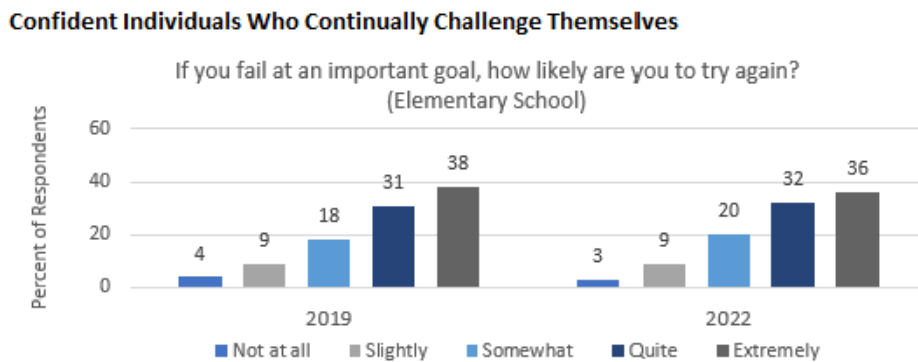
- Our efforts to continue to learn and promote inclusive practices have been a central focus for our leadership learning at the district level, across principal groups at all levels, and a central focus for schools in their professional learning efforts this year. As one standout example, Sehome High School has been recognized by the University of Washington Haring Center for Inclusive Education as a member school in their Inclusive Practices Project. Sehome’s work has been the subject of internal and external professional learning this year; this school has hosted multiple visits from other schools across the state, as well as team members from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Sehome’s ongoing approach to the development of co-teaching partnerships in which a special educator and general education teacher are paired to support the range of student needs is a particular highlight of the work. The work on inclusion is a focus for our entire system, and we are learning along with Sehome about approaches to master schedule building, collaboration and instructional practices that support the learning needs of all students in inclusive settings. To provide one small glimpse into the impact of this work, six students served in our Bridges program for students with behaviorally oriented IEP (Individual Education Plan) needs at Parkview Elementary started the year 100 percent self-contained, totaling 10,470 minutes a week. Currently these six students are in general education classroom settings 8,724 minutes a week.
- Efforts toward shaping a proposed direction for dual language learning took another step forward with the establishment of the Dual Language Program Planning Task Force. Led by director Amy Carder and executive director Isabel Meaker, the committee’s charge is to learn about and review dual language program components and the issues affecting the development of K-12 dual language programs. The committee will engage in learning more about the concept of dual language and recommend a model for implementation of dual language program(s) in our district beginning no sooner than the 2023-24 school year. Planning will identify projected program design at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and include a timeline with initial plans for dual language program professional development, curriculum and materials, and program evaluation plan.
- We continued our partnership with Allied Arts, which is a community organization that supports arts learning in our schools. One annual event, the Children's Arts Walk, has a record sign up this

year with over 3,820 pieces of youth artwork. The Children's Art Walk is attended by 10,000+ local community members and serves as a culminating event for the Allied Arts Education Project, Artists in Schools program. As well, Allied Arts hired Lummi artist Jason LaClair, to partner with some of our elementary instructional coaches to create transferable Coast Salish art lesson plans that will be available to other schools. These lessons were a highlight of the spring at Happy Valley and Cordata. He is working on another project with Options HS and starting to book projects with other schools. Read this full account at: <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/05/05/local-artist-jason-laclair-shares-coast-salish-art-with-happy-valley-elementary/>.

III. Ends 3.0 – Character and Action Outcomes

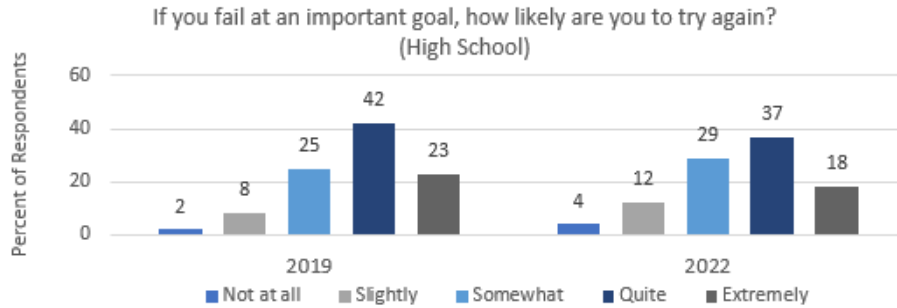
This section of the report delves into the character and action outcomes from The Bellingham Promise. The sections that follow incorporate students’ self-perception data related to several character and action outcomes, drawing on data from our annual Qualtrics survey. We have also included, where appropriate, some examples of the ways our school district staff members and community partners demonstrated and exemplified various outcomes noted here, as we made our way through the pandemic.

- Data on our students’ willingness to continually challenge themselves held fairly steady in the 2022 survey, compared with 2019. Thirty six percent of elementary students responded they were “extremely likely” to try again if they failed at an important goal. This was down from 38 percent in comparison with 2019. But a strong majority of elementary students scored in the most favorable categories (see graph below). Responses from high school students to this



to this same question showed a bigger drop in comparing 2019 data with 2022. High school students in 2022 indicated they were somewhat less likely to persevere after failing at an

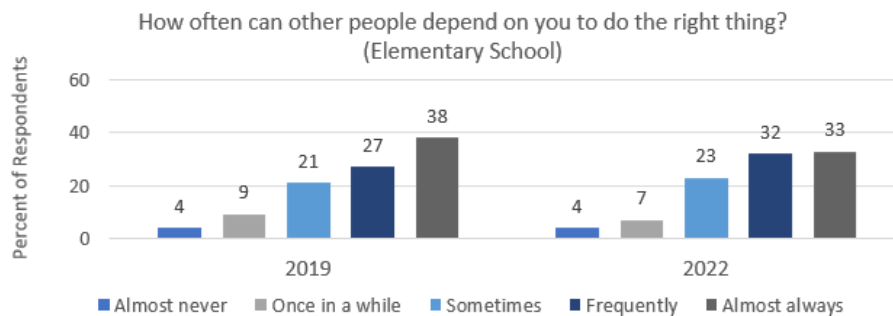
important goal than they were in 2019 (see graph below).



While difficult to determine, we wondered if this drop for high school students may be a corollary to the hope data presented earlier, and at least in part a byproduct of living through the pandemic period.

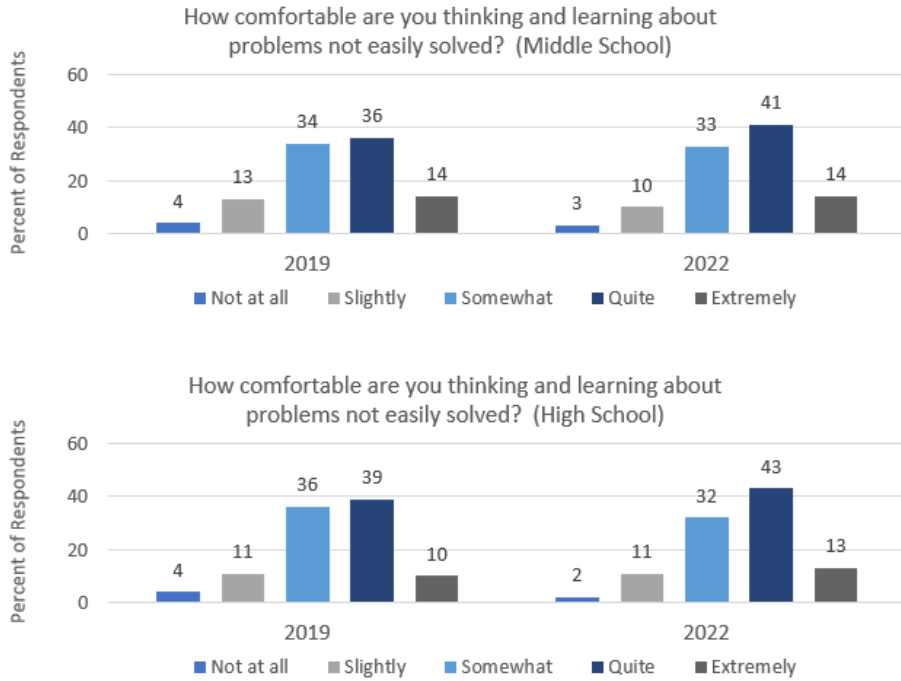
- The district’s reinstated Traffic Safety Education (TSE) program continues to grow. This is an example of our efforts to develop dependable and responsible people. For three years and counting, students have been taking TSE for free at their high school. The one-semester class combines TSE and personal finance in a blended course with practice drives scheduled after school or on weekends. For the TSE portion, students complete six hours of supervised drives with a certificated instructor, as well as a classroom portion on driver safety. Half their time is spent in a personal finance class taught by a different teacher that covers topics related to car ownership as well as other personal finance topics. Read more about TSE at: <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/03/17/traffic-safety-classes-popular-and-appreciated/>.
- Data from our elementary students regarding dependability showed about the same rates of favorable response in 2022 as in 2019. The graph below compares 2019 and 2022 student responses to the question “How often can other people depend on you to do the right thing?” While still generally skewed in a very positive direction, the responses in the top category of “almost always” dipped just a bit.

Dependable and Responsible People



- On a positive note, survey data from 2022 related to critical thinking and problem-solving abilities showed stronger results as compared with the 2019 data gathered from our students.

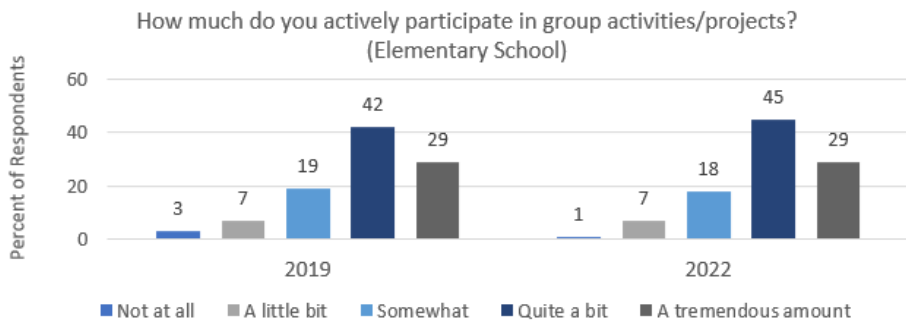
Critical Thinkers and Problem Solvers



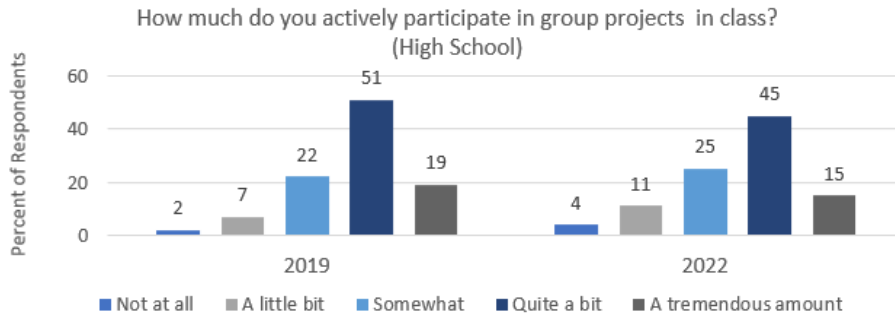
The two graphs above represent responses from middle (top graph) and high school students (bottom graph) to the question “How comfortable are you thinking and learning about problems not easily solved?” At both grade levels, the 2022 data was slightly more favorable than in 2019.

- We were curious to compare responses to questions about collaboration, and particularly given that students spent so many days in relative isolation during the pandemic. For elementary students, responses to the question “How much do you actively participate in group activities/projects” held fairly consistent for 2022 as compared with 2019. (See graph below.)

Leaders, Collaborators and Team Players

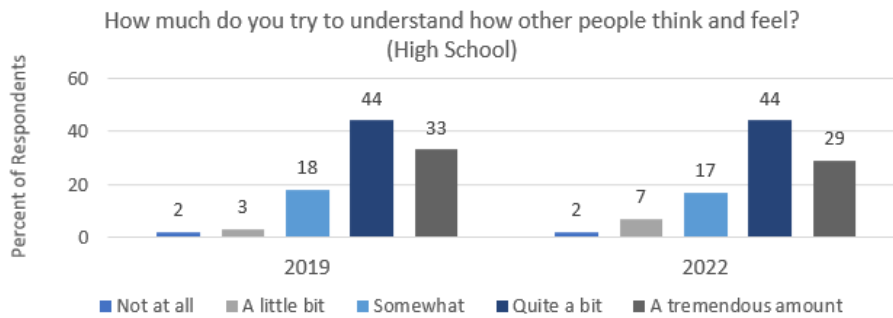


Data gathered from responses of high school students shows a bigger difference between 2019 and 2022 regarding the question “How much do you actively participate in group projects in class?” As the graph below displays, favorable responses for 2022 dropped by comparison with data from 2019 on the same question.



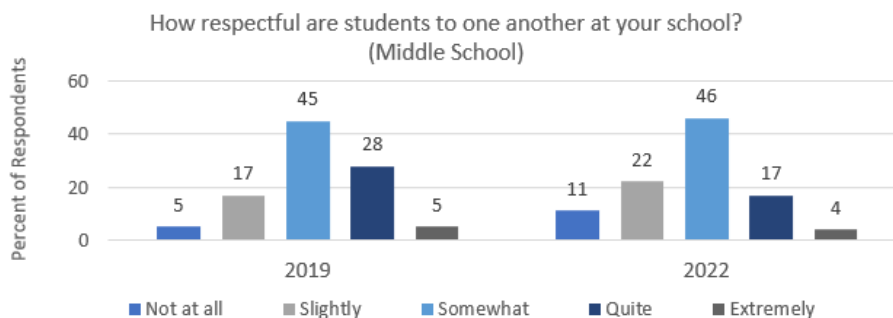
- Survey data regarding students’ perspectives on respect and compassion showed a mixed picture. On the question “How much do you try to understand how other people think and feel” which is a question trying to get at the idea of empathy, high school students’ responses were fairly consistent comparing 2019 with 2022, with responses in the most favorable category dipping slightly (see the graph below).

Respectful and Compassionate Humans (first question)



Data from middle school students on the question “How respectful are students to one another at your school” revealed somewhat less favorable responses in 2022 compared with 2019 data. As the graph below shows, responses in the categories of “not at all” and “slightly” increased for middle school students in 2022. This data made us reflect on what students have been observing in adult behavior over the course of the pandemic. Both in the media, and possibly even within

Respectful and Compassionate Humans (second question)



their own families, students have borne witness to a lot of disrespectful talk. The negative nature of the political discourse in our country, violent protests regarding the election, social unrest,

arguments over masking requirements and vaccinations have been commonplace over the past couple of years and we hypothesize this may translate into students' perceptions (and reality) that others in their school are less respectful now versus in 2019.

- Earlier this year, Geneva students were captured showing their respect for neighbors living near the school. Using their woodsy, magical school mascot as the theme, Geneva Elementary School students delivered garden gnomes and thank you cards to their surrounding Geneva neighbors on Earth Day to show their school appreciation. An important outcome of our Promise states that our students will develop into “respectful and compassionate humans” and “well-rounded community members engaged with the broader world,” and this recent spring activity demonstrated these attributes in Geneva students. As a community, the school wanted to show gratitude to their nearby neighbors who may have been impacted by the increase in traffic and the long lines in the drop-off and pick-up times during the past two years of the pandemic. Principal Sharece Steinkamp summarized the project. “During the pandemic, we relied upon the grace of our neighbors as we used modified dismissal procedures as families chose to drive their children rather than use buses during COVID-19 times,” Steinkamp shared. “Our elementary-aged students were unable to be fully vaccinated until January or February of this year. With two car pick-up lines each day, our neighbors were impacted 20 minutes or more every morning and afternoon,” she continued. “Throughout the entirety of the pandemic, despite the extra traffic and inconvenience, our neighbors stuck it out and put the safety of our students first.” Read the whole story at: <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/05/04/geneva-gnomes-thank-their-neighbors/>.

IV. Summary Concluding Statement and A Look Ahead

There is much to celebrate in the progress we see for students in our district tied to The Promise outcomes we aim for. Graduation rates continue to rise, professional development and new curricular efforts are being implemented, and more robust efforts to include all students in the general education classroom and ensure all needs are met are having some powerful effects. As well this report points out what we believe to be some of the ill effects of the pandemic period – overall declines in students' sense of hopefulness, evidence that respectful behavior may have decreased, and perhaps a decline in older students' favorable responses regarding questions of willingness to collaborate with others. These outcomes suggest our work in the social emotional dimensions of student experiences are ever more necessary and important, and we need to stay the course with work underway to ensure those important aspects of student growth and learning are front and center in our work moving forward.

We believe that this Bellingham Promise Ends 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 monitoring report, in combination with the ongoing exploration of outcomes that occurred during the course of board meetings, school visits and linkages this year, serves as evidence of a reasonable interpretation of these Ends and is supported by data that demonstrates progress toward achievement of these Ends. Further, we hope this report serves as a useful tool in support of the school board's ability to regularly review our Promise Ends to ensure they remain relevant and inspire meaningful work throughout the organization and community.