



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
DATE: Feb. 7, 2025
RE: Monitoring Report for EL- 3, Treatment and Communication with Public, Parents and Students

I certify that the following is accurate as of Feb 7, 2025. The reporting period is from Dec. 1, 2023, through Nov. 30, 2024.

Policy Type: Executive Limitation

Policy: EL-3 Treatment and Communication with Public, Parents and Students

“The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that non-employee stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity throughout the organization and are provided with communications regarding district events, plans, and actions.”

Adopted: Sept. 10, 2009

Revised: Jan. 19, 2020

Interpretation of items: None in question.

Description of Evidence of Compliance:

EL-3 directs the superintendent to treat non-employee stakeholders with respect and dignity throughout the organization, and appropriately communicate district events, actions and plans. Specifically,

1. The superintendent shall not fail to take all reasonable and prudent actions with respect to non-employee stakeholder interactions and communications that are typical for similar and highly effective organizations.

Before making districtwide decisions or implementing large-scale change, our standard practice is to engage our stakeholders in being part of the decision or solution. In this report,

we highlight several examples of stakeholder engagement, significant communications and/or change management around the following topics and/or initiatives:

Levy elections in February 2024

Ahead of our levy elections in early 2024, we shared facts and information with staff and our community about why and how levies provide essential funding for programs not fully funded by our state. Both our operations and technology levy were on the special election ballot on Feb. 13, 2024. These levies replaced two voter approved levies from 2020 that expired at the end of 2024. We shared general information as well as specific numbers and figures in the form of webpages, videos, printed fliers, FAQs and several messages in email communication, at in-person meetings with staff and parent groups (with the help of a levy toolkit) and on social media. Our levies were approved by voters by approximately 66%. We followed up with staff, families, students and community members with a thank you message from our superintendent.

Capital projects

We regularly share information and look for ways to engage with our community around construction and capital projects.

Projects that were of special importance during this reporting period include the heating issues at the Family Partnership Program, flooding of the old District Office, temporarily relocating staff and programs in our schools and buildings across our district, and opening of the new District Office; publicly sharing that we are pausing construction of the 15th elementary school and collaborating with the city to try to relocate Carl Cozier Elementary School; construction of the new Kulshan Middle School turf field; educational specifications/designing advisory committees for the following projects: Community Transitions, Cozier and Roosevelt; and opening of the new tennis courts at Bellingham High School.

Milestones of these projects are shared with photos and opportunities for feedback from staff, families, students, other stakeholders and neighbors. A variety of public meetings (e.g., Roosevelt) and feedback forms are used throughout the timeline of a project, from brainstorming and dreams and wishes to offering input on layout and logistics.

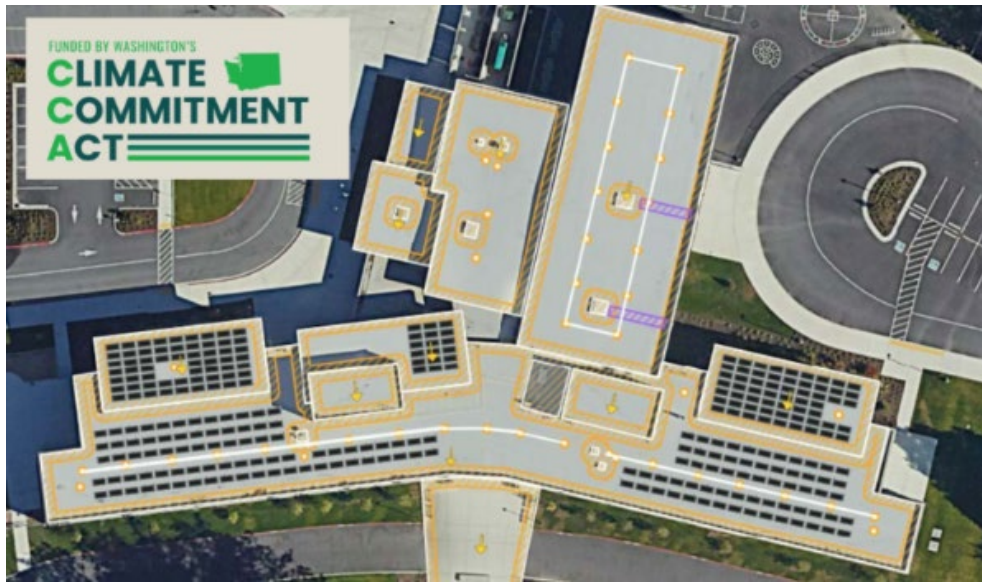
We believe it is important to share these updates with our community to say thank you to voters who have supported our bond measures and help taxpayers understand how bond funds are being spent.

Looking ahead to the next reporting period, we look forward to sharing progress on our work with the city to find land to relocate Carl Cozier, breaking ground on the new CT building on the Whatcom Community College campus and exploring running a capital maintenance levy.

Sustainability

Our efforts around sustainability have continued during this reporting period. We publicly shared our Climate Action Plan (CAP) in fall 2023 and took important steps toward a sustainable and resilient district, looking for opportunities to share updates and engage staff, students, families and community.

In May 2024, we hosted an emergency resiliency event and in July, 2024 received a \$2.7 million grant award for solar array on five schools, supported with funding by the Washington state Climate Commitment Act.



Other sustainability-related engagement and news included: the Fall 2024 Sustainability Update, district Promise stories on Earth Day 2024 and Sehome High Environmental Club activities, with corresponding posts on social media. *Photo: Sehome High and Geneva Elementary students partner up on April 22 at Geneva.*



The Sustainability Standing Committee continues to meet to support the CAP and report on the progress of goals within the five-year plan. Sustainability progress can be followed on the district website which now includes a dynamic Energy Use Intensity (EUI) and Carbon Benchmarking dashboard.

Safety concerns and usage of safety protocols

Our team helps support safety-related concerns and incidents at our schools throughout the year. Some of the incidents during this reporting period include Kulshan going into a secure due to a nearby burglary; Sehome going into a lockdown briefly due to a swatting incident/false alarm; and a middle school student being the target of a racist attack during a walking field trip.

In fall 2024, a Bellingham High student reported they were attacked off campus, which garnered inquiries from local media and Seattle television stations. The BHS principal posted and shared a message with BHS students, staff and families. The district responded to all media inquiries and shared our statement (which is on our website) to help clarify the facts, as some misinformation was reported by media. BHS and district staff worked closely with police on their investigation and on timing and clarity of messaging with the public.

Our district continues to follow the standard response protocols and similar templated messaging from the “I Love U Guys” Foundation. Almost always, our principals send a follow-up message to staff, students and families with more context and information about what occurred and why the school used the protocol. There are times when the scope necessitates a message from the superintendent. Also related to student safety, the superintendent sent and posted the following messages about safety concerns at Wade King Elementary and a follow up on the charges against three high school administrators.

We continue to look for opportunities to proactively share updated policies and staff and student rights related to sex discrimination and sex-based harassment, bias or hate speech incidents, and student discipline. These include messages, annual handbook, posters, lessons and trainings.

Budget planning

We regularly send messages related to the district’s budget planning process, and we followed our practice during this reporting period. Our message for budget planning for the 2024-25 school year was a “hold steady” year. We shared messaging and information widely in May 2024, March 2024 and January 2024, in addition to numerous presentations to staff, leaders and community groups. We use a webpage as a key resource to track our budget messages and tools, including our Final Budget (which is often referred to as the “budget book”), and Priorities for Progress, which helps identify our key investments.

Our budget messages include indications that we will likely be facing challenges for the 2025-26 school year, along with many, if not all, districts, in our state. In October 2024, we shared a video and message with students, staff, families and community about budget

planning for 2025-26. We received positive feedback and appreciation for the information included and the accessible format of the video.

Looking ahead to the next reporting period: We are anticipating additional messages and videos regarding the budget. In December 2024, we shared a message about the school boards recent actions, including an open letter to legislators and a resolution. In January 2025, the superintendents of Whatcom County sent a joint letter to the editor, which was published by Cascadia Daily News, the Bellingham Herald, the Salish Current and other local publications.

Public Records

Communications fulfilled more than 100 records requests during the reporting period, compared to about 100 and around 75 during the previous two reporting periods, respectively.

Requests included those requested under the state Public Records Act (PRA), requests furnished to students and/or their guardians under the Family Educational Records and Privacy Act (FERPA), and requests that include elements of both. Additionally, the records officer supported the records components of Title IX investigations, for many legal proceedings, and with agencies such as the Office of Civil Rights, each of which must be handled with care, efficiency and accuracy.

The scope of each request ranged from a single piece of information about our district to thousands of responsive records requiring extensive review and redaction.

The quantity of requests stayed more static during this reporting period than the growth trend seen over the previous six years; however, we continue to observe individual requests being complex and broad, e.g., “any and all communications” regarding a topic or an individual. This trend is common across public agencies in our state and is not unique to BPS.

Video requests for our district security camera footage continue to represent a sizeable portion of this work, as predicted in our past two EL-3s. Communications works closely with our district educational technology team, director of safety and security, and legal counsel, if needed, to fulfill video requests and make redactions. Communications and the director of safety and security also provide guidance for administrators for saving, furnishing and using security footage as a tool for communication and, sometimes, student discipline.

Video requests range from short videos of parking lot fender benders to multi-view videos of student behavior to multi-day footage of safety/security incidents. Our safety director and records officer work closely with law enforcement to ensure that video requests involving public safety needs are fulfilled efficiently and accurately. As awareness grows of the capabilities of our security cameras, we anticipate video requests will continue to represent a sizeable portion of our public records and/or FERPA requests.

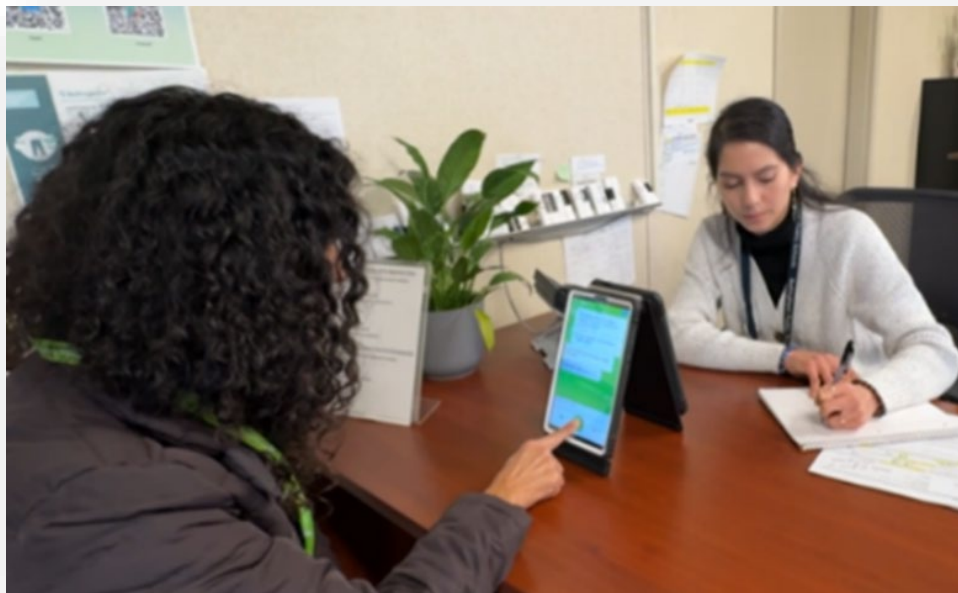
Communications appreciates the support of colleagues across the district, including finance, accounting, human resources, educational technology, teaching and learning, capital projects and building leaders to assist in public records requests, which is an important function of transparent government.

The assistant director of communications, who is the district records officer, continues to receive regular training in public records law and best practices by regularly attending training conferences, workshops and webinars hosted by the state Attorney General's office and the Washington Association of Public Records Officers (WAPRO). Our records officer works in close partnership with our district records manager and appreciates having a knowledgeable resource regarding records and records retention. From March through December 2024, the records officer was also supported by an administrative assistant 10 hours per week. The administrative assistant was instrumental in helping the records officer remain organized and on deadline with this complex work.

The records officer also receives support for questions regarding records requests from our district legal team as needed and appreciates their timely responses, which allow us to fulfill complex requests with efficiency and confidence.

Technology helps expand family engagement

With the support of a grant from OSPI, the Family Engagement Department was able to purchase ten Instant Language Access (ILA) devices that facilitate live interpretation, enhancing the services provided by school staff, the District Office and the Family Resource Center to families who speak languages other than English. ILAs are able to translate in more than 210 languages. ([See Fall 2024 Promise story.](#))





Additionally, in collaboration with the Educational Technology Department, we acquired portable translators (right) that staff can check out to assist with communication between parents, students and school personnel. The team has also been actively translating various policies and procedures to ensure accessibility for all school administrators and families. We are constantly interviewing and expanding the number of interpreters to better support the growing diverse linguistic needs of the community.



The photo below is of interpreters representing six languages at a recent Squalicum.



Graduations

For the class of 2024, we continued our recent tradition of hosting graduation ceremonies at one location and providing online streaming access. For the fourth consecutive year, the district hosted all four high school graduation ceremonies at Civic Stadium. A small change for 2024 was moving the Options High School graduation to Friday evening, followed by graduations for Squalicum, Bellingham and Sehome on Saturday. The Community Transitions program graduation was held at Depot Market Square on the Thursday before the four high school weekend ceremonies.

Considerable time was spent planning, listening to stakeholder feedback and messaging seniors, staff and families with details and expectations of the day and event. BPS staff and students streamed all five ceremonies to the BPS YouTube channel, which totaled nearly 3,800 collective views, including live streams and on demand replays.

New in 2024, BPS Communications was the primary photographer team for all graduation ceremonies. Previously, the district had contracted with a third-party photo company for photos. We made this decision as a cost-saving step and an enhancement to photo turnaround time. We appreciate both a better product and having more control of the process.

The communications technician specialist was the sole primary photographer for the Community Transitions (CT) program graduation and the Options High School graduation, due to the smaller number of graduates requiring only one photographer. At the CT event, portrait photos were taken of each graduate along with other group scenes.

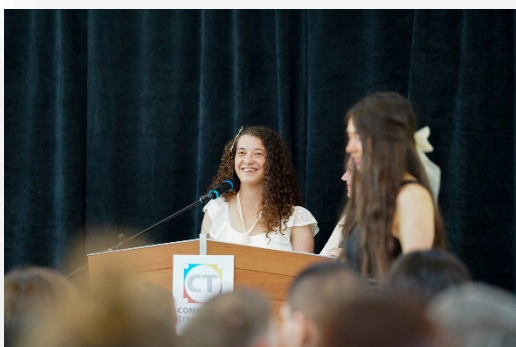
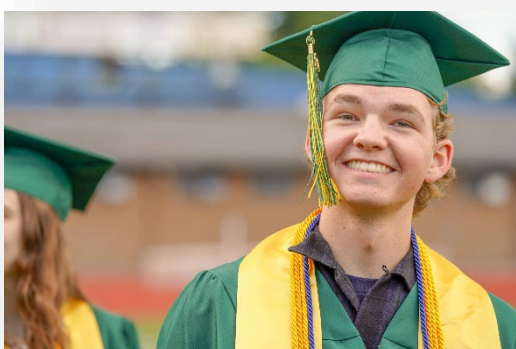
The communications technician specialist and one contracted photographer (a former BPS employee) collaborated to cover the Squalicum, Bellingham and Sehome graduations on Saturday.

In total, over 5,900 downloadable graduation photos taken by BPS Communications were published to Flickr by Tuesday morning of the week following the conclusion of the graduation events. The photos generated over 19,500 views on the platform. The team shared subsets of each collection shared to social media in well-performing posts (CT, BHS, SHS, SQHS, OHS plus a post of crowdsourced photos of seniors visiting elementary schools in graduation caps and gowns and a post summarizing graduation season) for a combined accounts-reached total of over 35,000 across all social mediums (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn), not including the 19,500 views on Flickr.

(photos, next page)

Monitoring Report for EL-3

2024 graduation photos:



Monitoring Report for EL-3

Communications supports the creation of graduation programs to give each high school similar, consistent production and print values. The Sehome High School trifold program is shown below as an example. Graduate names are listed inside.

Program

— Please rise and remain standing during the processional. —

Processional....."Pomp and Circumstance" by Edward Elgar
Sehome Band, Director Lourdes Aguilar

National Anthem.....Gabrielle Brandon, Vocal Soloist

ASL Interpretation.....Haven Alex, Adria Clines,
Lindsey McConaghy, Sydney Wolfson

Land Acknowledgement.....Preston Navarone Coyot Lana

Welcome.....ASB President
Arabella Cham

Student Speaker, selected by the senior class.....Adria Lilliana Clines

Choral Performance....."Goodbye Yellow Brick Road"
Arr: Paul Langford
Sehome Chamber Choir, Director Vanessa Katz

Faculty Speaker, selected by the senior class.....Lauren Tucker

Orchestral Performance....."Taylor Swift Medley"
Arr: Sehome Orchestra Students
Sehome Senior Orchestra, Director Kirstin Doud

Presentation of Class.....Sonia Cole, Principal

Acceptance of Class.....Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent of Schools

Presentation of Diplomas.....Sonia Cole, Principal
Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
Scott Ritchey, School Board Member

Closing.....Sonia Cole, Principal

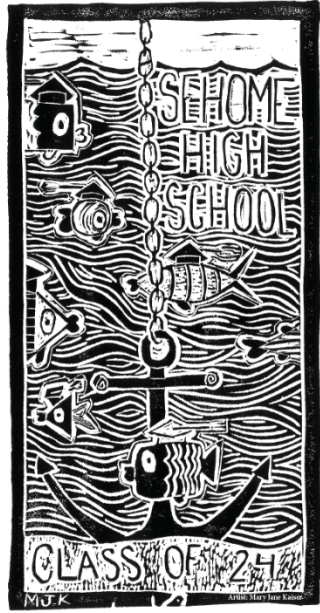
Turning of the Tassel.....ASB Senior Representatives
Haven Alex, Mara Brogan, Skye Davidshill, Sawyer Fleming

Recessional....."Anchors Aweigh" by United States Navy Band
Sehome Band, Director Lourdes Aguilar

— Please remain at your seats during the recessional. —

Sehome Staff 2023-24

John Aguilar Lourdes Aguilar Frank Alvar Natalie Anquak Susan Auld Bethany Barrett Michael Beckowski Ashleigh Bobowski Robert Burgess Ian Caldwell Kevin Candella Maurice Capps Shannon Casey Kristin Cerezina Jordan Chalfant Shari Clarke Kerri Clary Sonia Cole Monica Contreras Nicky Cook-Deiler Mike Couto Jennifer Cowan Lillian Craker Raudelle Crawford Colin Cushman Valerie Defehr Steven DeMone Angela Deiler Damian Di Nitto Nancy Dixon Shawn Dean Becky Domingo Kirstin Doud Kristin Dungan Emmery Eaga Shannon Babashak Peggy Fogarty Erin Furda Mary Gouran	Jared Greenwood Robin Green Derek Hahn Amy Hankinson Tyler Hannigan Donald Helling Phillip Henoch Marta Herrera-Carreon Lester Herting Julie Hiett Magdalena Hite Amy Hight Eric Hofstedt Lucas Holtgeerts Mary Hooker Alyssa Johnson Kai Kane-Romming Vanessa Katz Kacy Keck MacKenzie Keeling Colleen King Kimberly Kirk Garrett Knoll Lillian Lahti Alex Lara Renee Larsen Kari Lee Todd Letia Tara Luna Carter Maden Phillip Marx Kandace McGowan Lauralise McGowan Bridget McGuinness Catherine Moran Sonya Morrison Patricia Neary Dana Pattison Cindy Pearson	Katarina Peatross Lindsey Post Brian Powell Kam Quisenberry Golzar Rahman Kyle Ringo Anna Rittmudler Catherine Roosma Julie Ross-Buckmaster Kevin Ryan Bromwyn Sambrook Chuck Schelle Stephanie Schroeder Heidi Schroyer Scott Schroyer Hana Schurz Kelli Sheehan Kendra Simpson Sarah Spitzer Jaquay Sasha Strane Jennifer Styer Steven Terrier Jennifer Thornton Lauren Tucker Kirsty Van Egdom John VanderMolen Anmol Verma Nick Viera Cheraine Villarral Bennet Via Alexandra Walbeck Shawn Walker Michelle Wilhelm Theresa Wines Edward Wising Jeffrey Wood Jane Yacde Brian Young Martha Zender Maxwell Zentzer
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COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
Saturday, June 15, 2024



School Board
Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Haddler,
Jenn Mason, Scott Ritchey, Katie Rose
Superintendent: Dr. Greg Baker



Bellingham Public Schools
a collective commitment

High school weekly advisory schedule

After a major adjustment to our high school advisory schedule in the 2023-24 school year, Communications supported our high schools in making a more minor adjustment for the 2024-25 school year. Based on feedback from school communities, advisory class was moved from Tuesday and Friday weekly to Monday and Friday weekly. Although this was a minor change compared to the previous school year's change, any bell schedule adjustment requires communications tools, like posters, to support each campus. Communications also made sure that each school's website was updated prior to the launch of the 2024-25 school year and that posters were visible throughout our schools (examples below):

Early Dismissal			
1st/5th	8:30 - 9:40		
2nd/6th	9:45 - 10:55		
3rd/7th	11:35 - 12:45	4th/8th	12:50 - 2:00

A/B Day			
1st/5th	8:30 - 9:55		
2nd/6th	10:05 - 11:30		
3rd/7th	12:15 - 1:45	4th/8th	1:50 - 3:15

Daily Schedule			
1st/5th	8:30 - 9:55		
2nd/6th	10:05 - 11:30		
3rd/7th	12:15 - 1:45	4th/8th	1:50 - 3:15

A/B Day + Hawk Hour			
1st/5th	8:30 - 9:45		
2nd/6th	10:35 - 11:50		
3rd/7th	12:35 - 1:55	4th/8th	2:00 - 3:15

Inclusive practices and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)

Our district's work to increase training for and implementation of inclusive practices and multi-tiered systems of support continued during this reporting period. Communications supported this work with attention to the needs and questions of internal and external stakeholders.

Communications continued to support Department of Teaching and Learning (DTL) leadership with messages to staff clarifying the scope and intention of our inclusion work. The assistant director of communications sat as an ex officio member on the Inclusionary Instructional Strategies Standing Committee during the 2023-24 school year, and continued this involvement when that committee was re-envisioned as the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Standing Committee for the 2024-25 school year.

Professional Development

To accomplish communications work that is “typical for similar and highly effective organizations” as defined in the EL, we look nationally and regionally to identify and implement best practices from other school districts. For professional development in the last reporting period, team members participated in the following learning opportunities:

- In July 2024, the executive director of communications, assistant director, communications specialist and communications technician specialist attended the National School Public Relations Association conference in Bellevue, WA.
- The Communications Department attended a one-day team retreat in August 2024. During this time, the team shared reflections on the NSPRA conference, discussed how to apply learnings from the “How to Write Short” book study completed over the summer and reviewed/refined team norms and matrix responsibilities. DTL director Janis Velasquez Farmer presented a professional development session on equity, diversity and inclusion. The team also set goals and brainstormed future strategic work for the 2024-25 weekly meetings.
- The assistant director of communications attended several conferences and webinars related to public records to support her continued proficiency as district records officer.
 - PRA Bootcamp on Jan. 23 and 24, 2024
 - Public records training: March 11 and 12, 2024.
 - WAPRO Spring conference May 15 and 16, 2024.
 - Public Records Association training Aug. 28, 2024.
- The executive director and communications technician specialist attended the Washington School Public Relations Association Conference October 27 – 29, 2024.
- The executive director of communications attended the Summit on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Nov. 20, 2024.
- The executive director and communications technician specialist regularly attend the Northwest Educational Service District 189 meetings held for communications professionals once to twice per month (typically on Zoom) to share ideas, plans, new laws and/or crises management.

- The executive director of communications and assistant director of communications continue to regularly attend local/regional public information officer meetings (PIOs) and have participated in panel discussions. This group provides training, speakers and opportunities for collaboration with communications colleagues from school districts, cities, counties, fire, police, libraries, transit, public works and other public and private agencies. We were excited to host this group in the new District Office in October 2024.
- The communications technician specialist participated the following professional development opportunities:
 - Monthly meetings as part of the BPS aspiring administrator cohort throughout the 2023-24 academic year
 - Monthly “What’s New Review” sessions with ParentSquare for product development updates
 - ParentSquare webinar about chronic absenteeism (Sept. 18)
 - Washington School Public Relations Association (WSPRA) virtual PD event about school funding issues (Sept. 16)
 - Summer book club regarding book titled, Social Media for Schools (June and early July 2024)
 - Countywide reunification exercise at Meridian High School (June 27)
 - Washington state Qualtrics school districts meeting in Seattle for a Lunch and Learn about software use cases
 - Generative Ai in K12 Education: Practical Considerations webinar hosted by Finalsight (December 2023)

2. The superintendent shall not fail to:

- a. Use multiple media resources including, but not limited to:**
 - i. Community and school newsletter(s):**

A) InsideSchools

In this reporting period, the Department of Communications and Community Relations produced three community newsletters called InsideSchools. For each edition, 56,000 are printed and mailed to saturate the entirety of postal routes within School District 501, including both businesses and residences. These newsletters inform stakeholders about our schools and engage them in the collective work of The Bellingham Promise. InsideSchools is also published online and shared via email and our website. Stories highlight major initiatives and areas of focus; other articles recognize staff, students and community partnerships. Most editions include updates from facilities, the school board and the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation.

Winter 2024: This edition included stories about literacy curriculum in K-2 classrooms, Treaty Day commemoration, work-based and worksite learning, and quick facts about the 2024 replacement levies, among others. We shared an interview with our newly elected board member Scott Ritchey, as well.



Spring 2024: This edition included stories on the opening of the new District Office, a discussion of what Options High School offers, and students excelling at bridge-building and music. It also included a jump to photos taken during the districtwide Since Time Immemorial Curriculum Night. School board members Camille Diaz Hackler and Katie Rose were interviewed about school funding.



Fall 2024: This edition included eight dynamic stories from our schools with QR jumps to full articles on the Promise website. Articles ranged from elementary library collections and bike PE to the celebration of a high school coach and career center staff. Middle school stories shared innovative CTE instruction and the opening of the first turf field at Kulshan. This edition also included a review of what policy governance is and how the board operates, as discussed with board president Doug Benjamin.



B) Mass messaging tools: ParentSquare

ParentSquare overview and background:

The 2024-25 school year marks the third full academic year using ParentSquare.

We use ParentSquare for mass communications (school newsletters, district information, urgent alerts), classroom communication (one-to-one and group messaging, parent-teacher conferences), and related school services.

Training and support of ParentSquare use:

ParentSquare's capabilities represent comprehensive, two-way communication and notification services. ParentSquare provides enhancements that further its usage – such as an improved school newsletter editor, called Studio Editor, released during the reporting period.

As such, our team anticipated it would take multiple years for most of our community to become familiar with, and maximize the use of, customization tools available to each user

in the platform. Though well regarded as an easy-to-learn tool, the comprehensive aspects of the new tool have called for continued support and education for best use cases.

Our Communications team assists staff and parents/guardians daily via phone and email with account settings and permissions to optimize usage.

Much of this support is resolved with the expertise of our team, but we also routinely reach out to ParentSquare's support team to better understand the tool and suggest feature enhancements, based on feedback from our community. For example, the communications technician specialist had 109 ticket conversations with ParentSquare support during the reporting period.

A particular focus during fall 2024 has been helping schools create newsletter templates in the new Studio Editor to ease the transition from other tools, such as Smore. Studio Editor assists in ease of viewing for recipients, composition for authors and enhances accessibility related to translation and screen readers.

Our team has also orchestrated several group trainings during the back-to-school season, though fewer than in years prior based on needs of our school communities.

Expanded usage:

We continue to receive a positive response to ParentSquare's role as a communication tool in our community.

Here are a few examples: easy-to-use attendance notifications and excuse notes, language translation in two-way digital conversations when translators are not available, and offering large-scale messaging to grades or classes along with one-to-one direct messaging all in one platform.

We leveraged a new feature for the first time during this reporting period, using the Secure Document delivery feature to send report cards and progress reports. This feature matches ID numbers to recipients via a mass PDF upload and digitally distributes report cards and progress reports for ease in family access.

Using Secure Document Delivery for report cards saves immense time and funds formerly spent on preparing and mailing documents and includes delivery reports to confirm which guardians engaged with the report card. In the cases of undeliverable documents, we can quickly pull the list and find other ways to contact those folks.

During the most recent reporting period, our team has also supported numerous staff in creating custom groups for communication that extend beyond class rosters. Examples include middle school choir clubs, caseloads of students for special education staff and

Monitoring Report for EL-3

multi-class groups such as all classes at a specific teaching team or grade level that need to communicate about content unique to this group. For example, Parkview Elementary requested we create a singular group that combines all rostered kindergarten classes for easy communication applicable to all kindergarten families at once.

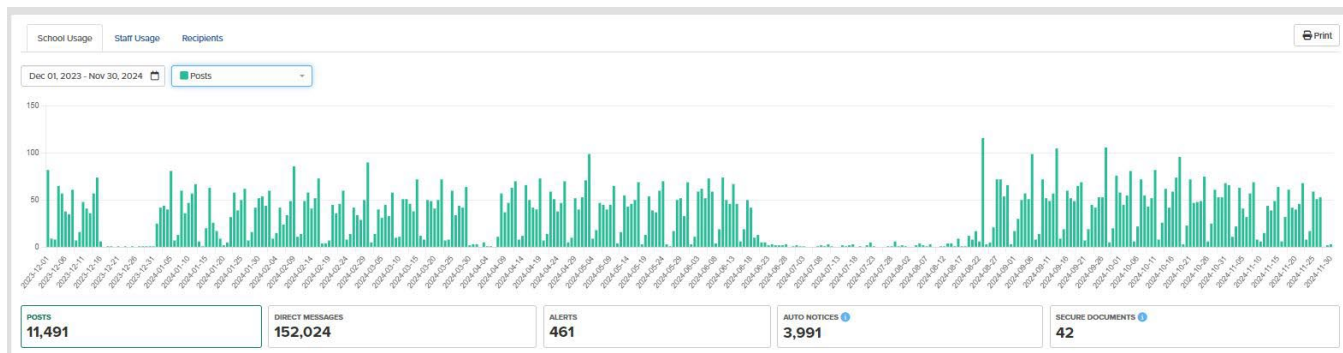
ParentSquare analytics numbers support the expanded usage of the tool in its third full year in our school district.

During the reporting period, BPS staff used ParentSquare to send 11,491 posts (district, school or class group messages), 152,024 direct messages (one-to-one or small group back-and-forth messaging – similar to texting), 461 smart alerts (higher priority messages related to school schedules changes due to weather, school safety etc.), 3,991 auto notices* (e.g. attendance) and 42 Secure Documents*

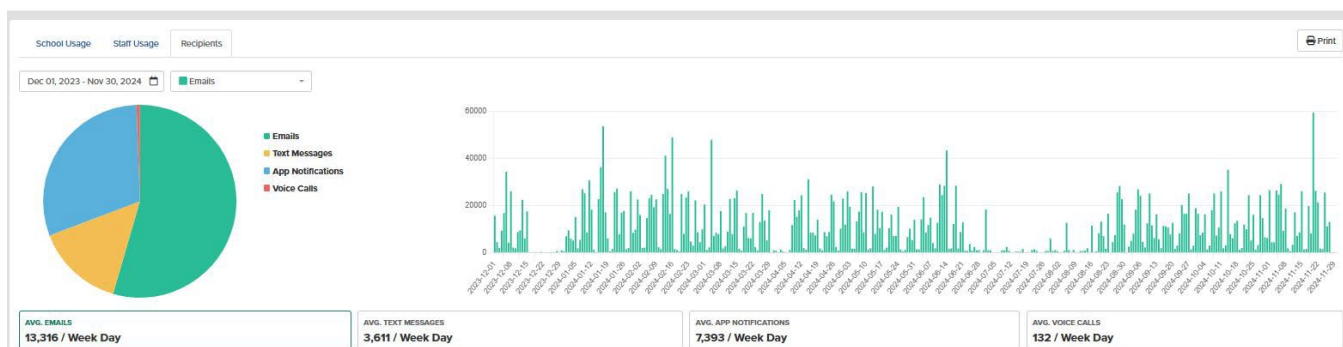
*Auto notice and Secure Documents totals are calculated by how many times a mail merge style template is used to do a mass send, not the number of individuals sending count/recipients.

From a districtwide perspective, the tool usage continues to expand with an average of 13,316 emails, 3,611 texts, 7.393 app notifications and 132 voice calls per weekday.

Data snapshots: ParentSquare:



Provides a snapshot of notifications overall usage (districtwide) over the reporting period.



Provides a snapshot of notifications per weekday (districtwide) over the reporting period.

Monitoring Report for EL-3

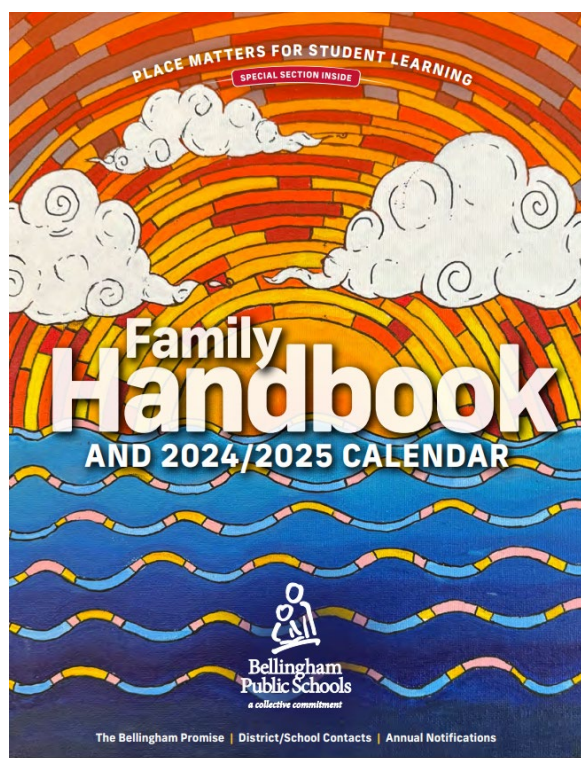


Compares July 1, 2023-July 1, 2024 (past year) and July 2024-December 2024 (current year)

C) Other publications and posters shared with family and student stakeholders

Family Handbook and Calendar 2024-25

This annual publication is mailed home before the start of the school year and includes important notifications and a full calendar highlighting student art. It is printed in English and Spanish.



This year's publication included a special section called Place Matters for Student Learning, summarizing the major updates to our facilities in the past 25 years, relaying the astounding fact that 13 of 22 schools (or nearly 2/3) have been built or rebuilt since 2000.



High School Course Catalog 2024-25

Working with the Department of Teaching and Learning, Communications staff updated the high school course catalog for 2024-25. The catalog is used by all four high schools and includes the registration schedule, new classes and regular course offerings. This remains an important publication relevant to nearly 35 percent of all students and families, which shares three important graduation requirements: 1) the credits needed to graduate, 2) the High School and Beyond Plan and 3) graduation pathways. The front pages of the catalog also include critical information about registration. Each year, we print fewer copies as more and more families and students rely on the digital version.



Priorities for Progress 2024-25

Produced every fall, this publication is a companion document to The Bellingham Promise that provides detail for anyone who wants to learn about our work in each of the six key strategies. Each key strategy lists the top five priorities, plus a list of other important priorities. The current Priorities for Progress for 2024-25 is posted online only.

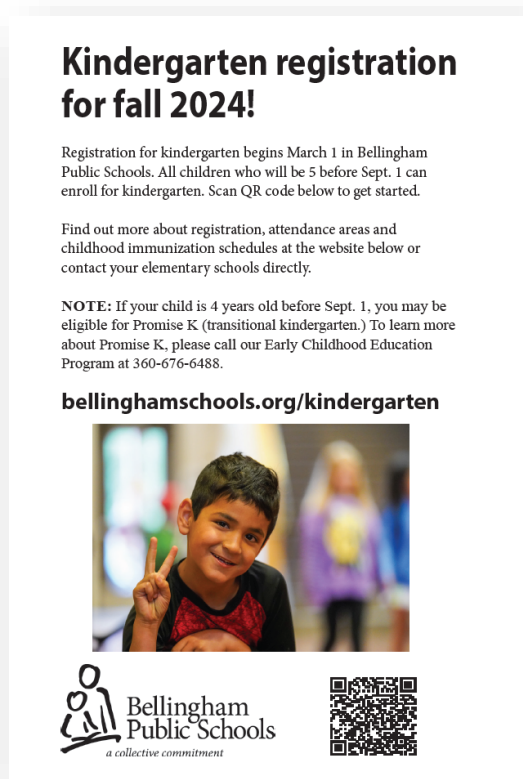
Promotion

Promotional materials for everything from kindergarten registration to career and college planning events are created annually in Communications.

For this reporting period, these included:

Kindergarten flyers and posters were updated, printed and distributed at elementary schools in numerous languages in spring 2024.

There was also a focused effort to locate young children for Promise K classrooms. These children need to be 4 by September 1. The Promise K flyer was translated into five languages alongside the English version.



Additionally, the seven school districts in Whatcom County put together a joint press release and produced countywide flyers listing all districts. This collaboration assisted families across the county in registering at their correct district. Some families may have childcare in Bellingham but live in Meridian, Ferndale or another county school district.



2024-25 School Year
Register for Kindergarten!



Kindergarten registration for the 2024-25 school year is open. All children who are 5 by Sept. 1, 2024 are eligible.

Register with the school district you live in:

Bellingham Public Schools  1306 Dupont Street Bellingham, WA 98225 360-676-6400 www.bellinghamschools.org	Meridian School District  214 W. Laurel Road Bellingham, WA 98226 360-398-7111 www.meridian.wednet.edu
Blaine School District  765 H Street Blaine, WA 98230 360-332-5881 www.blainesd.org	Mount Baker School District  4956 Deming Road Deming, WA 98244 360-383-2000 www.mtbaker.wednet.edu
Ferndale School District  6041 Vista Drive Ferndale, WA 98248 360-383-9200 www.ferndalesd.org	Nooksack Valley School District  3326 E. Badger Road Everson, WA 98247 360-988-4754 www.nv.k12.wa.us
Lynden School District  516 Main Street Lynden, WA 98264 360-354-4443 www.lynden.wednet.edu	

Visit your school district website to learn more.



On the other end of K-12 education, communications staff supported events for job, career and college planning with posters, flyers and social media promotion as well as targeted messaging to our high school students and families.



Above: Sample web slider for Youth Employment and Local College Fair 2024. Half-sheet flyers and posters and social media were also designed, printed and posted for promotion.

Below: Half-sheet flyer for the 2024 College Fair. Posters, web sliders and social media were designed, printed and posted for promotion.



Districtwide Block Party marketing and support

During this reporting period, Bellingham Public Schools hosted the fourth annual Back-to-School Block Party in August 2024. The Communications team supported the event with promotional materials, social media promotion, flyers, onsite signage and day of support with photography, setup/takedown and other tasks.

Families view this event as an important school readiness event as they prepare for the upcoming school year. It regularly attracts more than 1,000 attendees.

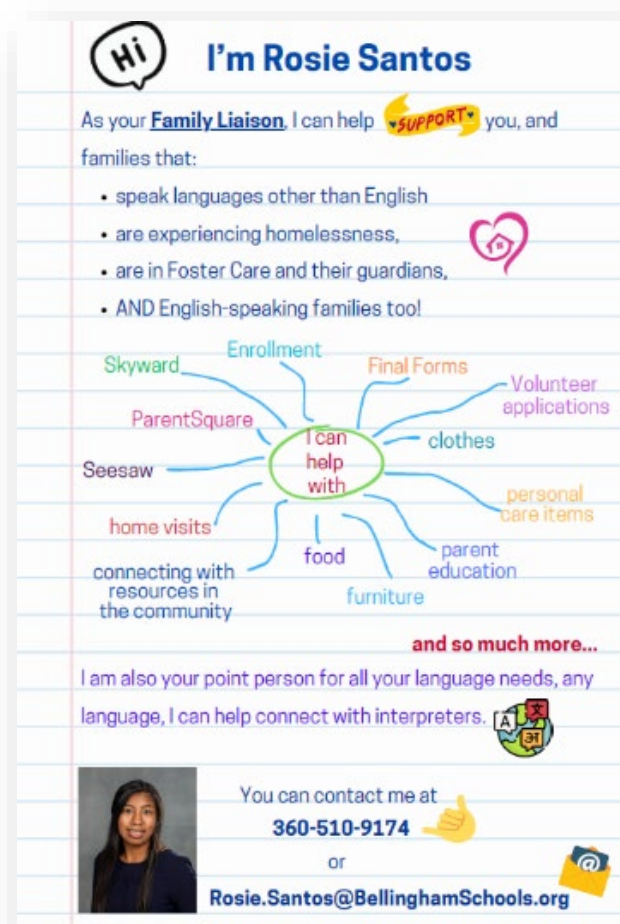


D) Investing in strategic partnerships on behalf of students and families

The Family Engagement team believes that together we achieve more than alone and for that reason has been reaching out to staff and community members, making presentations, raising awareness on the importance of the McKinney-Vento Act, and how we can collectively support families in need.

Through these presentations, we have highlighted the critical role we all play in ensuring every family feels supported and connected, as stated throughout The Bellingham Promise. One strategy that has been used for the last several years is the posting of family liaisons posters in every school. (See sample below.) We have not only raised awareness but also significantly increased the number of identified families that qualify for McKinney-Vento

support. This collaborative effort has strengthened our community bonds and reaffirmed our commitment to helping each other support families.



The Family Engagement liaisons from Bellingham Public Schools have been creating a powerful partnership with the Educational Service District (ESD) and the new Early Learning Center (ELC) in the District Office to support families from the beginning of their time in the district. They have been making sure the information about the ELC is getting to the right families, supporting the enrollment process and attending quarterly home visits. This collaboration ensures that families receive personalized assistance and follow-ups, fostering a deeper connection between educators and the families. By working together, the BPS liaisons, ESD and ELC can address the unique needs of each family, offering resources, guidance and a compassionate presence. This initiative strengthens family engagement and builds a supportive network that empowers families to thrive for years to come. (Photo: BPS family liaison Jami Pitman with a student.)

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Family Engagement continues to foster and expand relationships with numerous community partners. For instance, the Whatcom Literacy Council offers basic computer skills and English classes for Spanish-speaking parents, both held at Shuksan Middle School. Another partner is the Whatcom County Extension of Washington State University which provides the Strengthening Families program in both English and Spanish in several middle schools. Additionally, with the support of small grants from the Whatcom Community Foundation, we bring engaging opportunities to low-income housing complexes, such as La Posada at Villa Santa Fe (Catholic Community Services apartment complex), school readiness events at various Mercy Housing complexes, and Family Game Night at Trailview for community building.

Photos below: Strengthening Families program.



Photo below: parents graduating from a basic computer skills class, Fall 2024



Photos: Positive Parenting (Padres Positivos) at Birchwood Elementary



Monitoring Report for EL-3

Photos: traditional Posada celebration at Villa Santa Fe.



Other community partners include Blue Skies for Children's summer program. The Family Engagement team supported families to sign up for this support which provides essential items such as coats, shoes and backpacks and also strengthened ties with other key partners, including BPS transportation, the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation, World Relief and Friends of the Family Resource Center (FRC), all providing invaluable support and resources to families.

Photos below: household supplies at the Shuksan FRC courtesy of our partners.



Photo: beds at the Shuksan FRC courtesy of our partners.



Family Engagement has actively collaborated with various community partners to support families during the holiday season. We support close to 350 families each year. These partnerships include BP Refinery, the Port of Bellingham, the Bellingham Police Department with their “Shop with Your Cop” program, PeaceHealth and the Community Toy Store, among others. Through these collaborations, the team has been able to provide essential resources and joyful experiences to families, ensuring that everyone can enjoy a festive and supportive holiday season.



E) Website and Social Media

Website

During this reporting period, the district website had 1,642,533 views.

Peak website traffic occurred during possible weather events with snow falling and during the first day of school or semester. Web traffic was considerably higher compared to other days.

Highest web traffic days:

Jan. 17, 2024 – 18,077 pageviews (all schools closed due to snow, on Jan. 17, 18 and 19)

Jan. 18, 2024 – 13,690 pageviews (all schools closed due to snow, on Jan. 17, 18 and 19)

Aug. 27, 2024 – 16,200 pageviews (two days before the first day of school year)

Aug. 28, 2024 – 12,083 pageviews (one day before the first day of school year)

Jan. 12, 2024 – 11,500 pageviews (extremely cold weather and chance of snow)

The top 5 most visited district webpages during this reporting period (excluding the homepage):

Calendars – 110,638 pageviews

Human Resources– 102,570 pageviews

Menus and Food Services– 84,581 pageviews

Contact (Staff Directory) – 55,385 pageviews

School Index – 51,019 pageviews

High School and Beyond Plan– 27,477 pageviews

New websites planning:

During the reporting period, we began the process of evaluating the future of our websites and exploring a new web vendor partner.

The three main factors for our website change: (1) age - our websites haven't been redesigned since 2016; (2) accessibility – more than 50 percent of web traffic is from mobile devices and our sites lack mobile responsiveness; and (3) structural concerns - our current website support team recommended we explore a new vendor as soon as possible given some underlying website health and longevity concerns.

The communications technician specialist convened a website vendor work group in spring 2024. The group had representation from principals, office staff, library media specialists, a parent and select district office staff.

Together the work group shared input and feedback, developing a set of values for our next family of websites.

After listening to vendor pitches from three finalists, the work group feedback informed the selection of Finalsite, a leading K-12 website vendor used by over 1/3 of all Washington state school districts.

The end of the reporting period included discovery phase work between the Communications team and Finals site. Finals site will be custom designing a district website theme and school website theme.

The discovery phase presented the opportunities for our staff and Finals site staff to connect about website values, goals and vision. It included identifying a sitemap (page organization structure), branding and photos assets, stakeholder input, a current website assessment and assessment of competitor websites.

The design phase begins just after the reporting period in December 2024. We anticipate launching new websites in August 2025.

General web inquiries:

Our district website has a general web inquiry inbox, which visitors can access via the contact webpage. The inbox is monitored by our reception staff. When able, reception staff respond directly to the inquiry with the answer. When additional information is required, reception staff will forward the inquiry to the appropriate staff member for followup.

During this reporting period the inbox received 541 inquiries from staff, families, students and community members. The total was close to the number from the last reporting period (559).

Social Media

During this reporting period, the district social media presence continued to grow overall.

X, formerly known as Twitter: Lost 50 followers, giving us 2,513 followers*.

*X is our least-followed/engaged platform. The trend follows the tool's usage as ownership/rule changes on the platform have some folks deleting accounts or moving to an alternative such as Threads or Bluesky.

LinkedIn: This reporting period was our third reporting period actively posting content to LinkedIn as an active social media outlet. LinkedIn has an audience of both current and prospective employees. We continue to explore ways to uniquely use this medium.

We have 1,760 followers, gaining 231 followers during the reporting period.

Facebook: Our analytics reported an increase of 229 followers during the reporting period. We have 6,817 followers. A particular interesting note about our Facebook following is that it is 84 percent female and 16 percent male.

Below are the top five most popular posts on Facebook for this reporting period in chronological order (based on Reach):

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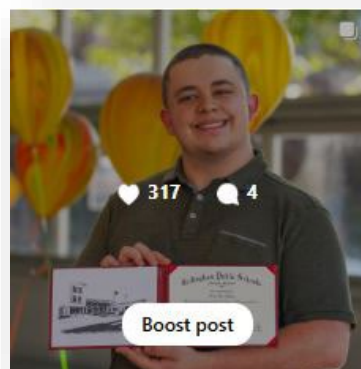
Date	Post	Interactions (reactions, shares comments)	Reach (people reached via their newsfeed)
5/11/24	Northern Lights in Bellingham crowdsourced photos share	244	15,554
6/4/24	Options senior trip on the Zodiac	156	15,549
4/26/24	High school students and state music highlight	108	12,472
2/28/24	“Bellinghome” unified basketball photo recap	153	12,107
10/4/24	BHS tennis 1,000 wins for “Coach Chron”	248	10,930

Instagram: Our Instagram following total increased by 186 followers during this reporting period. We have 6,634 followers.

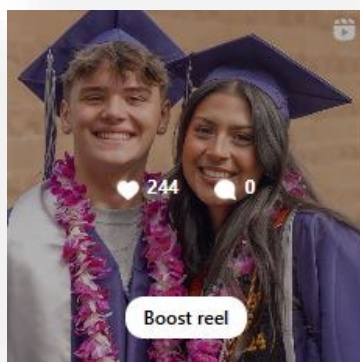
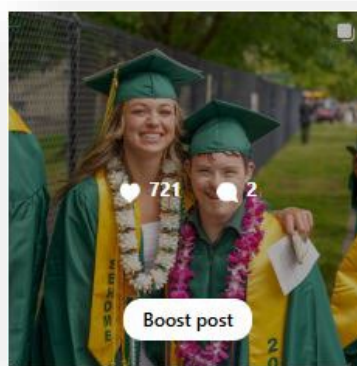
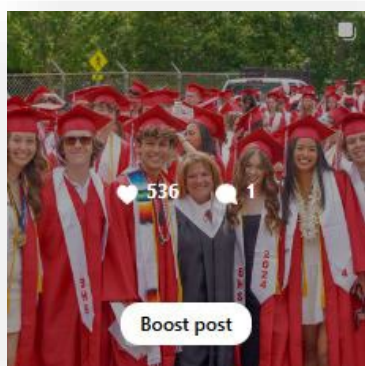
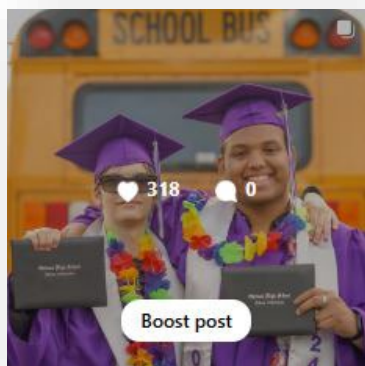
Popular Instagram posts:

The hearts are likes and the bubbles are comments.

Graduation highlights (continued next page)



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Celebrating student events, activities and moments

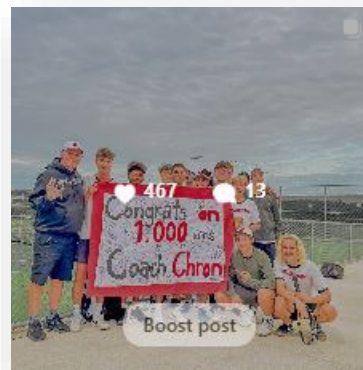
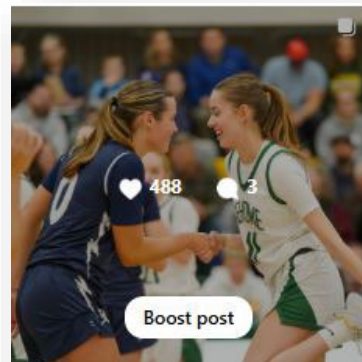
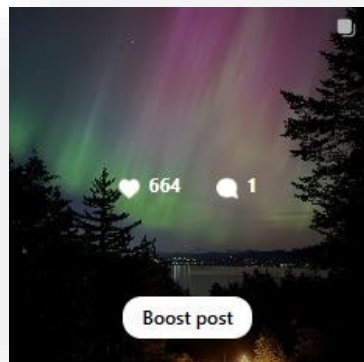
Top left: Northern Lights scenes from Bellingham and the surrounding area

Top right: Photos highlighting a Squallicum at Sehome basketball doubleheader

Middle left: A reel reposted from KPUG 1170 highlighting a special unified basketball moment

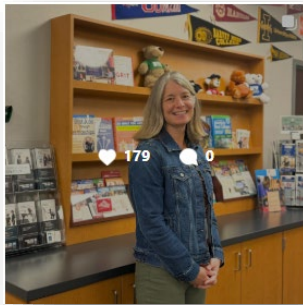
Middle right: Scenes from Bellingham High School tennis coach Steve Chronister's 1,000th all-time win

Bottom: Scenes from around the district during the first day of the 2024-25 school year

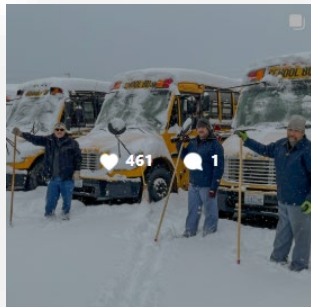


Social media posts highlighting staff: From Dec. 1, 2023 - Nov. 30, 2024, staff members were highlighted regularly in district social media on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn. Here is a sampling of these posts, captions and photos:

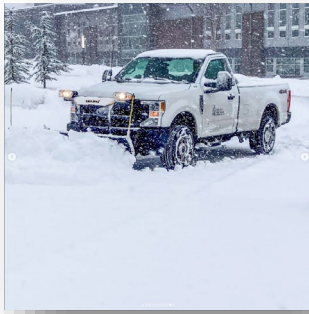
A post on Oct. 8 highlighted the important work of our career centers and their staff, especially in coordinating college and career events like College Fair and Teen Employment Fair.



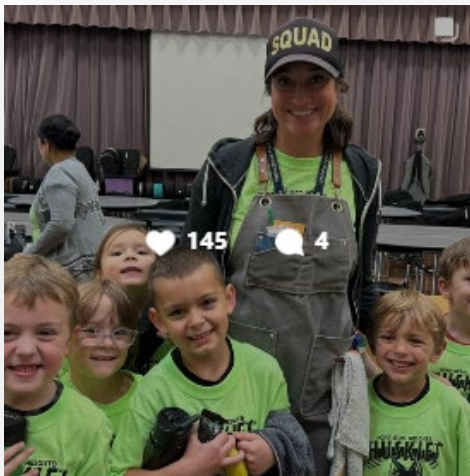
A post on Jan. 19, 2024 highlighted the important work of facilities and educational technology staff during extreme weather events.



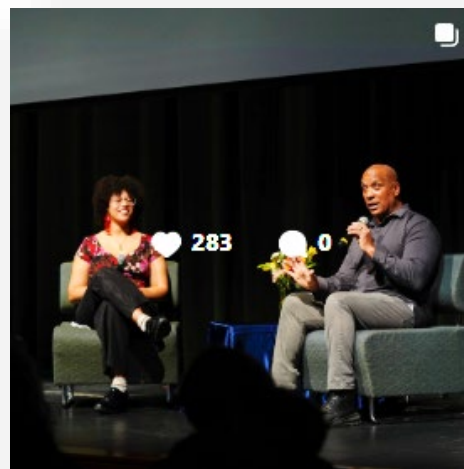
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Individual staff members were also highlighted on social media. In this reporting window, staff spotlights included paraeducator Katie Clark, ELC childcare coordinator Stephanie Schroeder, bus drivers Mark Miller and Chuck Tookey, and teacher/coach Brian Young.

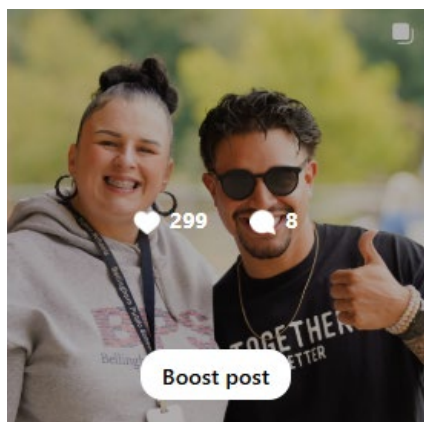


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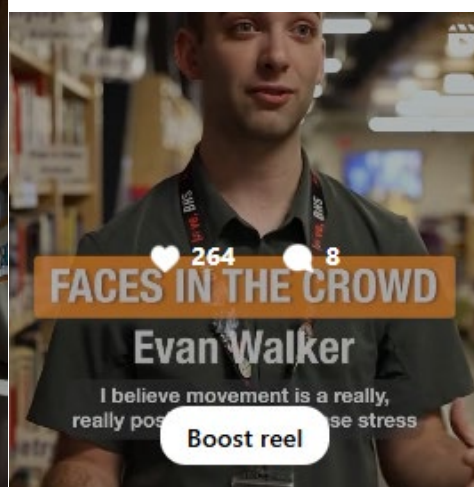
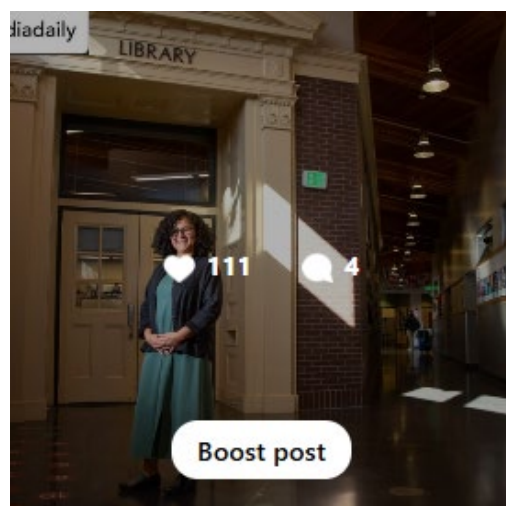


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One social media post in May 2024, in particular, highlighted recent awards and recognition of district staff members: family liaison Jami Pitman, bus driver Josh Triplett, family liaison Kathe Koruga, and teachers Katie Owen and Jen Reidel.



In this reporting period, local media stories about district staff were also amplified on district social media, including these stories by Cascadia Daily News on Birchwood staff member Nelly Reyes de Schonborn in May and BHS staff member Evan Walker (published just outside our reporting period in December):



During this reporting period (July 11- Aug. 9, 2024), we promoted kindergarten enrollment through digital ads on Facebook, Google Search and YouTube (pre-roll).

We learned Facebook and Good Search delivered strong, above-average results.

- Facebook click-through-rates were 3.88%, which is three times higher than the .90% benchmark.
- Google Search click-through-rates finished just above 18%, which is significantly higher than benchmark averages of 3.17%.
- Pre-roll on YouTube delivered strong awareness with over 11,000 total views.

In total:

- Ads served 210,282 impressions across all platforms
- Ads led to 5,353 clicks to the website
- Engagement rates for all platforms were above the benchmark average

While it's challenging to attribute a social media impression or click-through directly to the enrollment of a student, we believe the high number of impressions, clicks and above-average engagement rates helped achieve our campaign goal to increase knowledge and awareness of BPS kindergarten among prospective families in our district.

F) Digital Forms

Qualtrics

Qualtrics continues to be a well-used tool within the Communications team and beyond during the reporting period.

The communications technician specialist provides all initial training and troubleshooting for Qualtrics.

Our uses for Qualtrics are close to endless, and we continue to work to find operating and upkeep capacities to develop and maintain new projects in the system.

We continue to explore opportunities to empower other departments with a “train the trainer” mode, to share capacities and empower continued use of the product.

The largest and most robust annual Qualtrics project continues to be our climate survey. The project has specific audience questions for staff, families and students. All data is connected to a summary dashboard that can be viewed by district and school leadership. During the reporting period, we had 6,086 total responses to climate surveys.

Other examples of heavily used Qualtrics projects used on recurring basis include: districtwide transfer requests, student athletics, activities and clubs interest survey, post-occupancy evaluation surveys for new buildings in our district and Promise Kindergarten applications.

Qualtrics is also supported by Communications and used for many one-time surveys such as vaccine clinic scheduling, advisory committees and budget planning feedback.

Forms used during this reporting period included:

- Family, student and staff climate surveys (6,086 responses)
- Request for Student Attendance Area Transfer (5,591 responses since 2019)
- Bellingham Virtual Learning (BVL) and Lab Registration Application (705 responses)
- Promise K 24-25 school year applications (314 responses)
- High School Credit Requirements Waiver and Alternatives (2,044 responses since 2019)
- Verbal Offer Confirmation for HR job offers (1,716 responses since 2022)
- FERPA Agreement Form (333 responses since 2020)
- Promise Awards scoring form 2024 (178 responses)

G) Digital Signage

External reader boards

The Communications team continues to support the use of external school reader board signs, funded by the 2018 bond.

We now have eight schools with external digital reader boards in our district: Alderwood, Cordata, Parkview, Silver Beach and Sunnyland elementaries, Shuksan middle, and Bellingham and Squalicum high schools. One (Squalicum) was physically installed during the reporting period.

The signs provide a strong public presence to share messages such as school specific events and districtwide calendar reminders. Staff can add any combination of content slides (a single slide or as many as desired) that will rotate and play during sign “on” hours.

The communications technician specialist provides all training and support to school leadership and staff who update the reader boards. The Communications team also provides templates and visual resources to support the content design process.

Initial training includes access and overview of the web-based sign updating software, which controls sign content. During the reporting period, the communications technician specialist provided training refreshers and scheduled plans to train Squalicum staff on its new reader board (installed late November 2024, ready for use early December 2024).

The communication staff also provides content monitoring support of the signs. This includes adding districtwide reminders to signs (ex. early dismissal days) so that school staff can focus efforts on messaging unique to their respective schools. The

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communications team also works to ensure proper function signs are “on” and “off” at appropriate times to abide by city code parameters.



TruDigital internal displays

TruDigital is a digital signage software used by a portion of our schools to share content within school buildings on TV displays. Content shared through the software is typically specific to internal student audiences.

The communications technician specialist supports training and troubleshooting requests for identified school staff tasked with updating their school displays. The Communications team also supports the sharing and sizing of graphics for display, upon request, and can push content remotely to signs.

Across the district, 10 TruDigital display systems were active during the reporting period.

Additional internal displays

The move to the new District Office presented opportunities for additional interior signage, which operates on software systems different from our external and internal signage systems at our schools.

One is the vision board located on the main level of the District Office near the reception welcome area on the wall behind the coffee shop.

The communications technician specialist updates the vision board with a combination of videos (ex. Promise Awards recipients, overview of The Bellingham Promise, Class of 2024), photos (recent event highlights) and graphics (ex. human resources graphics, ParentSquare graphics). The videos run at a very low volume with closed captions for ongoing viewing and the screen is scheduled to go on and off automatically based on a set schedule each day.

Our Communications team also worked with educational technology to design and set up a new system for displaying daily calendar events via a vertical-positioned screen above the reception computer. This screen is intended to be a quick stop check for arriving visitors to know meeting locations during the day. The calendar is updated daily by the reception team.

A digital history wall is located on the upper level of the District Office. During this reporting period, a “then and now” slide deck was created as the building opened to the public for the first time in April 2024. It displays photos of our schools and students from the past and present. Coming in 2025, the history wall will evolve into a new content management system with a touchscreen display with an enhanced scope.

H) Media Coverage and Relations

The Communications team continues our commitment to timely and excellent customer service with traditional and new media outlets in our community. The assistant director of communications is the media liaison and typically responds in one working day to any media request, often more quickly, depending upon the reporter's deadline or other circumstances, and working to arrange interviews with district staff, families and/or students as appropriate.

Communications cultivates positive and responsive working relationships with our local media, the goal of which is a high level of trust and mutual respect. During this reporting period, the executive director and assistant director met in person with editors and reporters from the Bellingham Herald, Cascadia Daily News, and KGMI (Cascade Radio Group) to make intentional personal connections, share district initiatives, and learn more about local media trends and community interest. The assistant director also connects monthly with the education reporter from the Cascadia Daily.

Cultivating a regular schedule of conversations with our media partners builds trust and an ability to proactively work to connect them with stories about district initiatives and programs. As the Cascadia Daily and Bellingham Herald continue to hire and welcome new reporters to our community, often from other parts of the country, we also proactively work to connect with them to help build their understanding of public education in our community.

Communications also provides support and media coaching/orientations to staff members concerned or nervous about being interviewed and works to connect reporters with a wide range of subject matter experts from across the district, both geographically and by level.

Our messages to families and our community serve as de facto press releases and often result in media inquiries; however, the Communications team has also increased our proactive press releases and direct pitches to local outlets. Each local outlet continues to express the wish to expand coverage of education topics and local events and/or how national or state-wide initiatives affect the Bellingham community.

Professional press inquiries continue at a steady pace, in most part due to increased focus on local or localized coverage from our outlets. However, as reported in last year's EL-3, requests from student reporters from our local college publications continue to be minimal, and tend to be written as class assignments, not for publication. It appears collegiate reporters have returned to a more typical practice of reporting on issues and events relevant to their campus community. When received, however, Communications works with collegiate journalists following the same protocols as the professional press, with additional care and attention as they learn their craft.

Media relations by the numbers

- Direct inquiries received in this reporting period: around 100, about the same as the previous reporting period. This represents an average of 2-3 inquiries per week, with some topics/issues bringing multiple inquiries from multiple outlets or requiring multiple follow-ups. Staff spent roughly 225 hours directly devoted to media responses and activities this reporting period.
 - Around 70 inquiries resulted in published stories and/or broadcast coverage
 - Estimated staff time spent on published stories: approx. 170 hours for responding, researching, providing statements, facilitating site visits, and/or participating in interviews.
 - Around 20 inquiries resulted in unpublished stories (e.g., for a collegiate class)
 - Staff time spent on unpublished stories: approx. 40 hours spent responding, researching, providing statements, and/or participating in interviews.
 - The balance of inquiries represented a variety of scenarios, such as a check-in on scanner activity or the validity of a community tip, a story that may have been dropped due to the editorial process at a publication, or a story that had to be postponed due to scheduling conflicts.
 - Staff time spent responding to these inquiries: approx. 20 hours.
- Coverage varied widely. During this reporting period our media reported on a variety of topics and events related to BPS, including:
 - 2024 levy ballot measures, a bear sighting near Squalicum and Northern Heights, hate and bias incidents that intersected with our schools or students, cell phone policies, facilities and sustainability projects at Cordata and Options, the opening of the new District Office and the ELC, student events such as the Ebony Gala at Sehome, the farm-to-school food access program, impacts of existing or potential homeless encampments near Cordata and Shuksan, homeschooling in Whatcom County, criminal activity near Carl Cozier, a profile of one of our ML specialists, school seismic data maintained in Olympia, safety at Shuksan Middle School, and education budget challenges.
- The most reported-on topics were ongoing plans for the Civic Athletic Complex and the rebuild of Carl Cozier, a racially-motivated assault on a Whatcom Middle School student while on a walking field trip in June and an alleged anti-LGBTQ assault on a BHS student in October.
- COVID-19 and its impact on education is no longer a central topic of interest to our local outlets, although some have reported on student mental health, attendance, and other educational topics affected by the pandemic.
- This data does not include reporting on public events such as plays, concerts and prep sports, which are coordinated primarily through our high school coaches and athletics & activities coordinators, with support from our media liaison as needed. Numerous student-athletes, coaches, and fine arts events were covered and the

time for that media activity is not noted here, although our media liaison is available for staff support if requested for coverage of extracurriculars / public events.

Notable media trends or activities:

- Letters to the editor: During this reporting period, we sent two letters to the editors of multiple local outlets on behalf of the Whatcom County Superintendents, the first regarding February levy elections and the second regarding school budgets.
- The Bayhawk Bearer, BHS's student newspaper, reported on the District Office flood and subsequent relocation of DO staff. Communications was honored to participate in this act of student journalism, particularly because Communications was placed at BHS for the duration of the flood relocation and very much appreciated the hospitality at the home of the Bayhawks.
- Cascadia Daily had initiated a practice in fall 2022 for each prep sports season, featuring two student-athletes from each local school in a special edition. However, this practice changed in fall 2023, with a new sports reporter/editor at CDN, and CDN now focuses more on profiling student-athletes throughout the season rather than a preview edition. 2024 was the second annual spring senior/graduation spotlight edition that featured two graduates from each local high school. A print "Senior Spotlight" edition was released and delivered to schools, and each senior profile had a video and social media component as well. High school administrators help to coordinate this coverage with support from our media liaison.
 - Spring sports 2024 – prep sports previews, CDN
 - Senior Spotlight & Graduation 2024

In order of volume of inquiries, the most common media inquiries came from: The Bellingham Herald (21, reduced from last year's more than 30), Cascadia Daily (around 40, increased from the last reporting period), KGMI (5), WWU reporters (4) and the Salish Current (3).

BPS was also covered by Seattle TV stations King 5, KIRO and KOMO, plus local radio station KMRE; The Washington State Standard from Olympia; and additional media outlets such as The Daily Beast, Seattle Gay News, and The Independent.

2a ii) School board meetings and materials

During the reporting period, the school board met in-person for its meetings at Options High School, then starting in April 2024, at the new District Office on Barkley Boulevard. Our board meeting materials are on the website and available before each meeting. Printed materials are available for those attending in-person.

During this reporting period, per a new state law, we began recording audio from each board meeting. Recordings are typically available by request the day after the meeting.

2b) communicate short-term and long-term district and school strategic plans describing initiatives and programs to achieve board ends policies

We communicate and share short-term and long-term district and school strategic plans, initiatives and programs to achieve board ends policies, which are part of The Bellingham Promise, in several ways.

Here are some examples:

- Linkages, student roundtables and school visits: The school board regularly shares that they enjoy in-person events such as school visits, linkages and student roundtables. These visits allow board members and executive team the chance to hear firsthand from students and staff about experiences, reflections and special programs. Photos and reflections from these visits are shared on social media.
- During this reporting period, the board visited several schools, including Northern Heights, Kulshan, Lowell, Squalicum, Alderwood, Wade King and Happy Valley.
- The board also hosted student roundtables at Bellingham High regarding cell phones in school and at Whatcom Middle School with students who participate in the GSA club. The board hosted community linkages with staff, students, parents and community partners connected to our Career and Technical program and staff and parents of the Bellingham Family Partnership.
- Promise website: Our strategic plan, The Bellingham Promise, is referenced in many of our communications. During this reporting period, we have published 43 Promise stories. We continue to share these stories to staff and families via email regularly and post them on social media. In fall 2024, the Communications team began using a new approach to writing Promise stories, inspired by a session attended at the NSPRA conference in July 2024. The “becoming a backpack journalist” session included tips on how to 1) create more content, 2) create better content, and 3) work more efficiently (quickly). The presenter shared that given short attention spans (thank you, social media), content that is short and sweet is more likely to be read vs. longform stories.
- Superintendent reports at board meetings: At the beginning of each board meeting, the superintendent shares a slideshow of a variety of photos, events, celebrations, initiatives and updates from across our district.
- Priorities for Progress, which is organized by The Bellingham Promise’s key strategies. This annual publication includes priorities under each strategy to support the board ends.
- Committees and advisory groups: much of the work accomplished in Bellingham Public Schools is the result of committees and task forces. Membership consists of representatives from stakeholder groups. All do specific work at the direction of the superintendent. Please see section 2d) ii (below) for a comprehensive list.

2c) provide the public, parents and students relevant information on student progress toward achieving board ends policies

With continued support from our community for our tech levy, our district provides professional development to staff to support understanding and use of technology tools. Staff use a variety of communications tools and channels with families to report on student progress, including in-person strategies (in-person meetings and teacher/parent conferences) and web tools (Skyward, Zoom, SeeSaw, email, social media and ParentSquare) for family and student engagement.

Our staff consistently engage with families about student progress, including progress reports, report cards, graduation requirements and state assessments. As mentioned earlier, June 2024 was the first time we were able to deliver report cards to families and guardians through the secure document feature of ParentSquare. We will continue to deliver student progress reports and report cards via ParentSquare.

Our family engagement team plays a significant role in connecting families with our schools and staff not only regarding student progress but also sharing resources, news, important dates and emergency notification.

The Department of Communications and Community Relations includes and highlights the 17 outcomes in The Bellingham Promise in much of what it communicates to staff, families and our community, including the Promise site, our storytelling tool, and general communications (press releases) from the superintendent, the Department of Teaching and Learning and our schools.

We continue to use The Bellingham Promise website and social media to share stories about The Bellingham Promise in action in our schools and community.

Collectively, our Promise web pages had 20,320 pageviews during the reporting period.

Below are the top five most viewed Promise stories for this reporting period:

1. Commemorating Treaty Day through collaboration, listening and learning (2,227 pageviews)
2. What makes Options High School different? (880 pageviews)
3. Understanding work-based and worksite learning opportunities for high schoolers (787 pageviews)
4. Six BPS student-athletes recognized with WIAA sportsmanship awards (721 pageview)
5. Latinos in Action class wins Gold Award (457 pageviews)

Also from EL-3:

2d) provide an affirmative (or negative) statement that the following actions have been taken:

- i. a process is in place to address student, parent, and stakeholder concerns in a timely manner;**

Affirmative. The process is outlined in our Family Handbook, and there are many other avenues for stakeholders to share concerns, including our general inquiry form on our website, emails directly to the superintendent, visits or calls to the District Office or schools, and even on social media.

Members of the executive team, principals and other leaders and staff communicate and meet with parents and others who have concerns. Parents or community members who email or call the District Office with concerns or questions typically receive a phone call, email or an offer to meet with an executive team member or staff member, often within a few hours after they sent their question or concern. Staff in our schools follow a similar protocol. Our staff do not shy away from resolving conflict and strive to model the tenets of The Bellingham Promise to act as respectful and compassionate humans.

During this reporting period, 24 audience members spoke during the public comment period of the board meeting. 23 comments were submitted to the Listening Post. Listening Post submissions contain complaints, concerns and/or general comments for the board.

- ii. the district engages with appropriate community advisory groups on important questions.**

Affirmative. The Department of Communications and Community Relations helps develop the committee processes with district and school leaders, then publicizes the call for applicants, attends the group's meetings and assists with strategic communications for internal and external audiences.

The following groups were active during this reporting period:

Facilities

- Carl Cozier Elementary Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee
- Roosevelt Elementary Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee
- Community Transitions Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee
- Kulshan Middle School Field Ad Hoc Committee

Parent Advisory Committees

- Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Teaching and Learning

- CTE General Advisory Council

Monitoring Report for EL-3

- Inclusionary Instruction Strategies Standing Committee (revamped as MTSS Standing Committee in fall 2024)
- Instructional Materials Committee
- Professional Development Study Joint Committee with BEA
- Student Conduct Join Committee with BEA
- Title VI Native American Family Committee

Superintendent

- Student Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Other

- Occupational Health & Safety Committee
- Promise Awards Advisory Group
- Sustainability Standing Committee

Statement of Compliance: The superintendent is in compliance with EL-3.