



MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Directors
From: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
Date: February 15, 2022
Subject: **Monitoring Report for EL-4, Staff Treatment, Compensation and Evaluation**

I certify that the following is accurate as of February 15, 2022. The reporting period is from February 11, 2021 through February 15, 2022.

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 recommending 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, NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement, The National Association of Educational Procurement (NAEP), Washington State Paralegal Association (WSPA), 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.

During the 2020-21 school year, many of our hiring practices significantly changed based on COVID-19. Due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 and staffing needs, our timelines for hiring were delayed from past years. Another factor in the delay was an all-out effort to get all students back to in-person learning, which involved an extreme amount of staffing complexities including shifting staff and hiring for those staff not able to return to the workplace.

When the district started our hiring process for the 2021-22 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, with the vast majority of new hires assigned to a position before the end of the school year preceding their contract year. **Our hiring process in the spring and summer of 2021 was almost exclusively remote.** Principal/administrative and human resources coordination was electronic and via remote meetings and interviews were conducted remotely.

In-person job and recruiting fairs were all cancelled. Instead, many of the traditional job fairs went to a virtual format. The district participated in these fairs and was successful to recruit several great teachers. Below is a picture of the Bellingham virtual booth from the statewide job fair that is usually held in both Spokane and the Tacoma Dome.



This spring, the district is back to our normal early cycle of openings. Our Special Education and elementary pools were opened in January for the 2022-23 school year. In addition, the district has already participated in a virtual job fair and will be participating in other in-person jobs fairs such as the statewide fair at the Tacoma Dome in March. The district is also planning local job fairs to recruit applicants of color to assist in diversifying our work force.

COVID-19 has caused our district to change practices in many areas. Although many of our COVID-related practices are no longer necessary, the human resource team has developed and will maintain many of those practices that will continue higher level efficiencies and customer service.

Substitutes

During the 2020-21 school year, the use of substitutes varied greatly from normal practices. During remote learning, we used substitutes to assist with remote instruction as needed. This required providing special training to substitutes associated with the delivery of remote instruction. As we returned to in-person instruction, we used high numbers 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.

This fall brought new and significant challenges to fill vacancies and the need for substitutes. These challenges are the result of work force shortages felt throughout the county and state and the high absence rate caused by the Omicron variant. Vacancies have been experienced in all areas including bus drivers, food service, custodial, paraeducators and teachers. Typically, we have been able to fill absences (fill rate) throughout the system and provide substitutes with consistency at a high fill rate. See the chart below for 2020-21.

Substitute Fill Rate 2020-21 School Year					
Total Absences/Vacancies	Absences Needing a Substitute	Absences Not Needing a Substitute	Unfilled	Filled	Percent of Absences Filled
22,252	16,931	5,321	594	16,337	96.49%

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

This winter, we have been in the range of 80 to 90 percent fill rate for vacancies. Unfilled absences cause a great deal of day-to-day issues in every department/school. Most days we need to shift staff to meet the highest building and student needs. Based on these staffing/substitute shortages, the district has employed the following strategies:

- Shift staff assignments within the building to cover classroom assignments. Educational coaches, and other support certificated employees who work in the schools are filling in when needed as classroom teachers and paraeducators.
- Shift certificated staff from district offices and districtwide assignments to provide building and classroom support.
- Develop a schedule for district office classified staff to support buildings in the morning for tasks such rapid COVID-19 testing, supporting student arrival, general supervision and phone calls.
- Issue emergency substitute certificates to paraeducators and student teacher interns.

- Develop a process to hire emergency certificated substitutes. This is open to applicants with a bachelor's degree but not necessarily a teaching degree. We are able to obtain an emergency substitute certificate for qualified candidates.
- We have increased our advertisement for substitutes and our human resources staff are screening, reference checking and onboarding many staff each week.
- The district has designed and implemented trainings for new substitutes and other district staff who traditionally do not work in the classroom to better prepare them for working with students, such as how to support students with special education needs.

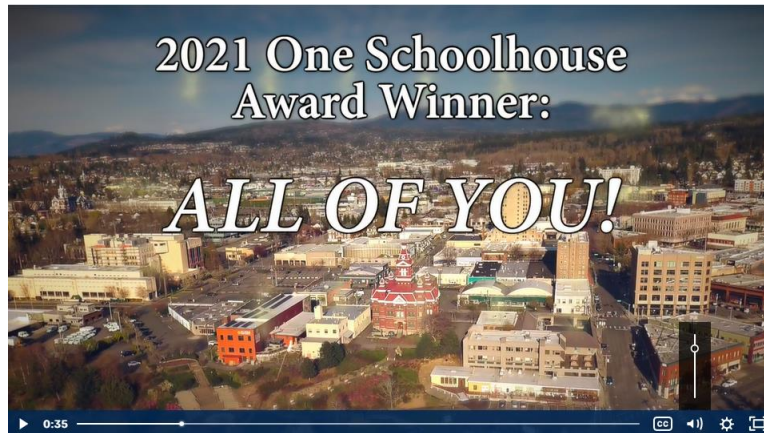
Employee Recognition

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, and a PDF version, which is usually shared in a message of gratitude from the superintendent. In this reporting period, Good Apples recognition was timed with Valentine's Day 2021 in [February](#), Staff Appreciation Week 2021 in [May](#), and American Education Week 2021 in [November](#).
- 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. Even in the time of COVID-19, [our Promise award surprise visits over Zoom in 2021 were heartwarming and appreciated](#). All Promise award recipients received engraved trophies. In addition to those awards, the [2021 One Schoolhouse Award video](#) was released in June 2021 highlighting the important work of our entire community (staff, students, families and community partners) during the pandemic.

“This past school year,” Supt. Baker says at the start of the video, “we have had challenges to overcome and successes to celebrate, and we could not have done it without the collective commitment of our entire community. The entire Bellingham community stepped up. As The Bellingham Promise says, ‘Together, we achieve more than alone.’”

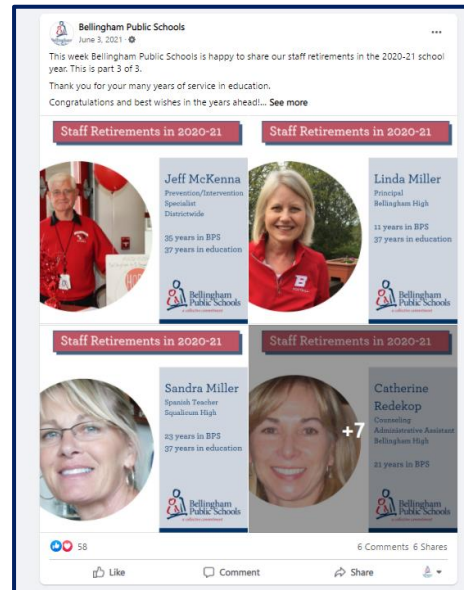
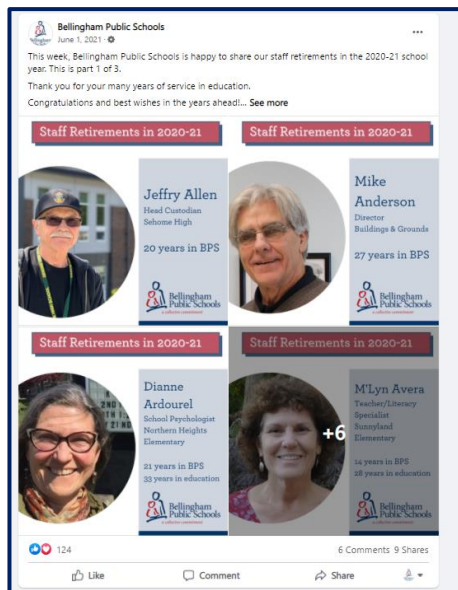


- 3) **Retirements:** Traditionally every spring, communications plans and hosts a semi-formal dinner to honor all retirees in the district. In spring 2021, as in spring 2020, the dinner was cancelled due to the pandemic. As a way to show appreciation for their service, every retiree received an engraved vase on behalf of the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation. Over 40 vases were ordered and delivered in person to staff members either to their homes or onsite. See sample vase gift bag.



Monitoring Report for EL-4

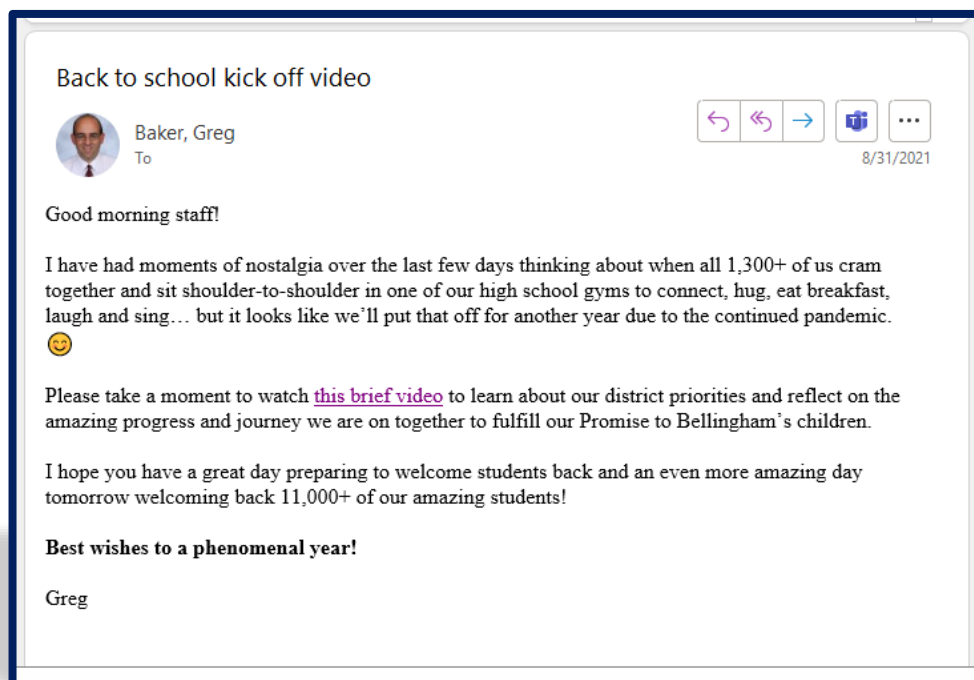
This year, in lieu of retirement tributes at the traditional dinner, the Communications Department worked on a [PowerPoint slides/video](#) shared at the May 2021 School Board meeting and through family and staff communications. Additionally, a three-part social media campaign highlighted our retirees on Facebook and Instagram, garnering lots of love and likes online. ❤️



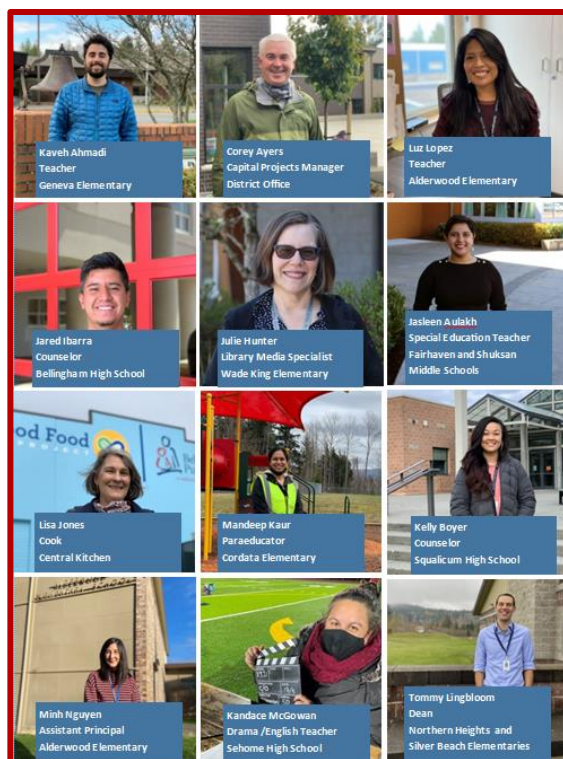
Additionally, communications staff supported individual offices with retirement celebrations by producing digital invites and cards. Examples below:



- 4) **Staff Kick off:** During this reporting period, we were unable to host our annual all-staff event once again due to COVID-19 precautions, but we still felt it was important to start the new school year with some inspiration. The [Aug. 31, 2021 video](#) was shared by Supt. Baker through email to all staff with the following message:



- 5) **Humans of BPS social media campaign:** Between January 2021 and January 2022, 12 staff members were highlighted as part of a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram using the hashtag #HumansofBPS.



Volunteers

In January 2021 many students had returned to in-person learning and we were planning the return of our secondary students. By March the vast majority of students were in-person with a modified schedule. During this time we were trying to limit the number of adults in the classroom to provide for sufficient distancing and other COVID-19 mitigation strategies. Since we were not allowing volunteers in the schools during that time, our volunteer coordinator recruited volunteers specifically for online programs like the Promise Tomorrow Initiative, providing 22 volunteers in winter and 24 volunteers in spring. Our volunteer coordinator supported the Creando Connections Team, a group of Bellingham High School students who developed a multi-lingual curricula for pre-second graders and shared with library techs and teachers as an added classroom resource and also for families. This group was nominated and won the Promise Award in 2021 for Volunteers of the Year! Additional hours were directed supporting the central kitchen and Department of Teaching and Learning each week, and working at the warehouse inventorying curriculum.

Starting in March, time was focused on building a back-to-school block party event scheduled in August. Our volunteer coordinator took a lead role with the family engagement and communication departments and several other staff to develop and present this school readiness event at Bellingham High School. This event utilized over twenty community partners and forty volunteers and multiple staff. The Promise includes providing an education for the whole child. The block party was the whole community contributing to students' readiness for schools and including sports physicals, haircuts, immunizations, free backpacks, books and a plethora of other resources for families. With over 1,500 families and students in attendance, this event was



deemed a success. With funding, the event will continue to be offered annually in August and continue to grow and expand its reach and resources to families.

Community partners played an important part in the back-to-school event and continue to provide added resources and supports to our students, teachers and families. Our volunteer coordinator meets quarterly via Zoom with community partners to share what is happening at the district level and answer any questions about upcoming projects or needs.

With students returning to school full-time this fall and the Governor's mandate for all school employees to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, the district made the decision to include volunteers under this mandate. In September, we added the vaccine verification requirement to the online volunteer application as well as a COVID-19 safety training for volunteers. These added requirements have been well received by parents, community members and college students who volunteer in our schools. The volunteer coordinator has worked closely with the health services team to create guidelines for visitors and volunteers in our schools this year. Volunteers continue to have limited opportunities in our schools this fall. However, many are supporting recess at the primary level and AVID and tutoring positions at the secondary level. Volunteers are also supporting vaccine clinics at various schools this fall and winter. To date, we have over 1,600 volunteers who are eligible to volunteer in our schools based on these new requirements. We are working to increase in-person opportunities for our volunteers to help support our schools.

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 is hiring powerful 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, have continued to develop professional learning opportunities for staff that are based on the guiding principles of equity, content knowledge, active learning, coherence, and collective participation.

A continued focus on the identified five critical areas of focus for effective teaching and learning has guided the professional learning through the pandemic:

- 1) Family engagement and support
- 2) Curriculum coherence (essential standards)
- 3) Digital learning environments
- 4) Cognitive engagement
- 5) Feedback for learning

This fall the added emphasis of equity, diversity and inclusion has been woven through our professional learning plans and practices. Some key professional learning efforts in support of the ongoing growth and effectiveness of our teaching and learning staff are outlined below.

Leadership team training and development took place throughout the school year, focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Knowing that the teacher is the number one variable to improvement of student outcomes, and the administrator's support is the next critical variable, we place a heavy emphasis on supporting the development and work of our school leaders. In August 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. A continued theme of learning also centered around student and staff safety and continuing to provide leadership around covid safety measures at each site. These learning topics then continued through monthly leadership team meetings, level meetings with a strong emphasis on learning together, and a strong majority of our district leaders taking part in a statewide book study of *Caste, the Origins of our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson, offered by Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) and facilitated by Dr. Tammy Campbell. All the leadership professional development focused on the "strong support" aspect of the key strategy of *Great Teaching with Strong Support*, knowing that leadership matters and makes a difference in setting up staff, students and families for success and teamwork.

In August each school team worked collaboratively, with the support and guidance of the Department of Teaching and Learning, to develop schoolwide professional development plans focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Professional development teams, including teacher leaders (multi-lingual learner specialists and educational technology/instructional coaches, for example), administration, and others key in professional learning at the school level, came together for two days in August. Guided by the Department of Teaching and Learning, teams developed school improvement professional development plans focused on the common area of equity, diversity, and inclusion, all in support of effective teaching and learning. The result, a year-long professional development plan for each school, centered around a common purpose, and catered to the unique place and circumstance of each school and staff.

Our district professional development calendar was once again established to show cross district, school-based, team, and individual times dedicated for professional development. This schedule highlights the use of the full days of non-student days that are dedicated for teacher professional development and planning. The cross-district collaboration time is also designated, as are the district technology integration hours that include school led and self-directed time.



2021-22 Staff Learning Time

Focus: Equity and Instructional Practice

	Monday Aug 30	Tuesday Aug 31	Friday Sept. 24	Friday Oct 15	Friday Nov 5	Friday March 11
8:00am-11:15am	5 hours Building-based*	District Kick Off Building-based	Building Based All Levels	Building Based All Levels	Elem/MS: Conferences HS: Individual	Building Based All Levels
12:15pm-3:30pm	2 hours individual teacher	Individual	Individual All Levels	Elem: Building Based MS/HS: District Directed Job-alike Sessions	HS: Building-based	Elem: Building Based MS/HS: District Directed Job-alike Sessions

Please note: Contracted times are adjusted on all cross-district staff learning days with all staff starting working @ 8:00-3:30 allowing for P-12 collaboration.

Early Dismissal Building-based Staff Learning Time

Elementary: 65 minutes individual, 1 hour building based

Sept. 16 TPEP*	Oct. 7 TPEP*	Nov. 18	Dec. 9	Jan. 13	Jan. 27	Feb. 10	March 3	April 14	May 5	May 19	June 2
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Dates for elementary district-wide job-alike collaboration time: Sept 30, Oct 28, Jan 20, Feb 24, March 24, April 21 and May 26 (all dates 2:00 – 3:00 pm)

Middle School: 60 minutes individual, 2 hours and 30 minutes building based

High School: 30 minutes individual, 90 minutes building based

Sept. 23 TPEP*	Nov. 4	Dec. 9	Feb. 10	March 10	April 28
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*TPEP suggestion based on need for time to develop student growth goals and area of focus for inquiry cycles and end of the year evaluation.

Technology Integration Time (See contract language for greater specificity)

7.5 hours Technology integration professional learning: Staff and principal or program administrator work collaboratively to design building/program-based activities designed to meet identified building, program, and/or District technology integration goals outside of the contracted day.

7.5 hours Technology self-directed professional learning: Staff will document individual technology learning time completed outside of the contracted day on a form provided by the District.

STAFF LEARNING DAY CALENDAR | REVISED 10.7.2021

District job-alike collaboration across the system focused on coherence, inquiry, EDI, and instructional best practices. With a new early literacy screener assessment (i-Ready) and a new foundational skills curriculum (Really Great Reading), the preschool, kindergarten, first and second grade teachers spent a day in August and the first two cross district collaboration afternoons focused on learning these new programs. Specialists and Special Education educators joined in the training as these new early literacy reading materials will support students across all tiers of instruction.

The third through fifth grade teachers spent their job alike collaboration time focused on inquiry units with a theme of equity, building on the school plans developed collectively in August. This learning, which included social studies content as well, led by each school's instructional coach.

Secondary teachers in grades six through twelve took part in content area collaboration including, depending on the grade level and content area, common essential standards, common assessments, collaborative design of unit plans, a focus on student engagement and increasing student voice, and content area topics of relevance. View our [artifacts of job-alike collaboration](#).

The Department of Teaching and Learning focused the intersection of *Effective Teaching with Strong Support and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*. Partnering with the University of Washington's Haring Center, and Dr. Cassie Martin, members of the Department of Teaching and Learning began a deep exploration into inclusionary practices, beginning with learning from

the staff at Sehome High School who continue to be a statewide model school with The Haring Center. This learning is being extended to principals through focused learning time at level meetings.

The Teacher Principal Evaluation Process continued with a focus on inquiry cycles of continuous improvement around teacher established goals. The first two early release sessions of the school year found school administrators leading their staff through reflection and goal setting around the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning. 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.

A strong commitment was put on staff development focused on staff and student well-being and attempts to support stress, anxiety and overwhelm during this continued time of covid impacting our daily lives. The overwhelm felt across the system this year, perhaps caused by the multiple waves of the pandemic, has put incredible stress on our system and our employees. In efforts to support staff overall well-being, one strategy has been to offer a variety of resources and ideas for staff related to well-being. These have included recommendations of podcasts, books, and apps focused on happiness, physical activity, meditation, and more. In addition, over 18 classes and webinars have been offered to staff in support of overall health and well-being. These classes have been well attended and the feedback and appreciation has been widely positive. Some topics have included yoga, suicide prevention and youth mental health training, helping students manage anxiety in the classroom, and adult classes on the science of well-being and managing emotions in times of uncertainty and stress. Facilitated by a variety of adults, but mainly our mental health staff and school counselors, these courses are aimed at building the well-being of our staff to equip them to be able to support the well-being and learning of our students.

SUPPORTING BPS STAFF WELLNESS - NOVEMBER 2021



PHYSICAL HEALTH, SOCIAL CONNECTION, MENTAL HEALTH AND REFLECTION ARE PILLARS OF WELLNESS

We are committed to continuing to offer professional development focusing on wellness and self-care as part of the BIG 4 for Wellness. This newsletter is designed to share wellness opportunities for staff.

BPS Mental Health & Wellness Mission Statement

In Bellingham Public Schools, we are committed to the mental, physical, and social well-being of our staff, students, and families. Through ongoing professional development, wellness initiatives and community partnerships, we believe staff wellness positively impacts student success and a healthy, connected Bellingham community.

IT'S A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

On October 15, Dr. Baker wrote a message to all staff recognizing the stress and difficulty still present in our schools and encouraging the focus on SEL with students and wellness for adults. We want to reiterate that message and remind you of the support for well-being for yourself and others. Here are some ideas and resources below.

Due to the overwhelm expressed by teachers, staff, union leaders and others, the professional learning experiences planned for the winter and spring were decreased in efforts to lessen pressure on staff. The cross-district collaboration efforts were paused for the winter and spring to provide teachers time for more individual and team time at their schools. School-based learning continues, along with many small group initiated professional learning endeavors. While the reduction of required professional learning time does provide a relief to the system, we also hear from teachers that the collaboration around content that matters to them fills them up in ways that also help their well-being – providing connection and purpose.

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 & adolescent development
- Emergency & health safety
- Positive & 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

2021-22 is our seventh year as a Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grant-funded district. This OSPI grant requires that our work be guided by a representative stakeholder team using the *State Standards for Beginning Educator Induction* which includes hiring, orientation, mentoring and professional 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 state 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 induction leader roundtables sponsored by OSPI. We also attended induction coordinator Zoom meetings and are refining practices about aspects of induction that lead to more equitable outcomes such as hiring staff of color. The benefit of the induction meetings being on Zoom is that we are learning with and from leaders from across the state rather than just regional coordinators.

New funding for staff who are Educational Staff Associates (ESA) became available and BEST districts were encouraged to apply for new BEST ESA funds. So, our stakeholder team has expanded to include the focus of mentoring of ESA staff such as psychologists, 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 funding also supports library media specialists. Our stakeholder team includes our mental health coordinator to reflect the expansion of the staff being supported through this grant. We have always included ESA staff in our orientation, but the funding is expanding to provide highly trained mentors for these specialized roles and will likely include more ongoing support for these important specialists that is similar to what we have developed over the last seven years for classroom teachers.

We have had a substantial increase in new hires this year and in our number of early career educators (those in their first three years in the profession). Many of the novice (first year) educators (classroom teachers or ESAs) have completed their internships during the pandemic and may have had minimal experience with full-time in-person teaching at the beginning of this year.

Using a blend of BEST grant and Title IIA funding, we have a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) leading the mentoring of new teachers. Per grant assurances, the TOSA may mentor up to twenty teachers and is currently mentoring ten novice teachers. The TOSA also coordinates the assignment of mentors for novices, provides ongoing professional development for our other mentors and communicates with district and building administrators to

coordinate support for our novice teachers. 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**. We focus on timely topics such as classroom environment and culture, family engagement, self-care, working with diverse learners and integrating best practices in technology. For this year only, we have decreased our monthly learning sessions and increased the amount of 1:1 mentoring, at the request of our teacher union in response to teacher fatigue and burnout. We continue to seek feedback from novices and expand their professional learning.

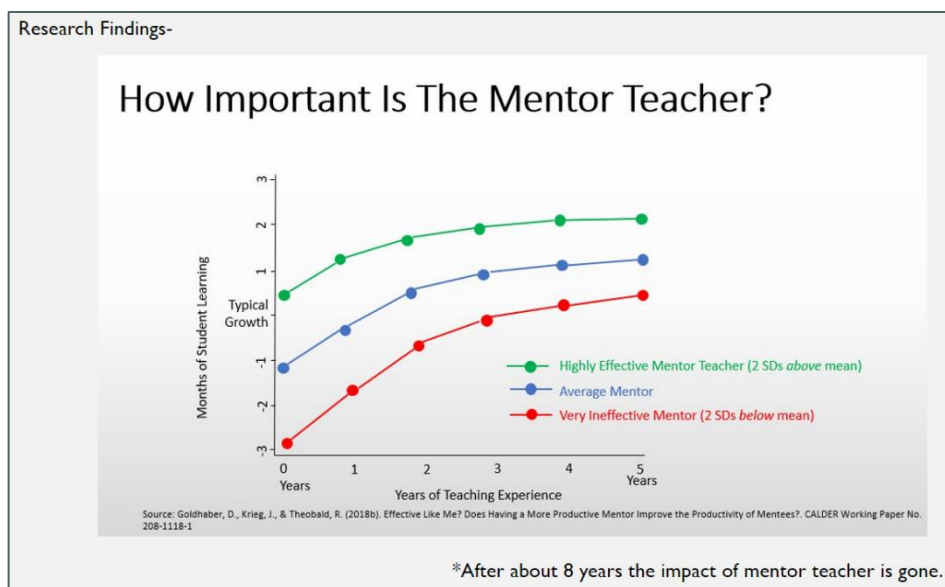
The stakeholder team continues to study the [State Standards for Beginning Educator Induction](#) as well as feedback from new teachers to set goals and focus their work.

Current goals include:

- 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
- Build intentional partnership with WWU to increase the effectiveness of our student-teacher placements, which has a large 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
- Develop mentoring team for ESAs and expand our stakeholder team lens to include these important staff members.

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 funding for the 2022-23 school year.**

Beginning Educators (under 180 days)					
	Fall 2017-2018	Fall 2018-2019	Fall 2019-2020	Fall 2020-2021	Fall 2021-2022
Elementary	7	14	9	11	17
Middle	11	8	3	8	9
High	9	7	7	4	5
Total	27	29	19	23	33



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 and our district leadership. 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 and mandatory trainings. We created a new employee orientation agenda on our Intranet 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. **With the addition of our new Director of Athletic and Activities, we are developing new and more direct ways to orientate and train our coaches prior to each sport season.**

During the 2020-21 school year, our new employee orientations were greatly reduced based on the complications of COVID-19. The orientations that were held, were done by Zoom. This year, we have returned to our normal schedule, and we are conducting orientations in person. We are closely coordinating the number of participants in each session to allow for proper distancing base on the size of the room.

Other trainings and in-person onboarding coordinated by the human resources department returned to more normal in-person meetings this past summer. Many of the processes that were created during COVID-19 have provided new and more efficient ways of onboarding new staff. One such example is the close working relationship with our technology department. Instead of two separate processes, we now plan and coordinate these services together, making it more efficient for both new employees and staff.

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 (previously called SafeSchools)** 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 and food services 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 training in November and have provided a window of time for completions through January 7. The chart below shows the number of online trainings that are completed on an annual basis and year-to-date for 2021-22. Some years may be higher due to the requirement of non-annual required trainings. For example, in 2018-19 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; and Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Prevention – Refresher (assigned to all staff in an “at risk for bloodborne pathogens” position) and Child Abuse – Mandatory Reporting.

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYEE VECTOR TRAINING COURSE COMPLETIONS BY SCHOOL YEAR (Through January 31, 2022)							
2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1664	3704	2872	3423	7376	5892	3357	5523

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

For the 2021-2022 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 Teamsters and Bellingham Education Association (BEA) and Bellingham Administrators' Organization (BAO). Salaries for other non-represented employees such as many district office staff, executives and coaches were also adjusted.

Early in the spring of 2021, we started working with Service Employees' International Union (SEIU) and Bellingham Association of School Employees (BASE) to negotiate successor agreements set to expire in August of 2021. With each group, we examined the compensation of comparable districts to determine adjustments in addition to the IPD (implicit price deflator) which is the inflationary adjustment index currently used by the state legislature.

The district and BASE agreed to a three-year contract (2021-2024) and a two-year contract with SEIU (2021-2023). Although some of our work was done remotely, much of our work was done in person using new protocols for masking and distancing. Our work throughout negotiations with both employee groups was collaborative and we continue to maintain a good working relationship as we move forward in the coming years.

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	2019-2022
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	2020-2022
BEA (Bellingham Education Association)	Certificated instructional staff	2020-2023

For 2021-22, the district made compensation adjustments for our classified directors and supervisors, executive team members and our non-represented employees including coaches, similar to other negotiated agreements to allow these additional employee groups to also remain competitive in our compensation.

This spring we will be working with Teamsters and BAO to negotiate new contracts set to expire in 2022. The district has already began meeting with BAO representatives to jointly work on compensation comparables and will soon begin our work with Teamsters. The current BAO contract expires June 30 and August 31 for Teamsters.

Throughout the past summer and fall, the district has continued to bargain other terms and conditions of the contract with all of our labor groups around the working conditions and changing health and safety conditions associated with COVID-19.

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 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.

Employee evaluations are typically completed in the spring and summer of each year. Because of ongoing workload issues associated with keeping schools open during a pandemic, OSPI again provided revised guidance related to the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) for the 2021-22 school year. To implement these changes, the Departments of Teaching and Learning and Human Resources provided written guidance for our district and open Q & A opportunities for all evaluators. The district worked with the Bellingham Education Association (BEA) to incorporate the revised evaluation guidance into a comprehensive memorandum of understanding regarding the terms of employment and delivery of educational services impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

- 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 2021 progress report was on the May 12, 2021 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 9.05%. This included a significant increase in our classified administrators/managers/supervisors from 6.67% to 9.38%.

At the time of this report, the district is **collecting data for the 2022** 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. Our human resources department's continual work is to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce.
- Continued into its fifth 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 planned 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.
- 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.