



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
DATE: Feb. 9, 2022
RE: Monitoring Report for EL- 3, Treatment and Communication with Public, Parents and Students

I certify that the following is accurate as of Jan. 6, 2022. The reporting period is from Dec. 1, 2020 through Nov. 30, 2021.

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 and communications during the listed reporting period. The examples highlight change management around the following topics and/or initiatives:

1. COVID response, closure and shifting our approach to in-person for fall, vaccine efforts, “last first day;”
2. weather-related closures;
3. bond communications and planning;
4. public records;
5. food and wellness;
6. La Academia de Padres for Spanish-speaking Latinx families
7. equity, diversity and inclusion efforts in our schools;
8. graduation;
9. budget;
10. Bellingham High School mascot change task force; and
11. revising attendance areas.

COVID Response

During this reporting period, we experienced many different iterations of our school schedule: mostly remote, hybrid/part-time in-person/remote in the spring, mostly full time in-person by the end of the 2020-21 school year and finally completely full-time in-person in fall 2021. For all these changes, we continued to rely on frequent, transparent and creative communication with our staff, families, students and community at large. Listed below are examples of how we communicated some different areas of focus.

- *Schedule Changes*

Guidance and requirements for K12 schools went through many changes, including recommendations from the CDC, governor, Department of Health and Whatcom County Health Department. In the 2020-21 school year, we had many “first days.” Once each first day was decided upon, Dr. Baker would send out an email to all staff, families and community members, with follow up messaging from principals, teachers and our family engagement team. School staff and principals were often making personal calls to families to check in with about their readiness to come back and making plans for “remote reconnect” if they wanted to stay remote even though classmates were back in-person.

Each first day brought a level of excitement (and sometimes nervousness), and we captured many of these milestones on social media. School schedules were aligned (by level), posted to our website and shared in a variety of ways with staff and families. Here’s the middle school example.

In June 2021, we started signaling that the 2021-22 school year would look and feel more like a traditional school year with in-person school. Despite the Delta variant, we stayed consistent with messaging from the governor and Department of Health that school would be in-person and that we would rely on mitigation layers to help keep students and staff safe.

- *Vaccine Efforts, Vaccine Requirements*

Public health asked schools across the state and country to play a role sharing information about and creating opportunities to access vaccines based on eligibility. District staff co-hosted multiple vaccine clinics with local providers and helped make connections between PeaceHealth and our staff throughout the months of February, March and April 2021. Once secondary students and more families were eligible, we shared out information about accessing vaccines to families as

well. Eventually, the state required all staff be fully vaccinated (or obtain a religious or medical exemption), which we communicated with staff in email and in person; we helped staff share proof of vaccine with HR and/or access vaccines as necessary. In fall 2021, children 5 and up became eligible and through work with the local health department and providers, we began hosting clinics at some of our schools and sharing links to vaccine information and appointment schedules.

- *Safety Protocols, FAQs and COVID-19 Dashboard*

Sharing key and ever-changing information, guidance and protocols with staff, families and our community has continued to be a priority during the pandemic. For the 2021-22 school year we updated our website with a COVID-19 Info quick link at the top of every school website. This is the main location for our COVID-19 health and safety protocols for families. We also developed a staff SharePoint site to post staff-specific FAQs, required training, cleaning protocols and other pertinent information. We continue to use our COVID-19 dashboard to reflect current cases impacting our schools and district as a public health communication tool for transparency with our community. We also revised school and office signage in fall 2021 to reflect new requirements about masking.

Daily Health Screening

Please place this reminder in a visible place like the kitchen refrigerator. ❤️

Symptoms

Every morning before in-person school, each family will screen their child at home for symptoms. Please keep symptomatic children home from school.

Children will not attend in-person school if any of the following symptoms apply:

- Fever (100.4° F or higher) or chills
- Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat, nasal congestion or runny nose
- Recent loss of taste or smell
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Unusual fatigue

Daily questions to ask regarding exposure to COVID-19:

Child(ren) will not come to school if the answer is "yes" to any of the following questions:

Within the past 14 days, have you had contact with anyone that you know had COVID-19? Contact is being 6 feet or closer for more than 15 minutes with a person or having direct contact from a person with COVID-19 (for example, being coughed or sneezed on).

Have you had a positive COVID-19 test for active virus in the past 10 days?

Within the past 14 days, has a public health or medical professional told you to self-monitor, self-isolate, or self-quarantine because of concerns about COVID-19 infection?

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL WITH A CLEAN MASK EVERY DAY.



- *Virtual Conversations*

In an effort to provide as much information as possible to our community during the pandemic, we continued to host virtual Q&A conversations with Dr. Baker. During this reporting period, we hosted one in February 2021 and June 2021. Each of these videos had over 2000 plays with additional views and engagement on website and social media.

These videos were posted to our website and sent to all staff, students and families. We also shared snips and links on social media and with the city of Bellingham's BTV 10. We have heard from many staff and families how much they appreciated and enjoyed hearing directly from Dr. Baker and staff about important topics in the comfort of their living room.

Weather

During this reporting period, we closed school for two days. In November 2021, parts of the Pacific Northwest were hit with significant rain, flooding, landslides and road closures, which impacted school sites and access/transportation for staff, families and buses.

We followed our typical emergency communications protocol in sending updates to local news, emails and texts to staff and families, and updating our website, multi-language phone line and social media. You can see examples here and here. After closures, we look for opportunities to send context, reflections and information on decision-making processes from the superintendent to our staff and community.

Bond Communications and Planning

We shared updates on schools and facilities funded by the 2018 bond and planning for the 2022 bond during this reporting period. Highlights included opening replacement Alderwood and Parkview elementary schools in fall 2021, a new gym for Shuksan Middle School and new fields for Squalicum and Bellingham high schools. Here are some of our facilities updates: December 2020, March 2021, July 2021, and Sept. 2021.

We also shared a call for applications for the facilities planning task force in September to ask staff, students and community members to consider participating in the planning process for a bond in 2022. As we do with any comprehensive committee or advisory group, we maintained meeting notes and materials from the task force's work, and shared updates from the superintendent, including this What's up Doc feature video with two students at Alderwood.

Next reporting period: we'll share more information about our communications related to bond facts and videos ahead of the special election in February 2022.

Our most recent facilities bond was approved in February 2018, and we are committed to sharing updates on our projects and schools and providing different tools that help keep our community informed and engaged in our processes, which includes design, educational specifications, input and celebrating milestones. We shared updates on all projects with community stakeholders through facilities updates on Dec. 11, 2019, May 26, 2020 and Dec. 2, 2020.

Monitoring Report for EL-3

We invited the rest of our school community including students, families and staff to watch Alderwood Elementary School's virtual groundbreaking event and Parkview Elementary School's virtual groundbreaking in an update on Dec. 2, 2020.

Public Records

Communications fulfilled 58 public records requests during the reporting period, a 65% increase over the previous reporting period, when communications fulfilled 35 requests. 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 total file size of records furnished was around 11 gigabytes.

Communications also supported several large-scale records requests and subpoenas involving legal matters.

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 this important function of transparent government.

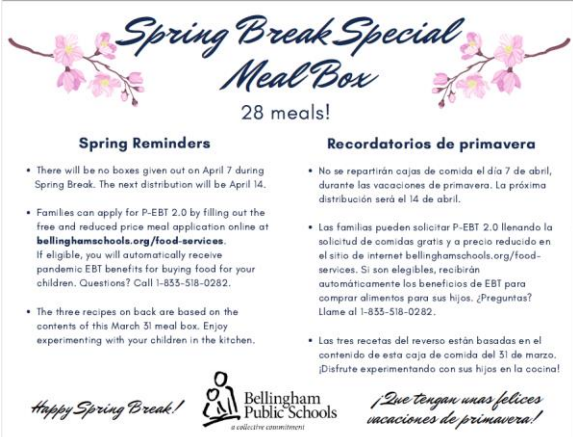
The Assistant Director of Communications, who is the district records officer, continues to receive regular training in public records law by attending training webinars hosted by the state attorney general's office and holding a membership in the Washington Association of Public Records Officers. The records officer also receives support for questions regarding records requests from our district legal team as needed.

Food Services and Wellness

During this reporting period, the Department of Communications and Community Relations continued to support food services and wellness with evolving needs.

Weekly mealboxes continued until mid-August 2021 and our department continued with the necessary communications about pivots, delivery locations, times on social media and on flyers given to families in mealboxes.

Sample mealbox insert flyers (produced in English and Spanish, as needed) follow:



Spring Break Special
Meal Box
28 meals!

Spring Reminders

- There will be no boxes given out on April 7 during Spring Break. The next distribution will be April 14.
- Families can apply for P-EBT 2.0 by filling out the free and reduced price meal application online at bellingshamschools.org/food-services. If eligible, you will automatically receive pandemic EBT benefits for buying food for your children. Questions? Call 1-855-518-0282.
- The three recipes on back are based on the contents of this March 31 meal box. Enjoy experimenting with your children in the kitchen.

Recordatorios de primavera

- No se repartirán cajas de comida el día 7 de abril, durante las vacaciones de primavera. La próxima distribución será el 14 de abril.
- Las familias pueden solicitar P-EBT 2.0 llenando la solicitud de comidas gratis y a precio reducido en el sitio de internet bellingshamschools.org/food-services. Si son elegibles, recibirán automáticamente los beneficios de EBT para comprar alimentos para sus hijos. ¿Preguntas? Llame al 1-855-518-0282.
- Las tres recetas del reverso están basadas en el contenido de esta caja de comida del 31 de marzo. ¡Disfrute experimentando con sus hijos en la cocina!

Happy Spring Break!  *¡Que tengan unas felices vacaciones de primavera!*

Summer 2021 Meal Boxes

This summer, Bellingham Public Schools will offer seven-day meal boxes at no cost to children 0 to 18 and to students in Community Transitions.

Meal boxes **will not** be distributed next Wednesday on June 23.

Meal box distribution **will resume** on Wednesday, June 30 and will continue every Wednesday through Aug. 18.

Boxes will be given out **between 12 and 1:30 p.m.** at the following locations:

- Geneva Elementary School, 1401 Geneva Street
- Happy Valley Elementary School, 1041 24th Street
- Roosevelt Elementary School, 2900 Yew Street
- Shuksan Middle School, 2717 Alderwood Avenue
- Whitcom Middle School, 610 Halliwick Street
- Regency Park Apartment Complex, 2050 Fraser Street
- Bakerview Mobile Park, 4015 Eliza Avenue

Please note: families will be asked if their students are part of summer programs in Bellingham Public Schools for accounting purposes only.

Monitoring Report for EL-3

While continuing to distribute weekly mealboxes, Food Services also needed to keep up with the increased cafeteria meals. By April 2021, when all the grade levels were returned to in person, an 8-week menu was developed for the end of the school year. Communications helped to organize and promote their in-person menus as well, in essence, keeping both models of delivery going in 2021.

We returned, for one brief moment, to a print menu in July 2021, which was mailed home in the annual back-to-school mailing. Supply chain issues quickly changed the delivery model for our food services program almost immediately in September and the online menu became one of the most popular webpages on the district website.

During this reporting period, the communications team also worked with our mental health staff to produce timely and content-filled updates about nutrition and wellness. Content was shared in January 2021 (1,203 visitors), March 2021 (1,683 visitors), and May 2021 (813 visitors). These updates were shared with families in emails and on social media.



La Academia de Padres for Spanish-speaking Latinx families

Spring 2021 was the launch of the Parent Academy for our Spanish speaking Latinx families. La Academia de Padres was created to support our diverse Latinx families in their desire to be more active participants in their students' educational experience. The course is delivered in Spanish by parent leaders with support from the Family Engagement Department. Families who enrolled have a strong desire to become parent educational leaders in supporting improvement in our schools. We know that when parents and families have a strong connection to our schools and district, there is a positive impact to students' school experiences.

The group developed their "why" for participating in the academy:

"To help our children, to learn about our community, to get to know each other better to support one another, to learn as much as we can from these meetings so we can help more families, to have a voice in our schools, and mostly to have a presence in our schools."

In a survey of Academia parents, they shared they want to deepen their understanding and participation in the following areas:

- Effective communication strategies to support communication between home and school.
- Volunteering/participating in their child's school.
- Understanding and influencing school district decisions and policies.
- Supporting their students to be successful in elementary, middle school, and high school.
- Learning how to navigate the school district system.

The parents commit to a six-week course designed to support and help parents develop skills that will lead to their active participation in their child's school experience. The Academia de Padres planning committee is three Latinx parents and three staff. The course sessions are developed to actively engage parents as experts of their children and to provide them with the knowledge, strategies and tools they need to support their child's school success. The topics include the following: building communication, school district resources, opportunities, and policies, student/parental rights and parent leadership and advocacy.

The Academy "graduated" 30 new Latinx parent leaders between March and May 2021. We are looking forward to continuing the six-week course sessions several times each school year. Currently the Parent Academy is focusing on families from our Latinx community, and we are planning to expand this training to other underrepresented families in our district.

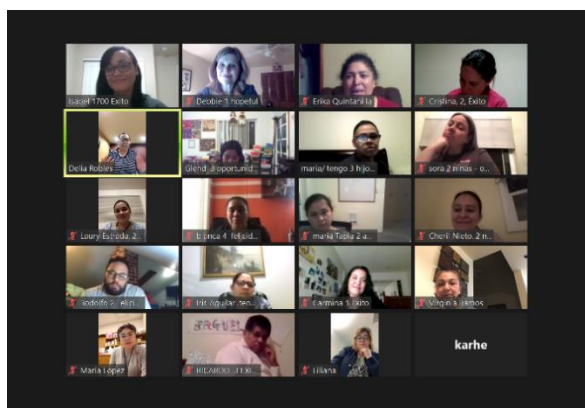


Photo of the first meeting of the la Academia de Padres March 3, 2021 via Zoom.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

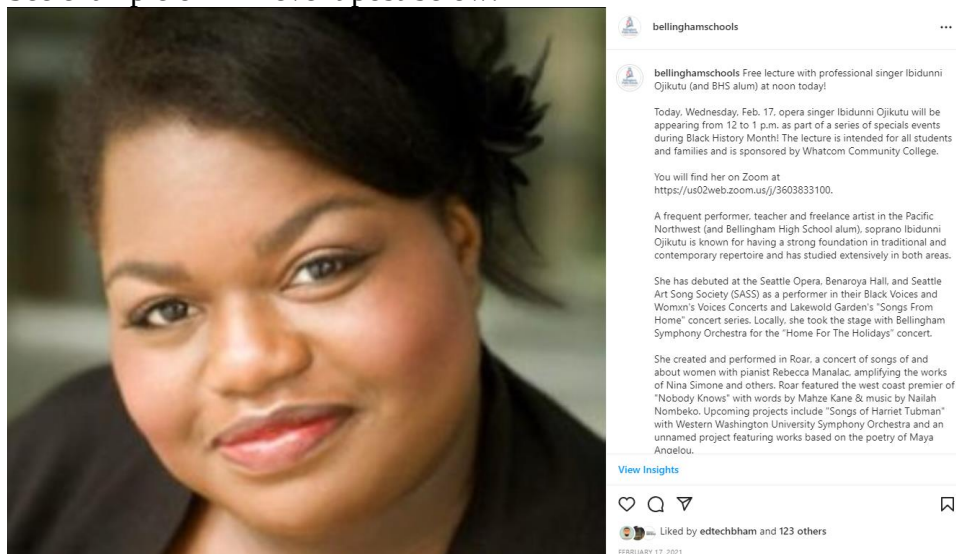
We continued to share our district's commitment to being an anti-racist organization and to communicate our plans and reflections of our ongoing equity, diversity and inclusion work. Communications expanded our use of ADA compliant features in our district communications and worked to be inclusive of all student populations when communicating about COVID-19 protocols, returning to school, transportation and other key topics for families.

In March 2021, anti-Asian violence in Georgia brought fear and trauma to the Asian community. I shared a message of support which also yielded feedback and conversation with students, staff and the community about racialized violence, and, for those of us who are white, how to hold "...ourselves accountable for enacting justice and dismantling the systems that enable racism, bigotry and hate in order to lift the invisible labor from the backs of our students and staff of color."

In May 2021, our district's inclusionary practices drew national attention when an email exchange between a first grade teacher and a parent regarding the reading of an LGBTQ-themed book, "I Am Jazz," was published as an item on the Young America's Foundation's website. The item also referenced the private business of one of our school board members. Although many in our community engaged in respectful inquiry and learning about why an elementary school might read LGBTQ-themed books, our teacher, school board member and district at large also received some hateful and threatening commentary. I published a statement responding to the situation and reiterating our commitment to a diverse library collection as well as zero tolerance for the mistreatment of the adults who work in our system. This statement also served as our public comment for media inquiries outside of our local area.

During this reporting period, working with the director of EDI, Communications shared out EDI newsletters in December 2020, January 2021, February 2021, March 2021, April 2021 and June 2021 and supported the director with blog and website development, as well as promoting numerous educational EDI lectures.

See example of EDI event post below:



Graduations

We were thrilled to offer both in-person ceremonies and streaming options for the class of 2021. For the first time ever, the district hosted all four high school graduation ceremonies at Civic Field in one day.

Significant time was spent planning, listening to stakeholder feedback and messaging seniors, staff and families with details and expectations of the day and event. We contracted with Veritas Media to live stream all four ceremonies from Civic; staff streamed the Community Transitions event from the Market Depot.

We produced yard signs and flyers for every graduate, including those completing the Community Transitions program (similar to what we did for the class of 2020), to add to the level of excitement, school spirit and pride for our graduates in unprecedented times. This reporting period, we highlighted the 2021 graduations in the Summer 2021 InsideSchools community newsletter.

Sample graduation signage below:



Budget

We sent regular updates during this reporting period to students, staff, families and our community about our budget process, including updates in April and June. We regularly update our budget webpage, which includes budget highlights that summarize proposed new investments, as well as links to our process, timeline and board presentation. We continue to receive accolades on the district's comprehensive budget book, as well as inquiries from other districts to replicate our publication.

While our budget is typically approved by the board over the summer, we believe it is paramount to keep our community well-informed of our financial standing as a government entity throughout the school year. I also share budget updates as I speak at staff meetings and with other groups.

Bellingham High School Mascot Change Task Force

We convened a task force to help determine a new BHS mascot name in February 2021 based on a nationwide social justice movement and a strong desire to update the mascot name to reflect more inclusive practices. The task force focused on strong student and community engagement, offering multiple opportunities for feedback via a survey, in-class lessons, videos, activities and public meetings. In June 2021, the task force submitted a recommendation to the superintendent to change the BHS mascot name to replace the Red Raider name with the Bayhawk, which he accepted.

Next reporting period: we will share the new art and logo for the new Bayhawk mascot and an update on replacing the logo throughout the school, fields, uniforms, etc.

Revising Attendance Areas

In spring 2021, our middle school principals hosted virtual tours and meetings with families and students who were affected by the new attendance areas. By fall, all new students had been communicated with several times between the district and schools with opportunities to share feedback and ask questions.

In fall 2022, boundaries for Silver Beach, Northern Heights and Sunnyland are changing. 78 families are being impacted and each of them received a message about the shift and to look for opportunities to tour their new school and meet the principal and staff.

Monitoring Report for EL-3

Summer 2021: This edition focused on the 2021 high school graduations held at Civic Field on June 12, 2021, and the Community Transitions graduation on June 17, 2021.

Inside Schools
YOUR BELLINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021

Presenting the Class of 2021
GRADUATIONS • JUNE 12, 2021 CIVIC FIELD

For the first time in district history, Bellingham Public Schools held all four high school graduations on a single day in one location: Civic Field, staggered only by time. Squalicum High School held their ceremony at 9 a.m., Bellingham High at 10:30 a.m., Serenome High at 4 p.m., and Options High at 7 p.m. These unique events, following COVID-19 protocols for social distancing, were a unified way to share joy and love for our 2021 graduates.

Recognizing our graduates and our community

Dear Community,

We have made it through this most incredible, challenging and transformative school year. We started this school year fully aware and informed of the challenges we would face. We were thoughtful and intentional, working together to create a year of growth, learning and connection. We have been so proud of our graduates, and we are so proud of you!

One Schoolhouse Award Winner: ALL OF YOU!

Together, we achieve more than alone.

BELLINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL

The class of 2021 at Bellingham High School is a group of students who have overcome many challenges and have achieved great success. They are a testament to the power of hard work and dedication.

OPTIONS HIGH SCHOOL

The class of 2021 at Options High School is a group of students who have overcome many challenges and have achieved great success. They are a testament to the power of hard work and dedication.

SERENOME HIGH SCHOOL

The class of 2021 at Serenome High School is a group of students who have overcome many challenges and have achieved great success. They are a testament to the power of hard work and dedication.

SQUALICUM HIGH SCHOOL

The class of 2021 at Squalicum High School is a group of students who have overcome many challenges and have achieved great success. They are a testament to the power of hard work and dedication.

Fall 2021: This edition celebrated the start of the school year in person and the opening of two newly rebuilt schools, Alderwood and Parkview. It also highlighted the 10th anniversary of Project Free Education and gave a preview of the bond 2022 proposal.

Inside Schools
YOUR BELLINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER FALL 2021

Grateful to be in person

Dear community,

It's exciting to be back in person this fall. I am amazed and grateful by the incredible work students and staff are doing every day to keep each other engaged and safe. I have deeply loved going into our schools, and it has been especially enjoyable that fall after the even-changing remote/hybrid schedule of last year. While we still face challenges, we are getting through this together.

We know our students and families are best served when our schools are open. Our students are also busy after school, participating in a variety of activities from sports to music, theatre and clubs, which is a big change from last year.

Younger children will soon be eligible for the vaccine, and our one-on-one support for staff are solid. Over 96 percent of all staff are vaccinated, and everyone continues to follow our COVID protocols of making and social distancing.

As we move through and eventually past COVID, we can start to plan for the future. Our Facilities Planning Task Force is meeting and beginning to think about next steps with the district's next urgent needs. You can read their current thinking on page 5.

We have had a great fall and it has a lot to do with the Bellingham community and our collective commitment to kids.

Thank you,

Greg Baker
Superintendent of Schools

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Join our team in Bellingham Public Schools! Be a part of the Bellingham Public Schools team. We are a staff of dedicated professionals who are committed to providing the best education for every student.

IN THIS ISSUE:

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- Foundation update

The 10th year of Project Free Education brings steady progress and significant wins

Equity work takes many forms in Bellingham Public Schools, but there is no clearer manifestation of it than in the Project Free Education (PFE) initiative over the past decade.

Spearheaded by Superintendent Greg Baker when he first arrived in the district in 2010-11, the purpose of this initiative is to reduce the financial burden of a public school education on families. One of the first major changes was a great to full-day kindergarten from a half-time schedule. This was accomplished before the state of Washington provided funds for it.

Also in Baker's first year, a districtwide audit revealed that school supplies cost families substantial amounts of money per student. To offset these costs, the district started reappropriating budgets to provide all school supplies that families had been asked to buy, as well as other costs associated with attending school and participating in sports and other activities, such as Mountain School and the Snow Goose field trips.

As a starting point in that first year, the district began buying school supplies for all elementary students at every elementary school. By 2015, all supplies were covered at all schools. Since then, Project Free Education has expanded yearly.

Assistant Superintendent Jay Jordan was in the district as the principal of Shalom Middle School when the initiative first launched. He remembers when the district began working on and adjusting the cost of middle school sports (2013) and how the district steadily leveled the playing field for some families and students. Jordan also expressed how progressive and proactive our district and superintendent has been in this equity work.

"Perhaps one of the biggest signs of how forward-thinking Dr. Baker has been supporting families with the true cost of a child's education," Jordan said, "is that Washington state recently passed House Bill 1001 in June 2020. This house bill now directs all school districts in the state to adopt a policy waiving fees and costs for students who are low income. This work has been a part of our culture in Bellingham for a decade."

In 2018-19, two exciting developments were implemented through the program.

In that school year, driver's education was included back into high school course offerings at no cost, and additionally, graduating seniors did not need to buy their own caps and gowns. And as one of the latest expansions of the initiative, in spring 2021, all student yearbook costs at middle and high school were covered.

Staff member Erin Vaino shared how this recent expansion of Project Free Education will have a positive effect on kids based on her own childhood experience. Vaino wrote in a June email to Superintendent Baker that "truly free education is close to my heart and the fact that K-12 caps and yearbooks are now being included in that makes me so happy!"

"It was one of those low-income kids who couldn't get a yearbook every year due to cost," she continued, "and not only did it make me feel super self-conscious and out of place during yearbook signing, but it was sad for me because I wanted to remember and be able to look back at pictures just like any kid that age."

Find out more about the history of PFE at bellinghamschools.org/project-free-education

Timeline of Project Free Education:

- 2011: Full day kindergarten offered at no cost. Secondary school supplies provided.
- 2012: Reduced athletic fees at middle and high schools. Student Mountain School for all fifth graders.
- 2013: High school supplies provided as needed.
- 2014: Driver's education added to high school course catalog. Graduation caps provided at no cost. Caps and gowns provided.
- 2015: Fully funded middle school supplies. Fully funded middle school supplies.
- 2016: Fully funded middle school supplies. Fully funded middle school supplies.
- 2017: Fully funded middle school supplies. Fully funded middle school supplies.
- 2018: Fully funded middle school supplies. Fully funded middle school supplies.
- 2019: Fully funded middle school supplies. Fully funded middle school supplies.
- 2020: Fully funded middle school supplies. Fully funded middle school supplies.
- 2021: Fully funded middle school supplies. Fully funded middle school supplies.

B) SchoolMessenger and other electronic newsletters

We also use SchoolMessenger and school newsletters to communicate with stakeholders. SchoolMessenger is our communications system that is integrated with our student information database, Skyward. Through SchoolMessenger, both the district and schools are able to reach families and staff by email, phone and text.

Throughout the school year, we support districtwide communications related to safety and weather, curriculum adoptions/changes and other teaching and learning updates, with targeted messages to families in special education, highly capable, English language learners or by bus route. We routinely communicate leadership changes, systemwide policies and procedures updates, and messaging from all corners of the district from bus delays to volunteer recruitment.

Aside from critical district communications, we support principals and other school personnel to use the SchoolMessenger system to send weekly or monthly messages or newsletters to regularly inform families about school news. We also encourage use of a web-based newsletter called Smore, which has been adopted by many schools and teaching and learning offices. This is an attractive, digital alternative to regular email communication.

An example of utilizing SchoolMessenger with critical information occurred near the end of our reporting period in November 2021. We sent out numerous weather closure messages to families and staff due to the fall atmospheric river and floods.

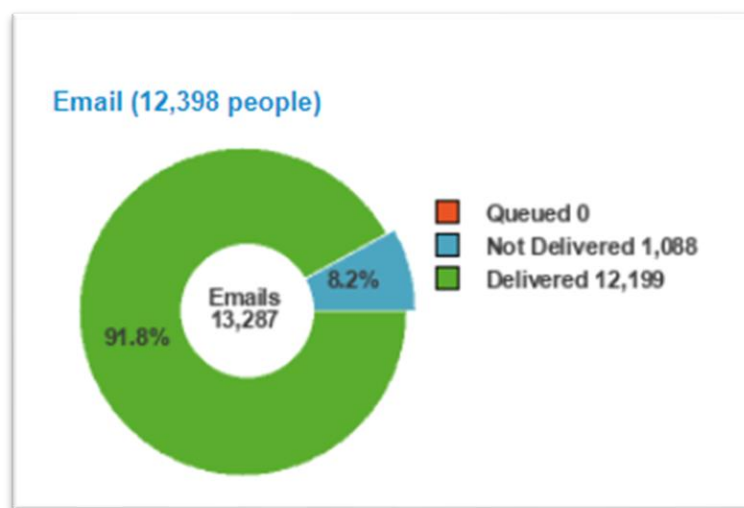
The specific number of emails and texts delivered under the Early AM school closure/delay contact type on Nov. 15 is listed below to give a determination of reach:

- Staff emails sent: 3225 (# of recipients 2703)
- Family emails sent: 20,050 (# of recipients 11,932)
- Staff texts sent: 785
- Family texts sent: 3,809

We send routine/non-urgent messaging with a "general outreach" designation in SchoolMessenger, and those emails reach upwards of 12,628 people at nearly 21,000 email addresses with a 92% "delivered" status. "Not delivered" status could indicate blocked emails or bad email addresses.

Examples of counts from recent broadcasts.

Recipients	# of Phones	# of Emails
12628	0	20891



Many of our general updates/news messages are sent from the superintendent, which includes Dr. Baker as the “reply to.” Many staff, families, community members and occasionally students take advantage of to share feedback and ask questions. Dr. Baker manages quick, thoughtful responses to ensure voices are heard and often shares these email exchanges with key staff.

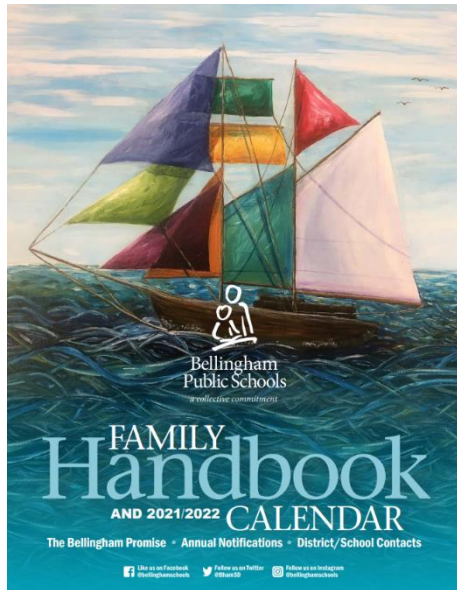
Through SchoolMessenger we are able to send translated messages at the same time as the English. For critical messaging, we translate into Spanish for our largest contingent of home language other than English.

The communications team asks school users to semi-annually review their school broadcast reports to note blocked emails or bad phone numbers. We ask that they contact the family for current contact information. In many cases, families do not realize they have unsubscribed accidentally to district/school emails, or they no longer use an email address that has not been updated in the student information system. In the winter and spring of 2021, the communications department began researching “industry-standard” notification systems, looking into a possible change to a new vendor. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pivots, we put this work on hold and began forming a plan in fall 2021 to begin a vendor notification work group in 2022 to research options. This vendor workgroup will make its recommendation in late winter/early spring 2022 about what company we will move forward with into the future.

C) Other publications shared with family and student stakeholders:

Family Handbook and Calendar 2021-22:

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



High School Course Catalog:

Working with the Department of Teaching and Learning, communications staff updated the high school course catalog for 2021-22. 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 impacting nearly 40 percent of all students, sharing important credit requirements and general high school information. The front pages of the catalog with critical information about registration, graduation pathways and credits needed are also translated into Spanish.



Promotional materials for kindergarten registration, career and college planning events, and bond facts for the 2022 election were drafted.

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

Kindergarten registration open for fall 2021!

Registration for kindergarten has begun in Bellingham Public Schools. All children who will be 5 before Sept. 1, 2021 can register for kindergarten. Register online today!

Kindergarten open house videos and virtual tours will be posted on school websites and sent to registered kindergarten families in May.

We plan to start in-person learning at every elementary school this fall with strong safety protocols in place. We will be ready to support our early learners and welcome the class of 2034 to our schools.

Find out more about attendance areas, registration and childhood immunization schedules at the website below or contact your elementary schools directly.

bellingshamschools.org/kindergarten



Kínder: Inscripciones abiertas ahora para el otoño 2021

Todos los niños que cumplan sus 5 años antes del 1º de septiembre pueden ser registrados para kínder en nuestra página web del distrito o llamándonos al centro familiar 360-676-6456.

Tendremos aprendizaje en persona en todas las escuelas con fuertes protocolos de seguridad y por favor llámenos para más información acerca del aprendizaje remoto.

Para más información visite **bellingshamschools.org/kindergarten**, contacte la escuela o al centro familiar.

¡Gracias por ayudarnos a correr la voz en nuestra comunidad!



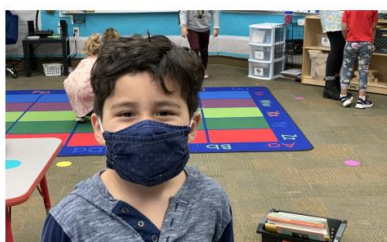
Mẫu giáo: Đăng ký ngay bây giờ cho mùa thu 2021

Hãy đăng ký càng sớm càng tốt. Các chuyến tham quan lớp mẫu giáo và tham quan qua mạng bắt đầu vào tháng 5.

Chúng tôi dự định bắt đầu học trực tiếp tại mọi trường tiểu học với các quy trình an toàn mạnh mẽ được áp dụng.

Trẻ em phải được 5 tuổi trước ngày 1 tháng 9 để được nhập học mẫu giáo.

Truy cập trang web phía dưới của chúng tôi, gọi cho trường học khu vực lân cận của quý vị, hoặc gọi số 360-647-6816 và để lại tin nhắn thư thoại



bellingshamschools.org/kindergarten



In fall 2021, most events for college planning remained in a virtual setting and FAFSA/WASFA information, developed by community partner Futures NW, was shared digitally and sent in a postcard format to assist seniors in filing for financial aid.



Other publications:

Playground Standards

In the spring of 2021, Bellingham Public Schools convened the [Playgrounds Standards Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee](#) to develop guidelines for choosing playground equipment and surfacing. Based on the information gathered, the presentations by expert-level guests, explanatory videos by Special Education teachers, and group discussions, the standards committee made a recommendation to Superintendent Greg Baker to move any new school playgrounds or expansions to universal design. Universal design is a term that incorporates not only accessibility and inclusivity but is a playground design usable by all and enjoyed by everyone.

Alongside the recommendation, communications developed a flyer [“Playgrounds in Bellingham Public Schools: a Plan for Universal Design”](#) to represent the key values and guidelines as the district makes choices about future playgrounds.

Playgrounds

in Bellingham Public Schools

A PLAN FOR UNIVERSAL DESIGN

All school spaces are learning spaces, and our playgrounds are outdoor classrooms providing critical learning opportunities through play.

In Bellingham Public Schools, we design playgrounds to support healthy child development and physically literate children.

When we design playgrounds and outdoor learning spaces, we begin with **universal design**—an environment that is usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

The foundation of this thinking in Bellingham Public Schools is found in our strategic plan **The Bellingham Promise**.

Values Statement
(as developed by the Playground Standards Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee, Spring 2022):

To achieve the collective commitment of The Bellingham Promise, we design and build playgrounds that are:

- Fun, engaging, inspiring, imaginative and challenging.
- Inclusive and accessible, with something for everyone, that exceed minimum accessibility requirements.
- Developmentally appropriate, with zones/pieces for all stages of physical development.
- Built to encourage social connections through play.
- Supportive of diverse sensory needs, providing experiences to stimulate sight, sound, tactile, vestibular and proprioceptive senses, and also strategic with sensory pathways.
- Safe play spaces and surfaces that include perimeter containment.
- Locally relevant, with cultural, geographic and artistic connections to Bellingham.
- Community centered, connected to nature, and most of all, welcoming.

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

The key strategy of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in The Promise states: "We envision and strive for a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organization."

Action and character outcomes in The Promise support our playground design work. These outcomes include developing students and graduates who are:

- leaders, collaborators, and team players;
- confident individuals who continuously challenge themselves;
- healthy, active individuals; and
- well-rounded community members engaged with the broader world.

PHOTO BELOW: Digital rendering of a segment of Allendale Elementary School playground to be installed in Fall 2021.

CONTINUED ON BACK

Bellingham Public Schools
a collective commitment
1300 Dupont Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 676-4538
bellinghamschools.org

*See definitions on reverse

Definitions

UNIVERSAL DESIGN	INCLUSIVE DESIGN	ACCESSIBLE DESIGN
Products and environments are created by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.	An inclusive playground considers not just physical equipment, but also emotional, social, and psychological benefits of play. It encompasses the philosophy that children and adults of all abilities benefit from being able to play and interact together.	Accessible design meets the environmental and communication needs of the functional limitations of people with disability. Accessible design aims to meet minimum ADA requirements to achieve usability.
FIVE OF SEVEN SENSES Five of our seven senses are important on playgrounds: sight, sound, tactile, vestibular and proprioceptive. (We leave the senses of taste and smell in the cafeteria!)	VESTIBULAR STIMULATION The vestibular system is essential for movement and equilibrium. Vestibular stimulation is input that your body receives when you experience movement or gravity. It can be mild (nodding your head or climbing stairs) or it can be intense (spinning or a roller coaster).	PROPRIOCEPTION Proprioception is the perception or awareness of the position and movement of the body.
PHYSICAL LITERACY The motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. — from the International Physical Literacy Association	SPORT FOR ALL, PLAY FOR LIFE MODEL BROAD ACCESS LEADS TO INCREASED PARTICIPATION	

RESOURCES
The playground values of the Playground Standards Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee were based on the following resources and presentations:

- The Bellingham Promise
- Policy & Procedures 3440
- Disability Inclusive Playgrounds
- Inclusive Play Design Guide—Playworld
- Inclusive Play Training—Playworld
- Mara Kaplan of Let Kids Play! 7 tips to an inclusive playground:
 1. Surfacing
 2. Perimeter containment
 3. The coolest thing is accessible to all
 4. Fun and challenging for all
 5. Inclusive zones
 6. Sensory play
 7. Social/cooperative play
- Bellingham Public Schools 2020, *Imagining Playgrounds*, produced by Jen Moffet, Sarah Catalano and Cindy Pearson

Updated Fall 2021

Block Party marketing

During this reporting period, Bellingham Public Schools hosted the first All Family Back to School Block Party. The communications team supported the event with promotional materials, social media promotion, flyers, onsite signage and a recap of the power of community. A one-sheet flyer (image left) was included in the summer mailing to all families (English and Spanish version) and posters and social media promoted the August event.

BACK TO SCHOOL

BLOCK PARTY

Saturday, Aug. 21 • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Bellingham High School • 2020 Cornwall Ave.

For social distancing purposes, families with last name A to L are asked to attend 10 a.m. to noon, and families with last name M to Z are asked to attend noon to 2 p.m.

A fun and festive resource fair for all students and families in Bellingham Public Schools. Lunch and entertainment will be provided.

sports physicals • haircuts • immunizations • afterschool program registration
school transportation • free and reduced price meals applications
Operation School Bell shopping sign-up for eligible families

This event will follow all COVID-19 precautions in effect in our community and schools in August.

DONORS

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
imagine the possibilities...

parent neighborhood

Whatcom Community Foundation

Bellingham Public Schools
a collective commitment
bellinghamschools.org

BACK TO SCHOOL

BLOCK PARTY

Sports physicals, vaccines and haircuts onsite at no cost!

Family engagement and communicating with our most vulnerable

Family engagement is closely connected to a child's school experience and the ability to be successful at school, which is why our district has invested in this area over the last 10 years, adding staff and resources to the Family Engagement Department and our two family resource centers.

Our family engagement team works diligently to ensure that all major updates and announcements are translated into Spanish and other languages as needed. This includes annual publications, including the Family Handbook, calendars, social media graphics and posters, as well as a myriad of other messages and updates, including opportunities for feedback and engagement.

While many communications efforts across our district are based on sharing news and updates with the masses, we know family needs vary greatly, especially for those facing hardships and challenges. In most cases, our family engagement team provides exemplary service to families who need assistance, including those who have recently immigrated from another country, those who speak languages other than English and those experiencing homelessness.

Our family engagement team has communicated with over 2,000 families during this reporting period and some of these conversations and messages are not "one and done," but are over many days, weeks, months and sometimes years. Our staff cultivate connection and consistent communication. Roughly, this is 54,000 communication exchanges over a 10-month period.

Here is an example of a family receiving additional help and support from our staff, demonstrating the wraparound services we provide. Please note we are only using the first letter of the family's first and last names.

The "H" family speaks Dari and is from Northern Afghanistan in the Panjshir Valley. They arrived in Bellingham in late 2021 and are sponsored by World Relief Whatcom County. Kathe Koruga, family liaison and multilingual learner advocate and the district's Dari interpreter, Khaled Kakar, met with the father to talk about their three boys' education and interests, as well as the family's needs.

Here is some information about the family:

- The home language is Dari, and all communication needs to be in Dari (oral or written)
- The father worked two years for the US Army, nine years for the CIA and the past two years in security in Kabul.
- The mother completed sixth grade in Afghanistan. She shared that she reads and writes well in Dari and is anxious to go to school to further her education.
- The family has three boys who are elementary school aged.
- Dad describes Y as shy and quiet; he loves painting and art. He will attend one of our elementary schools.
- He describes R as much more active with a lot of energy. He also likes art and soccer. He will attend one of our elementary schools with his brother.
- The youngest A is described by dad as a very smart boy. He says he learns quickly and is anxious to go to school. Dad shared that A was identified with a vision problem when at

the transitional camp in Indiana. A now wears glasses, which are helpful, but he is needing further vision evaluation.

- A will attend Promise K at a different school than his brothers because Promise K at their school is full. World Relief has arranged for transportation to/from school.
- Both Y and R attended three months of private school in Afghanistan. The parents are working with their sons to teach them how to read and write in Dari.

After meeting with the “H” family, here are some of the resources shared and delivered to the family and/or actions taken by the family engagement team:

- Welcoming folder with school and community information with the family and the interpreter (we should note that we worked with our Dari interpreter to choose cultural photos for home visit packets and learn about culture)
- Delivered large pan per request for cooking rice
- Delivered art supplies, bus passes and three hand-sewn quilts made by our amazing volunteer Grandma Betty
- Qualification for McKinney Vento, per OSPI refugee families qualify due to transitional housing
- Arranged meet and greet at school before Y and R start school; same arrangements made for A to the school he’s enrolled in for Promise K
- Used title funds to shop for clothing for all three boys. One school also requested pull up pants for one student as they were potty training him
- Thus far, the team has made a total of three home visits (one with the one multilingual language teacher) to help with concerns over two of the students and to get medical records for Promise Kindergarten student who is vision impaired
- Set up and attended with parent meeting with Promise Kindergarten teacher to discuss the student and vision concerns. This was a very heartwarming visit with such a compassionate Promise Kindergarten teacher!
- Worked almost daily the first few weeks in school to communicate with family through the interpreter regarding school day information, including absences, bus schedule, etc.
- Used some of our consignment clothing gift cards to get the father some pants and socks

Our family engagement staff continues to work alongside World Relief to assist the “H” family. Due to the family’s current visa status and sponsorship by World Relief, the family’s housing needs are being met. Our staff has worked with World Relief to communicate information about setting up an appointment with a vision specialist. The director of World Relief Whatcom is listed as an emergency contact for the family. For context, here are some resources our family resources team has shared:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panjshir_conflict

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58466647>

<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/afghan-culture/afghan-culture-core-concepts>

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:

- The communications team attended a one-day retreat in August and Analisa Ficklin, assistant director of teaching and learning, led the group in a Warm Demander training, which focuses on inclusion.
- The communications executive director and manager attended LGBTQ+ trainings with leadership in May 2021.
- The communications executive director and manager are participating in a book study of the book *Caste* led by WASA.
- The communications executive director and manager each participated as panel members in separate peer review processes with WASA. Both review processes involved colleagues from districts across the state and informed them on best practices, protocols and strategic planning. They both felt honored to be included learning more and advising on best practices for communication in our state.
- The communications manager attended multiple trainings through the state Attorney General’s office to support her continued proficiency as district records officer.
- The communications team participated in a variety of professional development opportunities on Lynda.com, now called LinkedIn Learning, including lessons and classes that focused on administrative professional tips, Photoshop, graphic design, Canva, writing, Excel and six morning habits of high performers.

D) Website and Social Media

Website

During this reporting period, the district website had 2,033,618 pageviews. Peak website traffic occurred near the first day of school in September 2021.

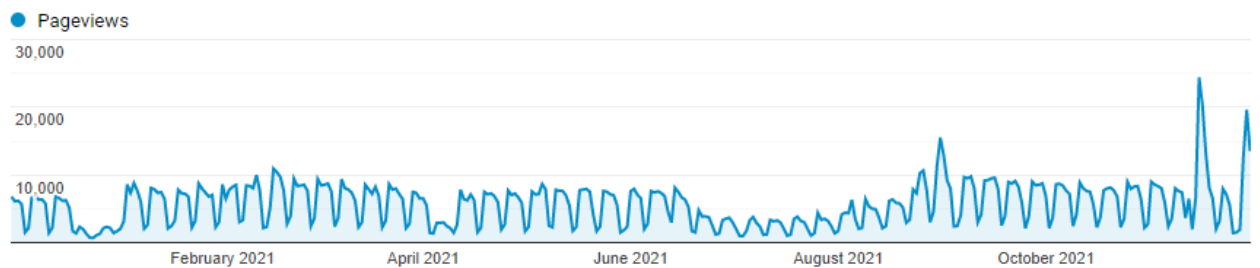
Highest web traffic days:

Nov. 15, 2021 – 24,401 pageviews (schools closed due to flooding)

Nov. 29, 2021 – 19,622 pageviews (continued weather messaging)

Aug. 31, 2021 – 15,503 pageviews (prior to the first day of school)

Feb. 16, 2021 – 10,934 pageviews (announcing the return of high school in-person)



The top 10 most visited district webpages during this reporting period (excluding the homepage):

Calendar – 87,049 pageviews

COVID-19 Dashboard – 75,936 pageviews

Human Resources – 71,883 pageviews

School Menus – 61,386 pageviews

Contact (Staff Directory) – 51,3391 pageviews

COVID-19 Information – 37,733 pageviews

Transportation – 22,513 pageviews

Salary Schedules – 21,291 pageviews

Schools – 16,326 pageviews

Schools, Elementary – 15,970 pageviews

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 to follow up on.

During this reporting period the inbox received 363 inquiries from staff, families, students and community members.

Social Media

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

Twitter: Gained 73 followers, giving us 2,341 followers.

Facebook: Gained 539 page likes, giving us 5,131 likes. We have 5,843 followers. A Facebook like means someone is connecting themselves to our page as a fan. A follower is someone who wants updates but does not necessarily consider themselves a fan.

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

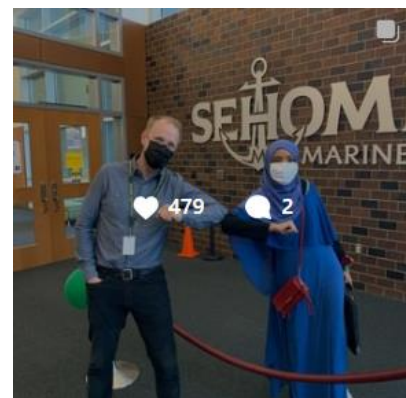
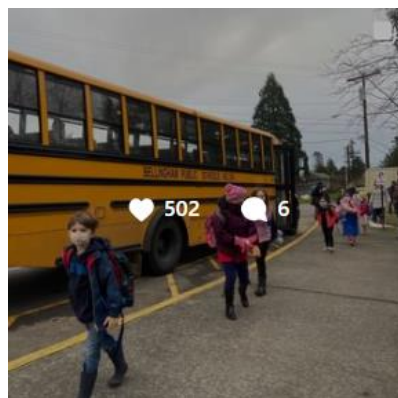
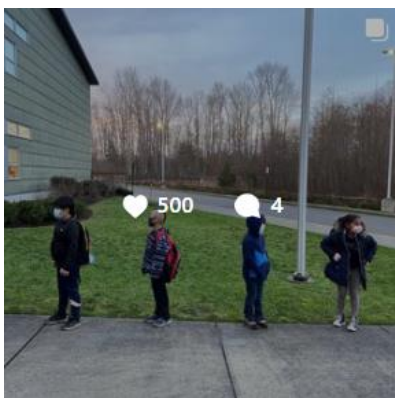
Date	Post	Post Clicks	Interactions (reactions, shares, comments)	Reach (people reached via their newsfeed)
5/21/21	Humans of BPS – Jared Ibarra	1,176	931	7,187
7/12/21	Free Bricks at Alderwood/Parkview	834	314	8,946
9/15/21	Join our team!	556	157	7,377
11/15/21	Bellingham schools closed Nov. 15	941	420	9,963
11/15/21	Bellingham schools closed Nov. 16	845	443	10,699

Instagram: We gained 1,128 followers during this reporting period, giving us 5,883 followers.

Popular Instagram posts:

The hearts are likes and the bubbles are comments.

First Days Back in School



Monitoring Report for EL-3

Weather Messaging



Celebrating our Students or Staff



Social Media Campaigns:

Highlighting Retiring Staff

Since we were unable to host our annual retirement dinner, we wanted to celebrate our retiring staff another way. In a three-part series, we shared photos of retiring staff, their location, job position and years with Bellingham Public Schools. The campaign was very successful resulting in over 1,000 likes on Instagram and 250 likes on Facebook. The campaign gave colleagues, families and students an opportunity to express love and appreciation for these staff members.



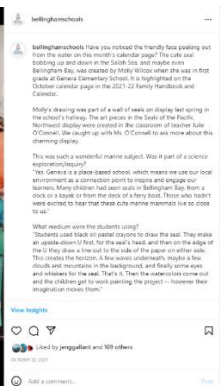
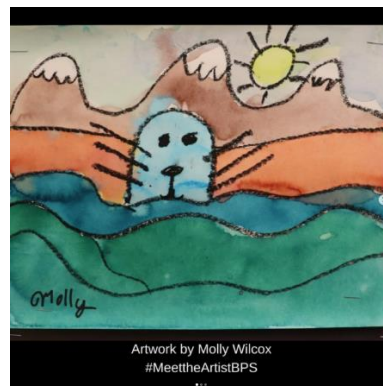
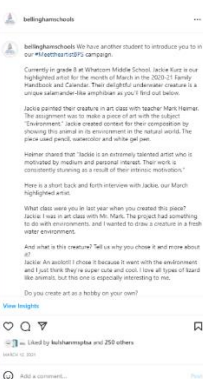
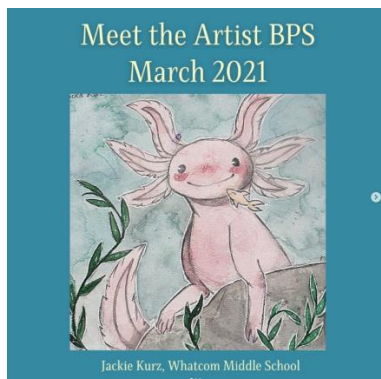
Highlighting Our Graduating Seniors

This year we interviewed two graduating seniors from each high school. We asked each high school to tell us who their student speakers were to help determine who should be interviewed. Each senior was asked the same four questions and asked to submit a photo for us to use. The seniors shared thoughtful reflections on a hybrid school year and hopes for the future.



#MeettheArtistBPS and **#HumansofBPS** continued throughout this reporting period.

The posts about our student artists often included short interviews with either the teacher (if elementary) or the artists themselves. These posts highlight art curriculum and individual talent.



Humans of BPS on social media continued to highlight staff from all corners of the district and was an important engagement tool.

In this reporting period we highlighted school nurse Matt Neisenger, dean Tommy Lingbloom, drama/English teacher Kandace McGowan, assistant principal Minh Nguyen, counselor Kelly Boyer, paraeducator Mandeep Kaur, Central Kitchen cook Lisa Jones, special education teacher Jasleen Aulakh, library media specialist Julie Hunter, counselor Jared Ibarra, school board director Doug Benjamin, and teacher Luz Lopez.



E) Digital Forms

Qualtrics

Since March 2020 use of Qualtrics has expanded greatly. All initial training and troubleshooting are provided by the communications technician.

Qualtrics was vital during the on-site vaccine clinics we provided. Staff, students and families were able to sign up for vaccine appointments through the online forms we created using Qualtrics. We had over 2,000 appointments through the online sign-up forms.

We kept our COVID-19 general feedback/question form active and modified it to direct general questions to our general inquiry inbox. Families and community members can still access the form to request a counselor to contact them and to be directed to the Family Resource Center referral form. Since Dec. 1, 2020, there have been 219 entries to this form.

Our Family Resource Center referral form was created during the school closures but continues to be a valuable tool for families to request help and for staff to refer families to the center. The inbox is monitored by Family Resource Center staff. Families can request personal care items, support with meals and request support for other needs. During this reporting period 703 submissions were received.

Additional forms during this reporting period included:

- Daily student health attestation form (78,198 responses)
- Quarterly student health attestation (7,696 responses)
- Return to school preference input from families (7,169 responses)
- Visitor sign in/out – required per COVID-19 protocols (1,581 responses)
- Family school climate survey (1,503 responses)
- Tech support request form (1,100 responses)
- BVL and BFPP future plans/feedback form (478 responses)
- 2021 budget feedback (371 responses)
- Eligible bus rider registration forms (158 responses)

F) Traditional Media

Media Coverage and Relations

The communications team provides timely and excellent customer service with traditional and new media outlets in our community, typically responding in less than 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 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 knowledgeable sources from across the district, both geographically and by level. The advent of Zoom interviews has a positive influence on media relations, as Zoom gives more flexibility and

easier access to staff members during their available hours and gives communications staff more ability to support them in being interviewed.

Messages to families, the wider community and our media list serve as press releases and often result in inquiries, interviews and/or follow-up stories using the resources and messages we provide to our community. Communications cultivates positive and responsive working relationships with our local media, which results in a high level of trust and mutual respect.

The communications executive director and assistant director meet with the Bellingham Herald and KGMI editorial leadership annually to build relationships and inform about major initiatives within the school district; they have also begun regular meetings with newer local media outlets the Salish Current and Cascadia Daily.

Communications also facilitates many requests for a wide range of stories by Western Washington University journalists, both for classes and for publications, and met with editorial leadership of The Front (formerly the Western Front), WWU's student newspaper, in September to build working relationships with editorial leadership and help clarify some of the best practices for working together. WWU is a valued community partner, and communications works with collegiate journalists following the same protocols as the professional press.

Based on community feedback and research on media relations practices in similarly-sized Washington school districts and local government and/or educational organizations (e.g. Whatcom Community College, WTA, WWU, the City of Bellingham), the 4000 procedure (Communications and Community Relations Program) was updated to clarify district media relations protocols, and to emphasize the responsibility to provide information about and media access to our district, while balancing the privacy, dignity and capacity of our students, families and staff. Previously, media relations procedure information had been in procedure 4011.

COVID-19 and its effects on K12 education continued to be a topic of great interest to media, and our COVID-19 dashboard was mentioned in daily coverage of COVID-19 in our community.

Media Relations by the Numbers

- Direct inquiries received this reporting period: 73 (average of 1.4 / week)
 - 45 inquiries resulted in published stories and/or broadcast coverage
 - Estimated staff time spent on published stories: approx. 43 hours for responding, researching, providing statements, and/or participating in interviews.
 - 15 inquiries resulted in unpublished stories (e.g., for a collegiate class)
 - Staff time spent on unpublished stories: approx. 54 hours spent responding, researching, providing statements, and/or participating in interviews.
 - Please note that this number is higher than in typical years due to a WWU advanced journalism class's focus on K12 education during winter quarter 2021.
 - The balance of inquiries represented a variety of scenarios, such as checking in on the validity of a tip received through a tip line, or a story that appears to have been dropped due to the editorial process at a publication.

- Staff time spent responding to these inquiries: approx. 13 hours.
- Coverage included stories on:
 - COVID-19 related:
 - Returning to in-person school
 - Vaccination access and eligibility
 - Staff vaccination rates
 - Vaccination rates and exemptions for staff
 - 2018 bond project completion and continued work
 - Outdoor Education
 - Bellingham High School Mascot task force, process and decision

In order of volume of inquiries, the most common media inquiries came from: The Bellingham Herald, KGMI, The Front (WWU) and WWU journalism students. (Please note that while the Herald and KGMI inquiries typically result in coverage, The Front inquiries do not always result in a published story, although they receive consistent consideration and response.)

Communications also worked with NPR, Seattle radio stations KIRO and KNKX, Seattle TV stations KOMO and Q13, the Point Roberts Press, the Salish Current, several freelance reporters and additional websites or researchers.

In May 2021, our district also received national attention regarding the picture book “I Am Jazz” from a variety of news and opinion-based outlets, including the Young America’s Foundation, Yahoo Life, christianpost.com and Fox News (national). Please see the EDI section of this report for more on this subject.

2a ii) School board meetings and materials

Our board meeting materials are on the website and available before each meeting.

During the pandemic, the Zoom link to the meeting was published on the [school board webpage](#).

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

Pre-COVID, we organize and promote [school board linkages](#). During this reporting period, the school board was unable to host any linkages or student roundtables. However, the board was able to participate in school visits in the fall of 2021 and visited Parkview, Fairhaven and Sehome. These visits allowed 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 were shared on social media.

The Bellingham Promise is referenced in many of our communications. During this reporting period, we have published 43 Promise stories with 30,922 pageviews on the Promise website. We continue to email these stories to staff and families regularly and post them on social media.

An example of sharing short-term and long-term strategic goals is our [update on the class of 2024](#), which included a video update on the students who were in the first class to access full day kindergarten. We highlighted The Promise’s key strategy of early childhood education.



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

Pre-pandemic, our schools and staff, with assistance from the Department of Communications and Community Relations, regularly communicate with families in person (teacher/parent conferences) and via web (Skyward), email, social media and postal mail regarding student progress, including progress reports, report cards, graduation requirements and state assessments.

During this reporting period, the pandemic increased the need for strong two-way communication with both staff and families. It also allowed both staff and families to get creative in how they could access each other. Staff shared Zoom links, phone numbers and Skype for business accounts because they could not rely on having access to parents/guardians on the playground or invite them into classrooms for meetings or volunteering. We heard consistently that strong family engagement was a silver lining of remote learning and that staff are continuing to utilize tools that allow them to be in more frequent contact with families. Both staff and families are more adept at utilizing apps and technology to share information about student progress, as a result of remote learning. This includes the use of tools such as SeeSaw, Teams and Remind in addition to the tools previously noted.

Our family engagement team play 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 to share stories about The Bellingham Promise in action in our schools and community. Below are the top five most viewed Promise stories for this reporting period:

1. <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/06/10/humans-of-bps-graduating-class-of-2021/>
2. <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/06/01/thank-you-for-your-years-of-service-2020-21-retirees/>
3. <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/02/16/high-school-students-create-virtual-rooms-to-read-to-elementary-students-and-showcase-global-dances/>
4. <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/06/01/sehome-drama-students-depict-teen-life-in-a-pandemic-in-award-winning-devised-film-project/>
5. <https://promise.bellinghamschools.org/2021/04/05/national-merit-2021/>

The Bellingham Promise Website Statistics



The chart above (December 2020 to November 2021) shows the spike in pageviews after each communication to families, staff and community about our latest Promise stories.

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. Our school staffs 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, all school board meetings were held via Zoom. We did not have any audience speakers this reporting period, and 67 people submitted Listening Posts containing complaints, concerns, 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

District Office Design Advisory Committee

Facilities Planning Task Force

Playground Standards Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee

Sunnyland Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee

Parent Advisory Committees

Highly Capable Learning Parent Advisory Committee

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

Teaching and Learning

Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee

CTE General Advisory Council

Dual Language Program Planning Task Force

Early Literacy Screener Review Task Force

Foundational Literacy Skills Curriculum Committee

GRADS Advisory Group

High School Grading Practices Task Force, Phase Two

Instructional Materials Committee

Joint District- BEA Professional Development Study Committee

Superintendent

Student Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Other

BHS Mascot Change Task Force

Occupational Health & Safety Committee

Promise Awards Advisory Group

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