



MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Directors

From: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent

Date: February 16, 2023

Subject: **Monitoring Report for EL-4, Staff Treatment, Compensation and Evaluation**

I certify that the following is accurate as of February 16, 2023. The reporting period is from February 16, 2022 through February 16, 2023.

Policy type: Executive Limitation (EL)

Policy: [EL-4 Staff Treatment, Compensation and Evaluation](#)

“The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that staff is treated with respect and dignity and that the district’s public image or credibility does not fall into disrespect or ill repute due to imprudent employment decisions.”

Adopted: September 10, 2009

Revised: April 18, 2013, June 26, 2014, March 9, 2017, April 17, 2019

Interpretation of items: None in question

Background information: This report is about Executive Limitation 4 – Staff Treatment, Compensation, and Evaluation (EL-4). It was created in April 2013 by combining three prior Els: Staff Treatment EL-4, Staff Compensation EL-5, and Staff Evaluation EL-6. The board adopted the revised/combined edition of this EL in April 2013.

*Some of the information in this report has not changed from previous reports but provides needed context for each area. **Bolded words** or phrases within the text of this report have been used to signal new initiatives, strategies and work. EL-4 has five major areas and a response to each of them follows.*

1. The superintendent shall not fail to take all reasonable and prudent actions with respect to the hiring and continued employment of district employees that are typical for similar and highly effective school districts.

Each year the district reviews hiring practices, processes and timelines and makes necessary adjustments to recruit the most qualified candidates for each position. Although some requirements for different positions vary, we require an application form, letter of application, reference letters, confidential reference forms, disclosures, applicable licenses/certificates and a written response to “The Bellingham Promise”. Applicants apply and submit their application materials through our web-based application system (HRM+). Each year, the human resources staff work with and train administrators and supervisors on sound and legal hiring practices, especially our new administrators to the district.

Once a position has been posted/advertised, principals or program administrators screen files electronically to determine candidates most qualified for the position. Candidates then go through various processes such as interview(s), testing, reference checks and certification checks prior to recommendation for hire. The district also conducts background checks, in accordance with law, including fingerprint and State Patrol/FBI checks.

We are continuing our outreach through job fairs and advertising on websites such as Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), Washington School Personnel Association (WSPA), Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS), National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), Diversitywashington.com, Washington Association of School Business Officials (WSBO), Government Finance Officers Association, NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement, The National Association of Educational Procurement (NAEP), Washington State Paralegal Association (WSPA), LinkedIn, The Bellingham Herald, Craigslist, Indeed, WorkSource and other online sites as applicable. We continue to partner with universities for student teaching to attract the highest quality staff and increase the diversity of candidates.

We continued to return to more pre-pandemic hiring practices in the 2022-23 school year. Nearly all our hiring processes were back to in-person.

Due to the uncertainty of student enrollment projections stemming from the drop in enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic, our timelines for hiring were delayed from pre-pandemic years. When the district started our hiring process for the 2022-23 school year, we continued the practice of using “pool” openings in most areas. This practice allows the district to post, interview and even offer positions prior to knowing many of the retirements, resignations and

leaves of our current employees. Although there is some risk of over hiring, we have successfully implemented this strategy for several years and have placed all pool hirings into open positions. This strategy proved to be particularly helpful when hiring for special education teaching positions. We were able to hire candidates early and place them into positions as they opened. **Our hiring process in the spring and summer of 2022 returned to in-person.** While video conferencing tools were still utilized at times for efficiency, most of our interviews and onboarding occurred in-person. Principal/administrative and human resources coordination was mostly conducted in-person.



We have returned to in-person job and recruiting fairs. In March 2022, our district participated in the statewide job fair held in the Tacoma Dome. We were able to meet and recruit potential certificated applicants. **Also in March, to attract more racially diverse candidates, we held a Black Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) job fair at Bellingham High School.** The event was planned and implemented by a team from human resources, our teaching and learning department, communications and community partners. The highly successful event attracted over 100 attendees and applicants for a wide variety of positions in our district. We were able to interview and hire applicants who attended for teaching, custodial, transportation, food service and school administration positions. In August, we were invited to attend a job fair held at the Sikh Temple in Lynden. We attended and appreciated the opportunity to broaden our recruiting efforts and look forward to continuing our partnership in the future. Below are photos from the Bellingham BIPOC job fair.



Looking at current budget forecasts, we anticipate limited job openings this spring. We are posting a select few specialized positions that have been traditionally difficult to fill and retain. With the likelihood of staff reductions, we are not participating in statewide job fairs. Our focus is reprioritizing budget resources and retaining current staff members.

Substitutes

During the 2021-2022 school year, the need for certificated and classified substitutes was significantly higher than pre-pandemic rates. Schools opened with a fully in-person option in the fall of 2021 and the required protocols around isolation and social distancing created a high need for daily substitute support. Additionally, there was a continued use of substitutes in the classroom to help compensate for a significant number of “high risk” staff who could not or chose not to return to in-person instruction and took a leave of absence. See chart below for comparison.

Substitute Fill Rate					
August 28, 2019 – January 31, 2020 Pre-Pandemic					
Total Absences/Vacancies	Absences Needing a Substitute	Absences Not Needing a Substitute	Unfilled	Filled	Percent of Absences Filled
13,394	11,288	2,106	171	11,117	98.49%

Substitute Fill Rate					
September 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022					
Total Absences/Vacancies	Absences Needing a Substitute	Absences Not Needing a Substitute	Unfilled	Filled	Percent of Absences Filled
17,601	14,743	2,858	1,382	13,361	90.63%

**Vacancies indicate a request for a substitute to provide additional support in a particular building or department*

The 2022-2023 school year began with the district intentionally implementing strategies to reduce the number of unfilled positions each day. Past practice has included staffing the Special Education paraeducator needs with substitutes at the beginning of the year. This year,

paraeducators were hired in August, thus reducing the significant need for paraeducator substitutes. The district also implemented a systematic approach to screening, interviewing, hiring and onboarding new substitutes, which has increased the pool of available substitutes. As a point of comparison, the month of January is particularly challenging, with a high number of staff illness and need for substitutes. There has been a significant increase in the district's ability to fill positions and provide necessary substitute coverage to buildings and departments in 2023 as compared to 2022. See chart below for a visual illustration.

Substitute Fill Rate					
January 1, 2022 – January 31, 2022					
Total Absences/Vacancies	Absences Needing a Substitute	Absences Not Needing a Substitute	Unfilled	Filled	Percent of Absences Filled
3,488	2,752	736	411	2,341	85.07%

Substitute Fill Rate					
January 1, 2023 – January 31, 2023					
Total Absences/Vacancies	Absences Needing a Substitute	Absences Not Needing a Substitute	Unfilled	Filled	Percent of Absences Filled
2,963	2,405	558	84	2,321	96.51%

**Vacancies indicate a request for a substitute to provide additional support in a particular building or department*

Overall, the district has maintained a substitute fill rate of 80% to 90% this school year.

There are still significant challenges to fill vacancies and a continued need for more substitutes. These challenges are the result of workforce shortages felt throughout the county and state. The high absence rate is compounded by a surge in respiratory illnesses. Unfilled positions due to absences have been experienced in all areas, including bus drivers, food service, custodial, paraeducators and teachers. To mitigate the impacts of unfilled absences, the district has employed the following strategies:

- Shifting staff assignments within the building to cover classroom assignments. Instructional coaches and other support certificated employees who work in the schools are filling in when needed as classroom teachers and paraeducators.

- Adjusting districtwide assignments to provide building and classroom support.
- Issuing emergency substitute certificates to paraeducators and student teacher interns.
- Implementation of a process to hire emergency certificated substitutes. This is open to applicants with a bachelor's degree but not necessarily a teaching degree.
- Launch of a social media campaign to recruit more applicants for all substitute positions. This campaign included digital media blasts, signage in schools and hard-copy flyers posted at key locations in the community (see below).
- Actively engaging families through school-based newsletters to encourage family members to apply to substitute pools.
- Focus on timely and consistent responses for all applicants. This included intentional cross-training of human resources staff so that multiple staff members are now able to answer and support the onboarding of applicants more efficiently.

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Current Positions Include

- Paraeducators
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Administrative Assistants
- Custodians
- Substitutes

bellingshamschools.org/jobs



Employee Recognition

Recognition is an important aspect of hiring and retaining qualified staff. The Department of Communications and Community Relations helps manage staff recognition by providing an avenue for staff to celebrate each other; developing criteria and a process for selection of districtwide staff and community partners in our annual awards; planning and implementing events; and offering a variety of ways to recognize staff and others.

Here are some examples of this work during this reporting period:

- 1) **Good Apples:** Three times per school year, communications staff asks employees for submissions to recognize staff accomplishments, shine a spotlight on the work of a colleague, and extend special thanks and appreciation in a positive way. We collect and edit submissions and produce an interactive film, as well as a PDF version. These are generally shared in a message of gratitude from the superintendent. In this reporting period, Good Apples recognition was timed with Valentine's Day 2022 in [February](#), Staff Appreciation Week 2022 in [May](#), and American Education Week 2022 in [November](#).



Above: image of how Good Apples is shared. Below: sample of a good apple submission.

Sehome High School educational technology coach **Kim Kirk** puts her best efforts into all that she does. She supports staff through a good conversation, brainstorming a lesson, discovering solutions to technology use and being there for whatever need might arise. She demonstrates excellence in all that she does. I personally am thankful for her taking on assessment needs this Spring for the building. Thank you for all that you do!

~ Mike Couto

- 2) **Promise awards:** We are committed to recognizing the special achievements and outstanding contributions of staff, volunteers and community partners. The annual [Promise Awards](#) provide an opportunity to highlight the exceptional work of select honorees who make a significant difference in our schools and community. These award recipients represent our school system and help increase awareness of the important contributions of our staff. The [2022 Promise Awards](#) included a return to in-person surprises after a two year hiatus due to the pandemic. All Promise award recipients received engraved trophies. Additional photos from the surprise visits are found [here](#). A video of the [2022 Promise Awards](#) was shared in the late spring.



Above: staff recipients named in the 2022 Promise Awards program; not pictured volunteer and community partner awards.

The post about the Promise Awards was shared on social media and received 495 likes on Instagram and 78 likes on Facebook.

- 3) **Retirements:** The Department of Communications and Community Relations annually hosts a semi-formal dinner to honor retirees in the district. Spring 2022 marked the first time the event was held in person since 2019. More than 50 invitations were sent out in April and 30 retirees chose to attend the dinner at the Hotel Bellwether on June 2, 2022. To show appreciation for their service, every retiree who chose to attend the dinner received a read-aloud tribute during the program, a sit-down dinner, and an engraved vase. The retirement dinner and tribute program are supported by the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation. Full album of [retirement dinner photos on Flickr](#).



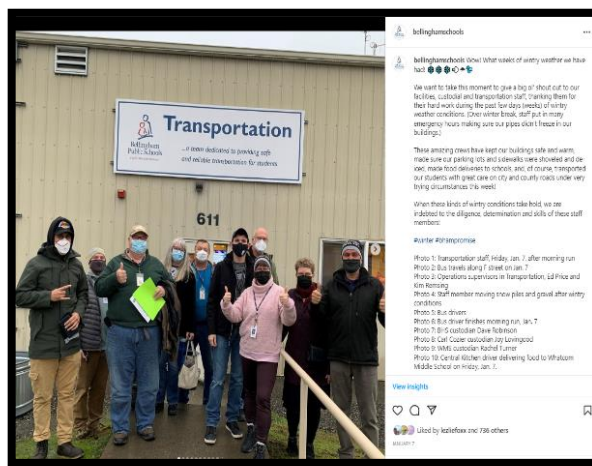
- 4) **Staff Kick Off:** For the first time since pre-COVID, the All Staff Kick Off was held in person. The kick off was held on Aug. 31, 2022 at Civic Stadium for the first time. Emceed by PE teacher Melanie Flink and counselor Aramis Johnson, with special performances by high school dance teams and choral groups, the event brings together all staff the day before students return as a fun and inspirational way to start the school year. The outdoor venue was selected as a way to have staff stay healthy and safe.



The social media presence for our staff kick off event garnered nearly 500 likes on Instagram and 176 likes on Facebook.

- 5) **Social media posts highlighting staff:** Between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2022, staff members were highlighted regularly in district social media on Facebook and Instagram and sometimes on Twitter and LinkedIn. Here is a sample of these captions and photos:

Jan. 7, 2022 social media caption and photos: This was a shout out to our facilities, custodial and transportation staff after a very difficult week of wintry conditions. Post garnered 737 likes on Instagram and 243 likes on Facebook.



Feb. 11, 2022 social media caption and photos: During the Omicron surge in January, front office staff at schools worked hard to keep schools open and safe. A post on Instagram and Facebook highlighted them. Post garnered 530 likes on Instagram and 107 likes on Facebook.



Nov. 4, 2022 caption and photos: The Nov. 4 teacher workday at Squalicum was comprised of a staff learning exhibition. The post garnered 463 likes on Instagram and 73 likes on Facebook.



6) Promise stories with staff focus (published online and often included in InsideSchools community newsletter in print).

Melanie Flink (Published in Winter 2022 Inside Schools)

<https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/11/09/inspired-and-inspiring-happy-valley-educator-recognized-with-state-pe-award/>

Jenny Styer (Published in Winter 2022 Inside Schools)

<https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/10/27/a-class-for-someone-like-me-sehome-computer-science-teacher-awarded-national-inclusion-fellowship/>

Traffic Safety Program (Published in Spring 2022 Inside Schools)

<https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/03/17/traffic-safety-classes-popular-and-appreciated/>

Shuksan's James Hayes honored as District One Coach of the Year

<https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/05/05/shuksans-james-hayes-honored-as-district-one-coach-of-the-year/>

High School and Beyond story (Published in Winter 2022 Inside Schools)

<https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/01/25/high-schools-unite-for-post-high-school-planning-lessons/>

Katie Owen story (Blurb and photo and QR link published in Fall 2022 InsideSchools)

<https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/09/22/teacher-katie-owen-goes-to-world-track-meet/>

Jen Reidel story (Blurb and photo and QR link published in Fall 2022 InsideSchools)

Staff model core belief that “learning is lifelong” (Published in Fall 2022 InsideSchools)

[\(https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/11/23/bps-staff-model-core-belief-that-learning-is-lifelong/](https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/11/23/bps-staff-model-core-belief-that-learning-is-lifelong/)

BHS World Languages Department celebrate World Cup (Published online, shared on social media) <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2022/11/29/bhs-world-languages-celebrates-2022-world-cup-games/>

Volunteers

With the start of the 2022 new year, the COVID-19 vaccination mandate remained in place for school staff and volunteers. While religious and medical exemptions were an option for parents and guardians of Bellingham Public Schools students, the volunteer database had approximately 2,100 approved volunteers at the end of the 2021-22 school year, which was less than half of pre-COVID volunteer numbers. Schools had various stages of readiness for additional people in their buildings and most volunteers worked outside for recess duty, athletic events or chaperoned outdoor field trips. The volunteer program continues to support human resources in recruiting necessary support including paraeducators, food service and transportation staff through newsletters and social media announcements.

Because of the success of the first Block Party/school readiness event in 2021, a planning team began in March 2022 for the second event. We were able to increase the budget using both Title I /family engagement funds as well as foundation funds procured by our district grant writer. Based on additional funding and parent and staff feedback from the inaugural event, we were able to provide the following upgrades and expansions to the second event:

- An additional food truck (three total);
- Every BPS school hosted a table as well as many departments including human resources, food services, health and wellness, and family engagement;
- Fifteen high school students served as translators for families;
- Free athletic gear for middle and high school students;
- A playfield which included multiple bubble stations, corn hole and an assortment of soccer, football and tennis balls. Popsicles were provided at this ‘play station’ and it was a big hit with a wide range of students participating; and

- Lunch provided separately in the teacher's lounge to over 100 volunteers and community partners as well as over 60 Bellingham Public Schools staff.

Approximately 2,300 students and families were served during this school readiness event with free haircuts, sports physicals, vaccinations and backpacks, books and athletic gear. Twenty-five community partners provided these resources.



Above: Back-to-School Family Block Party, Aug. 20, 2022 at Bellingham High School

While the COVID-19 vaccine mandate was still in place at the start of the 2022-23 school year, it ended on October 31, 2022. This brought a surge of new volunteers back to school where the current number of approved volunteers is over 4,000. Volunteers have returned to more traditional pre-pandemic roles including classroom support at the primary level and AVID and academic tutors and athletic coaches support at the secondary level.

The volunteer coordinator continues to support over 25 community partners and meets quarterly to discuss district updates, share resources and ideas on how to support our students and families. This winter the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will provide community partners with a three-hour training which will help build a consistent framework of student advocacy and support across the district. Additional trainings will be scheduled based on participant feedback.

2. The superintendent shall not fail to:

a. Ensure all staff are qualified and effective.

Selection processes described previously in this report help ensure that the district continues to hire able and effective staff. On-going training, professional development, supervision, and evaluation assure that staff continue to grow professionally, utilize research-based best practices, and develop powerful teaching and learning strategies. The Department of Teaching and Learning, along with building leaders, continuously plan and develop professional learning opportunities for staff. Professional learning is essential for delivering on The Bellingham Promise and involves efforts across the whole district, within each school, and within the daily practices of each of our 1600+ professionals.

Professional learning across these three levels, district, school and individual, takes time and intentionality. Our professional learning calendar carves out time for districtwide work, often led by Department of Teaching and Learning leaders, as well as for building-based work where principals and school leadership teams direct specific, school-based learning. In addition, the calendar creates time and space for teachers to plan and collaborate with each other, within departments, or across whole grade levels.

Districtwide efforts this year continue to emphasize learning more effective means of inclusion of all students. Professional development teams, including teacher leaders, administrators, and others key in professional learning at the school level, gathered in retreat on August 10-11, 2022 to develop school-based plans that are used to guide professional learning at each site. Guided by the Department of Teaching and Learning, teams developed school improvement professional development plans focused on the common area of inclusion, all in support of effective teaching and learning. The August retreat featured video-based messages from Shelley Moore, a British Columbia-based professor and consultant on inclusive education, and gave opportunities for all school teams to hear from three different schools within our district (Sehome, Shuksan, Columbia) who shared their ongoing work focused on inclusive practices. The plans that schools developed during this August retreat form the backbone for learning at each school over the course of the year.

Some additional, specific examples of cross-district learning this year include:

- Ongoing efforts to train around implementation of the newly adopted early literacy materials in grades K-3.
- Beginning implementation training for new comprehensive sexual health education curriculum from Washington State.
- Examination of middle level ELA curriculum and planning effort to work on greater continuity of instructional practices and materials within each MS grade.
- Continued exploration and planning for dual language instruction. This work is an outgrowth of more than a decade-long push to improve learning outcomes for multi-lingual learners through professional learning strategies designed specifically to support

the learning of that population of students. The broad-based committee established last year has moved into sub-committee-based work teams, and is in the midst of delivering a plan for consideration that will include timelines, staffing implications, structural components of the change (which school(s), which grade levels, nature of the instructional approach, etc.) The district sponsored a large group of staff and community members' attendance at the LaCosecha conference in New Mexico in the fall of 2022, with the intention of continuing to invest in system learning focused on dual language instruction.

- Engagement with early learning partners in the community, including Maureen Cleary Hodge who is leading the WA Pyramid Grant for transitional K through our ESD 189, and working with our early learning team to help support the inclusion of four-year olds from the developmental preschool setting into our expanded Promise K program.
- Efforts to improve the integration of science content and curriculum into the elementary teachers' toolkit are underway as well. Director Bill Palmer has been leading an effort, engaged with our local ESD and partners at WWU, to incorporate new resources from OpenSciEd into elementary schools. These resources will be built around the Next Gen Science Standards (NGSS) and the OpenSciEd instructional model. This feeds teacher's learning in that it is among the first curricula available that lines up with the IB PYP inquiry framework and has intentional integrations with literacy and social studies. Elementary instructional coaches are at work reviewing pilot lessons and developing professional learning for teachers.

Building-based professional learning connects to the strategic areas of work in The Bellingham Promise. Some specific examples of building-based work in schools this year include:

- Various book study efforts focused on equity, diversity and inclusion. Many schools built a focus on Universal Design for Learning into their professional learning plan for the year, which links directly to the overall focus for the district leadership team for this year (see below).
- Efforts to train around units of inquiry in IB elementary schools. Nine of fourteen elementary schools are now either certified or on the path toward IB certification.
- Efforts to train and refresh staff learning on strategies for supporting positive student behaviors and dealing with student misconduct.
- Efforts to learn about how instructional strategies are impacting specific student learning outcomes through the MTSS process, including the use of student-growth collaborative conferences within grade level teacher teams in the elementary schools.

Leadership team training and development focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) continues. On August 9, 2022, the annual leadership retreat kicked off the year of leadership learning with a focus on leading for equity, learning about inclusion, and moving toward coherence, and the team has once again focused on a common book read that has been

revisited in sessions throughout the fall and into the winter. This year's chosen book is *Equity by Design: Delivering on the Power and Promise of Universal Design for Learning* by Katie Novak and Mirko Chardin, two experts in the use of instructional strategies that ensure engagement of all learners through universal design, and whose work focuses globally on strategies for leading for equity. A leadership team made up of district leaders and a principal representative from each level (elementary school, middle school and high school) co-planned and implemented a series of learning opportunities connecting the book read to our practices in EDI. These sessions continue during regular leadership team meetings throughout the 2022-23 school year.

The Teacher Principal Evaluation Process (TPEP) continued with a focus on inquiry cycles of continuous improvement around teacher established goals. Our focus on implementing the TPEP process as an aspect of professional learning continued this year. School administrators once again led their staff through reflection and goal setting around the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (5D). District trainers ensure that our school administrators' training is current and provide continuous opportunities for professional development on the use of the 5D Tools in the TPEP process. Teachers established areas of focus, in many cases aligned to the schoolwide professional development focus and set student growth goals to work toward. Dialogue throughout the school year of the administrator and certificated staff member around these goals supported refinements to teaching and learning in a continuous improvement process.

Paraeducator Training and Professional Development

As reported previously, the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) requires all Bellingham Public Schools paraeducators and substitute paraeducators to meet minimum employee requirements and provide training on the Fundamental Course of Study. The human resources department monitors and ensures that all employed paraeducators required the ESSA standards are met. Those minimum standards are:

- Be at least eighteen years of age and hold a high school diploma or its equivalent.

In addition, a paraeducator must meet **one** of the following:

- Have received a qualifying score on the Education Testing Service (ETS) paraeducator assessment. The ETS ParaPro test assesses knowledge and skills in reading, writing, math, and assisting classroom instruction. Test takers have two and a half hours to finish the assessment, and they must meet or exceed Washington's qualifying score of 461.
- Hold an associate degree or higher from an accredited college or university.
- Have earned 72 quarter credits or 48 semester credits at the 100 level or higher at an accredited college or university.

The Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB) also requires the completion of the Fundamental Course of Study (FCS) Program for all K-12 instructional paraeducators. Our district offers training for non-instructional paraeducators who provide student supervision or preschool paraeducators also. **All experienced K-12 instructional paraeducators (hired prior to 2019) have already completed 14 hours of the FCS during each of the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.**

The training includes professional development in the following areas:

- Introduction to cultural identity and diversity
- Methods of educational and instructional support
- Technology basics
- Using and collecting data
- District orientation of rules & responsibilities
- Equity
- Behavior management strategies including de-escalation techniques
- Child and adolescent development
- Emergency and health safety
- Positive and safe learning environment
- Communication basics
- Communication challenges

This course work in some cases can be completed during the workday such as an early release day or staff can be paid additional time through a professional development fund which was established in partnership with our BASE leadership. The district has a grant through PESB that provides funding toward 14 hours of paraeducator training toward completion of FCS units.

New this year for K-12 instructional paraeducators who have completed all 28 FCS hours are to complete a minimum of 14 hours toward the General Paraeducator Certificate (GPC). A total of 70 hours are required to earn the GPC and some of our paraeducators have finished all 70 hours. Coursework that provides training toward paraeducator professional growth and awards clock hours or credits may be used toward the GPC. Many of the paraeducators are choosing to participate in training offered through ProDev and others are earning hours through university coursework.

The district has developed a [webpage](#) regarding all the necessary information regarding the paraeducator certification program. Our webpage also links to the Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board for additional information.

The district and BASE are collaboratively working together to recognize the diversity of languages expressed in our school community. Schools and departments value the ability staff may have to provide bilingual support that reflect the needs of the students and families that they serve. In such cases where a language assistance need has been identified at a school site, a BASE employee may apply for recognition for the bilingual skills they use to support student and family needs. If an application is approved, the BASE member will register for an assessment of their skills. Once they successfully pass the skills assessment, each individual will be eligible for an increased per hour wage premium for all hours worked for the school year. This year, we have had 16 paraeducators and office staff who have been approved and four additional staff will be assessed in April. We hope this will further increase the district's recruitment of bilingual staff.

Beginning Educator Support

2022-23 is our eighth year as a Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grant-funded district. A requirement of the BEST grant is that a representative stakeholder team guide the work, using the [State Standards for Beginning Educator Induction](#) which includes hiring, orientation, mentoring and professional learning standards. Our current stakeholder team includes building administrators, mentors, teachers within their first three years of teaching, BEA leadership, teaching and learning administrators, a human resources administrator and a WWU education department professor to help us focus on our goal of streamlining the pathway from undergraduate student to professional. The team meets at least three times a year to assess our implementation in each of the BEST standards, set goals and monitor progress. Members of the stakeholder team participate in ongoing professional learning around best practices in supporting beginning educators such as the state BEST convening conference (in March) and monthly Zoom-based Induction Leader roundtables sponsored by OSPI BEST staff. The benefit of these meetings being on Zoom is that we are learning with and from leaders from across the state as opposed to pre-pandemic in person, regional meetings. The Induction Leaders meetings assist us in refining our induction practices that lead to more equitable outcomes such as hiring and supporting staff of color.

The stakeholder team continues to study the [State Standards for Beginning Educator Induction](#) as well as use the feedback from new teachers to set focused and specific goals for action.

Current goals include:

- Curriculum support for late hires, including sub released make-up days and optional Thursday afternoon sessions.
- Development of ESA mentors through Mentoring Academy with OSPI.
- Differentiated support for one school with seven classroom teachers in their first 2 years. Providing one-hour of release time/week with their mentor for co-planning and follow-up implementation support in the classroom.

- Provide differentiated and additional mentoring support for beginning teachers in challenging schools and in high-needs areas (e.g., Special Education, English language development).
- Analyze district's educator workforce to inform and improve decisions re: recruitment.
- Partner with building administrators to build collective sense of responsibility.
- Continue developing intentional partnership with WWU to increase the effectiveness of our student-teacher placements, which has a significant impact on the effectiveness of beginning educators.
- Building supports for our beginning educators of color through affinity groups, recruiting mentors and building connects of color.

Additional funding for staff who are Educational Staff Associates (ESA). Our stakeholder team has expanded to include the focus of mentoring of ESA staff including psychologist, school behavior analyst, school counselor, school nurse, school occupational therapist, school orientation and mobility specialist, school physical therapist, school social worker, and/or school speech language pathologist/audiologist. BEST ESA funds also support novice library media specialists. Our stakeholder team includes our mental health coordinator to reflect the expansion of the staff supported through this grant. We have always included ESA staff in our orientation, but the funding now provides highly trained mentors for these specialized roles and will include more ongoing support for these important specialists that is like what we have developed over the last eight years for classroom teachers. ESA grant funding is available this year but may not continue beyond 2022-23 due to looming state budget concerns.

Using a blend of BEST grant and Title IIA funding, we have a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) leading the mentoring of new teachers, alongside other duties. Per grant assurances, the TOSA is currently mentoring seven novice teachers. The TOSA also coordinates the assignment of the additional mentors needed to support our novices. She also provides ongoing professional development for our other mentors and communicates with district and building administrators to coordinate support for our novice educators. All new teachers receive support from mentors that include classroom setup, co-planning, regular classroom observations with feedback, learning focused conversations and guided observations in veteran teachers' classrooms. In addition to our TOSA mentor, each school site has a "Building Connect" who supports novice educators with specific, site-based needs.

In addition to mentoring, we support our novices by providing high quality learning sessions designed especially for them through the monthly **Beginning Educator Cohort** facilitated by our TOSA. We focus on timely topics such as classroom environment and culture, family engagement, self-care, meeting the needs of diverse learners and integrating best practices in technology.

The BEST grant has allowed us to build a comprehensive system for new teacher induction that includes ongoing reflection, evaluation, and improvement. **We are hopeful to be able to apply and qualify for BEST grant funding for the 2023-24 school year.**

	Fall 2017-18	Fall 2018-19	Fall 2019-20	Fall 2020-21	Fall 2021-22	Fall 2022-23
Elementary	7	14	9	11	17	26
Middle	11	8	3	8	9	4
High	9	7	7	4	5	7
Total	27	29	19	23	33	37

*Since publication in October, our novice totals have increased from 37 to 42.

b. Provide appropriate training for all employee classifications required by law.

Each month of the school year starting in August, the district conducts a new employee orientation. This orientation includes a welcoming introduction to our district. District leadership orientates staff on The Bellingham Promise and the foundational beliefs and goals of our work. In addition, staff from departments throughout the district share important information in areas such as technology, payroll, human resources, Employee Assistance Program, employee risk, mandatory reporting, boundary training, confidentiality and mandatory annual trainings. We created a new employee orientation agenda on our Human Resources SharePoint site for employee access which includes all the topics, links and handouts for easy access to our employees for their reference.

Although most often our orientations in the past occur in the late afternoon after most employees' contract time, we are continuing to provide flexible options for employees who are working during that time such as bus drivers, afternoon paraeducators and custodians. This year we continue to collaborate with our Director of Athletic and Activities and further refine our onboarding practices to expand orientation and training for our coaches prior to each sport season.

Vector Training

We offer trainings in our district to approximately 2,400 staff. In order to effectively train all staff during each school year, as well as minimize the need for substitutes, we use a combination of both in-person and online trainings. Both training methods have inherent benefits.

The district is continuing our **online training program through Vector Training** for all new employees. The required trainings include: What Every Employee Must Be Told and Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Prevention. In addition, all employees receive mandated training required by law or best practice through Vector Training or staff in-service sessions. These trainings provide legally sound instruction for all employees and many of the online trainings require successful

completion of required testing prior to completion of the training. In some cases, such as with our transportation staff, training is conducted as a presentation from staff. Although this is not possible or even preferable for all employees based on time constraints, it does allow for additional discussion and individual questions.

Our online training ensures all employees receive the same consistent training information and employees may access the training content throughout the year. Online training is highly cost-effective and allows us to track compliance and ensure our staff are trained within the required timelines. If staff have additional questions after viewing online trainings, they may consult with their supervisor or a department director to receive further information.

This year, we assigned mandatory trainings in January and have provided a window of time for completions through January 31. The chart below shows the number of online training completions on an annual basis and year-to-date for 2022-23. Some years may be higher due to the requirement of non-annual required trainings. For example, in 2021-22 all employees needed to complete the Child Abuse - Mandatory Reporting training which is required every three years. **The trainings assigned this year to all employees through Vector Training include:** Bullying: Recognition & Response; Health Emergencies: Overview; Child Abuse – Mandatory Reporting, and Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Prevention – Refresher (assigned to all staff in an “at risk for bloodborne pathogens” position).

Bellingham Public Schools Employee Vector Training Course Completions by School Year (Through January 31, 2023)								
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1664	3704	2872	3423	7376	5892	4194	6696	5769

- i. **Maintain salary schedules for all employee classifications comparing district salary and benefits relative to appropriate comparable districts.**

For the 2022-23 school year, the district adjusted compensation for all our employees. The adjustments for our employees covered by bargaining agreements were based on previously agreed upon contracts with BASE, SEIU, Bellingham Education Association (BEA) and Bellingham Administrators’ Organization (BAO). Teamsters also received an adjustment to salary through a newly agreed upon collective bargaining agreement. Salaries for other non-represented employees such as many district office staff, executives and coaches were also adjusted.

The district continues to examine the compensation data with our comparator districts to guide our work in negotiations. After completing our agreements, the district believes we will continue to remain competitive by remaining in the 75th percentile of our comparisons.

The chart below shows our bargaining groups, members and current duration of contracts.

Bargaining Group	Positions	Term of Agreement
Teamsters (Local Union 231)	Bus driver, warehouse delivery driver, utility driver, mechanic, dispatcher	2022-2024
SEIU (Service Employees' International Union 925)	Custodial, maintenance, grounds, food services, educational technology	2021-2023
BASE (Bellingham Association of School Employees)	Administrative assistants, paraeducators, business/accounting, educational support, specialists	2021-2024
BAO (Bellingham Administrators' Organization)	Principals, assistant principals, directors	2022-2024
BEA (Bellingham Education Association)	Certificated instructional staff	2020-2023

This spring we will be working with BEA and SIEU to negotiate new contracts set to expire in 2023. The current BEA and SEIU contracts expire August 31.

ii. Maintain a system to evaluate all employees, provide written improvement plans and monitor employee improvement.

The human resources department continues, in coordination with the Department of Teaching and Learning, building principals and clerical staff, to maintain a system to track evaluations for all employees. Supervisors receive notification of timelines, forms, and requirements for new employee and annual evaluations. The human resources staff track and file all completed evaluations in employee personnel files. Administrators, directors, and managers receive ongoing coaching and support from the human resources team when working with employees on written plans of improvement. Employees with performance concerns are provided opportunities for support, training, mentoring and assistance. Supervisors work closely with the director or assistant superintendent of human resources to monitor improvement and determine if continued support is necessary, or if improvement goals are met. Union and employee association representatives also provide support to employees experiencing performance difficulties.

For certificated teaching staff, the district has adopted the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership's Instructional Framework, [5-Dimensions of Teaching & Learning](#) (CEL 5D). This state framework provides a common language for discussing effective teaching, along with a process that uses a cycle of inquiry and growth focused conversations. The evaluation

cycle for teaching staff is focused on this framework where staff, working with their supervisor, select areas of focus for continuous improvement. The framework is aligned to the state evaluation criteria, and final evaluations reflect both the 5D and the state criteria, commonly referred to as “the state eight”. Employees rotate between comprehensive (all areas) and focused (one-two areas) evaluations, having a comprehensive evaluation a minimum of every six years. Executive team members in teaching and learning and human resources supervise principals and directors following a parallel process using the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) Leadership Framework to guide cycles of inquiry and growth focused conversations. This framework focuses on improvement of principals and leaders in areas that are most likely to result in increased student achievement and is directly aligned with state evaluation criteria, rules and regulation.

In the instructional evaluation model, we also provide continuous training for our teachers and principals/evaluators. Training is provided for all new teachers on the instructional framework and cycle of inquiry process. This takes place in a full day Teacher Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) 5-D Training taught by a State Instructional Framework Specialist. For administrators there are stages of training required, Stage 1 (two days), Stage 2 (four days), as well as Rater Reliability and ongoing training in calibration of the evaluation model and growth. The district provides these training opportunities, taught by a State Instructional Framework Specialist, to all administrators and tracks completion for Stage 1 and Stage 2 training requirements. Administrators track their completion of Rater Reliability and ongoing training, referred to as Stage 3 trainings. The number of teachers and administrators requiring and receiving training is reported to OSPI annually, and the state grants TPEP funds to support the required trainings for new teachers and for Stage 1 and 2 administrator training. Ongoing training provided by the district includes Instructional Rounds for teachers and administrators. Administrator supervisors meet quarterly for ongoing collaboration and support around principal supervision.

Human resources continually works with employee groups and associations to review and update evaluation tools as needed. Current evaluation forms are accessible on the intranet for easy access.

iii. Make continuous improvement towards hiring and retention of under-represented minority teachers and support personnel in classrooms and supervisory/administrative positions, to better reflect the ethnic makeup of our district’s students.

The human resources department develops and maintains an Affirmative Action Plan and provides an annual report on progress towards our goals. The district’s most recent [five-year plan](#) was approved by the board for the years 2019-2024. Each year, a report on progress is provided to the district staff and board in the spring. **Our May 2022 progress report was on the May 18, 2022 board report and can be accessed on our [human resources website page](#).** That report shows a slight increase in the overall percentage of

ethnic minority of our district staff to 10.14%. This included a significant increase in our classified administrators/managers/supervisors from 9.38% to 15.63.

At the time of this report, the district is **collecting data for the 2023** report and will be submitted to the board in the coming months.

In addition, and as reported in EL-10 the district has:

- Added multiple staff members who grow our diversity as a direct result of job fairs conducted within the Russian and Punjabi communities, as well as our BIPOC job fair. Our human resources department's continual work is to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce.
- Continued into its sixth year, our high school Teacher Academy program is working hard to prepare our future teachers. The teacher team leading that effort includes Lori French at Bellingham High School, Mary Hooker at Sehome High School, and Angelica Garcia at Squalicum High School. The team is continuing to broaden recruiting efforts with teaching colleagues to expand placements for students to gain the valuable experience of working directly with a classroom teacher and students.

Other specific strategies used to recruit and hire a diverse workforce include:

- Target web-based posting options in venues connected with ethnically diverse candidates, and district and community-based job fairs. Collaboration and participation with other public and community agencies on diversity and affirmative action matters to increase the diversity of the applicant pool.
- Family and community engagement strategies to connect with employable adults in the ethnic minority community.
- Host job fairs at community facilities to attract diverse candidates. Human resources staff plan and coordinate with other district staff and community partners to provide technical supports, share information about job opportunities, how to apply for positions, and other supports available for interested community members who are pursuing job opportunities with the district.
- Post and fill positions early in the hiring season.
- Increase collaboration with WorkSource and DSHS to advertise openings and provide support for applicants to access and complete online applications.
- Banners outside schools and other facilities such as the transportation department, with high community traffic.
- Update recruiting information to highlight advantages of living in the Bellingham community and working for the school district.

Monitoring Report for EL-4

- Distribute job recruitment information in schools and the family resource centers.
- Continue trainings to ensure personal, cultural, and institutional biases do not interfere with the screening, interviewing, and hiring of diverse candidates.
- Establish employee resource groups to support district staff of color.

Statement of Compliance: The superintendent is **in compliance** with EL-4.