



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
DATE: Jan. 6, 2021
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, 2021. The reporting period is from Dec. 1, 2019 through Nov. 30, 2020.

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: revising attendance areas; crisis support at one of our schools; weather-related closures; operations

and technical capital levies; progress on our 2018 bond projects; food services; public records; budget; social justice and last but certainly not least, the COVID-19 pandemic closure and reopening in 2020.

Revising Attendance Areas

To help balance enrollment and socio-economic demographics at our middle schools, our district's Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee submitted a recommendation to revise our attendance areas, and I accepted its proposal in November 2019. Throughout the committee's process, school leaders, committee members and I shared a number of draft scenarios and asked for feedback via email, mailed letters, school-to-family communications, evening meetings and surveys. In February, we mailed postcards (see publications section below) and emailed families affected by the new boundaries in fall 2021, and equipped our school offices with maps to help explain and show the new changes.

Looking ahead: Our principals are looking forward to engaging with new families and students in 2021 in a variety of ways, including meetings, tours and luncheons (likely virtual) to help answer questions and welcome them to their new school.

Sunnyland Crisis and Support

Our mobile response team, district leadership, communications team and community partners stepped in to help support an unimaginable tragedy in December 2019 when Sunnyland Elementary School's beloved principal Lynn Heimsoth and her therapy dog were murdered. This was devastating for staff, students and families, as well as our extended community, and it was made more challenging because of the loss over winter break. We fielded multiple media requests in a fashion that honored our staff's needs and Lynn's family's wishes. We sent regular messages and updates regarding the tragedy, which included domestic violence and mental health resources. Our district took a lead role in hosting and organizing Lynn's memorial service at Bellingham High School and helped support with staff and the transition of a new principal at Sunnyland.

Weather-related Closures

We opened the inclement weather season in early November 2019 with an awareness message, and a staff and elementary family flyer in both English and Spanish. The purpose of this communication plan was to inform and remind our community how to find information about the status of schools and transportation when inclement weather hits, and how to add preferences through Skylert to receive communications. We also supported conversations and decisions in transportation regarding the best ways to design and communicate snow routes for buses.

In early January, with awareness of snow on the forecast, we reinforced these messages through social media.



On Monday, Jan. 13, 2020, schools were open with snow routes; schools were then closed on Jan. 14, 15, 16 and 17. Communications staff followed our notification protocols, which include phone, text, email in English and other languages as well as media alert and social media updates. We saw high engagement, both supportive and otherwise, on social media during these days, and we engaged in some positive community-building with our student body on Instagram, particularly through engaging photos of Hami in the snow and our adoption of humorous hashtags such as #CEOofsnow and #CEOofJuly, which played off the hashtags being used by students.

Communications also supported more serious messages, such as food access notifications, and helped me respond to and correspond with many community members who had questions about the decision-making process for closures. Many community members also had questions about whether one-to-one technology might make weather closures a thing of the past. These questions and answers at the time helped us both guide district conversations during the March COVID-19 closure and well into fall 2020 about equitable access to education when school buildings are closed.

I also shared reflections with our community at the end of each day on Monday, Jan. 13, Tuesday, Jan. 14, Wednesday, Jan. 15, and Thursday, Jan. 16. Family feedback has led us to try, whenever possible, to announce closures the night before, which support families in planning for a no school day. We were able to do that for three of the four days of the 2020 weather closures.

Communications then supported human resources in working with the labor groups to communicate a planned change to the end of first semester, which was shifted from Jan. 26 to Jan. 31. We also shared a message on Feb. 3 that shifted graduation dates and the planned end of the school year due to the weather closures.

2020 Levy

We had two replacement levies, an operations levy and technology capital levy, on the special election ballot on Feb. 11, 2020, and both were approved with 71% passing rate. Our levies pay for nearly 25 percent of the cost of educational services in Bellingham Public Schools not adequately funded by the state. Our role as a district is to provide our community with facts about voting, the election and what these levies would fund. We shared this information through a variety of channels, including social media, our community newsletter InsideSchools, emails with levy facts, videos and in-person speaking engagements, including parent group and staff meetings,

our [FAQ](#) and our [Levy Quick Facts flyer](#) (also in Spanish), which was sent home in backpack mail at our elementary schools and made available at all schools and the District Office.



2018 Bond

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](#).

During this reporting period, Alderwood and Parkview elementary schools marked the start of construction on their new schools with virtual groundbreaking events. We mailed postcard invites in September 2020 to the [Alderwood](#) and [Parkview](#) communities to watch the virtual groundbreakings. The videos were also shared via social media on [Sept. 15, 2020](#) and [Sept. 28, 2020](#). We invited the rest of our school community including students, families and staff to watch [Alderwood Elementary School's event](#) and [Parkview Elementary School's groundbreaking](#) in an update on [Dec. 2, 2020](#).

In October, Dykeman Architects joined capital projects director Curtis Lawyer and Sunnyland principal Amy Berreth in a virtual family and community Zoom meeting [viewable here](#) to share the work of the [Sunnyland Elementary School Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee](#). Permitting, bidding and beginning construction is all expected next spring for completion by fall 2022.

A design advisory committee for the new [District Office](#) met throughout this year. An [FAQ](#) for the community was created on Feb. 5, 2020. I emailed a call for applications to district staff and

Monitoring Report for EL-3

community partners on March 5, 2020. The new building will house offices and meeting rooms for staff, families and community partners, and includes an early learning center and ample space for professional development and training for teachers and staff.

Public Records

Communications fulfilled 35 public records requests during the reporting period. The scope of each request ranged from a single piece of information about our district to hundreds of responsive records requiring extensive review.

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. Communications staff continues to receive regular training in public records law by participating in training webinars hosted by the state attorney general's office three times per calendar year. We also receive support for questions regarding public records 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 their evolving needs and their major pivots during the pandemic school closures. Up until March, we continued to produce printed school menus by level in English and Spanish (four versions) every six weeks.

The image displays two printed school menus side-by-side. The left menu is for 'Elementary School Lunch Menu' (Feb. 18 - March 27, 2020) and the right is for 'Secundaria/Preparatoria Menu de Almuerzo Escolar' (18 de febrero al 27 de marzo, 2020). Both menus feature a 'Whole Grains' highlight at the top. The Elementary menu lists daily meal options in English and Spanish, including items like chicken, beef, pork, and fish. The Secundaria/Preparatoria menu also lists daily meal options in English and Spanish, including items like chicken, beef, pork, and fish. Both menus include a 'Good Food' logo and a 'Buena Comida' logo at the bottom.

Click to enlarge.

The regular school cafeteria menus evolved into support for meal box inserts and weekly social media reminders about pick up times, dates and locations once the closure began.

In this reporting period, communications continued to share the many stories coming out of food services but in June 2020 began sharing these in an online digital newsletter (Smore) "Update for Food Services and Wellness" highlighting the important changes happening in this area and shared through email, the website and social media.

- Jan. 9, 2020: highlighting the harvest of the month for January (apples), Parkview student baking and a visit to the Happy Valley cafeteria from farmer Helen Solem.

- Feb. 18, 2020: highlighting the food recovery initiative with Sustainable Connections, a visit from the cosmic crisp apple grower, and cooking in the classroom initiative.
- June 2020 (digital newsletter): highlighting the pandemic food distribution model, the summer food program, the Big4 for Wellness and self-care campaign, Pandemic EBT program, and the Farm to Freezer story.
- September 2020: this edition updated families with the USDA decision to continue to cover free meals for all children in the district, gave the updated fall locations and the move to Wednesday distributions.
- November 2020: highlighting meal box day of week variance in November to Tuesday; in-person cafeteria menus, wellness reminders about sexual health education, mental health resources, and use of playgrounds as well as the COVID-era daily health attestation for in-person students.

Before the closure, the new logos and assets of the Good Food Project were made into buttons and sticker to give out to food service ambassadors and kids in the cafeteria. See sample below.



Social Justice and Police in Schools

The COVID-19 pandemic was center stage for much of 2020, and another pandemic has been wreaking havoc for hundreds of years in our country – that of racism, bigotry and hate. In the days and weeks following the murder of a Black man, George Floyd, in May 2020, there were a number of protests, demonstrations and calls for action and education across our country, and we knew it was important to share our district’s continued commitment to being an anti-racist organization and to communicate our plans and reflections of our ongoing equity, diversity and inclusion work. I sent several messages to our community regarding racism, social justice and the role of police in our schools. My initial message in May inspired hundreds of responses, including emails, phone calls and social media posts from members of our community, including students, parents, staff and representatives from law enforcement. I sent several follow up community messages in June and July, as well as a What’s up Doc interview segment regarding racial justice and police in schools. Our goal was to acknowledge the importance of racial justice work and that it is ongoing; recognize there is work to be done to redefine the role of police in our schools, including the responsibilities of our district resource officer (DRO); and help those who were seeking videos and other anti-racist resources for education and action, which included class offerings for parents and guardians.

Budget

We sent regular updates during this reporting period to students, staff, families and our community about our budget process, including updates in February and May. We regularly update our budget

webpage, which includes budget highlights that summarizes 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.

In our message in September, we signaled the state's intention to cut funding for transportation and communicated how our enrollment is tied to state funding and that our student count was down, which is consistent with a statewide trend of families opting for homeschooling or "red shirting" students in preschool, kindergarten or first grade. 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. As I speak at staff meetings and to other groups, I strive to share an update on our budget.

Pandemic Closure and Reopening

And finally, the COVID-19 pandemic. The word "unprecedented" became cliché in 2020, but none of us had ever managed a district or tried to conduct school during a health crisis like COVID-19. We relied on frequent, transparent and creative communication as we navigated these uncharted waters. Listed below are some examples of how we communicated some different areas of focus.

Food

As mentioned above, regular menus pivoted to meal box inserts, messaging about the evolving and changing distribution model for meals. The early pandemic food story is written up in a Promise story: How a district and community pulls together to feed kids.

Safety Protocols, FAQs and COVID-19 Dashboard

Sharing key and ever-changing information, guidance and protocols with staff was paramount throughout the pandemic. In the past, we have relied on in-person staff meetings and paper flyers as well as email to signal new changes or practices. In the time of COVID-19, it became more important than ever to enhance a section of our website that would be easily accessible to staff. Over time, we created a "one-stop shop" on our human resources webpage, which includes videos, a staff-specific FAQ, required training, cleaning protocols, our staff COVID handbook and other pertinent information. Once we had a solid foundation for sharing safety protocols with staff, we developed a similar web presence and communications tools for students and families, including a return to school video, COVID safety agreement with families, family FAQ and form and COVID dashboard.

Virtual Graduations

Communications took a lead role in assisting and promoting virtual graduation ceremonies, which included creating branding elements with the help of graphic designer Aaron Logue of Credo Graphics. A uniform district look was created for the 2020 graduations, using the colors and logos of each school. This branding was included on digital evites, social media graphics and a graduate slideshow used in the graduation videos. (See links below)

Sample:



Yard signs and 11 x 17-inch flyers were also produced for every graduate in Bellingham, Options, Sehome and Squalicum high schools and in the Community Transitions program. While we couldn't be together in person, the district tried to show support and how proud we were of our 2020 graduates.



Communications worked with Veritas Media in its production and streaming of four separate, unique graduation videos, including a PowerPoint template for the procession of graduate slides: Bellingham High School; Sehome High School; Options High School; and Squalicum High School.

Virtual Conversations via Zoom

In an effort to provide as much information as possible to our community during the pandemic, we hosted five virtual conversation via Zoom with Dr. Baker. These were on April 24, May 7, May 27, Aug. 20 and Oct. 22. We invited staff, students, families and our extended community to watch and submit questions before and during the event through an online form. To build anticipation for the virtual conversations we created and shared the events via Facebook. After the live event, we posted a video recording to our website and sent to all staff, students and families

and shared snips and links on social media and with the city of Bellingham's BTV 10. The virtual conversations were well attended with up to 800 live participants. Students also interviewed Dr. Baker in our "remote edition" of What's up Doc? video features throughout the spring.

School Schedule

One of the largest tasks the reopening workgroups faced over the summer was designing schedules that would meet students' learning needs, while allowing for both in-person and remote learning.

Communications participated in the schedule work groups and supported conversations around aligning the levels' schedules. Family, staff and student input regarding possible schedules was collected via the summer reopening feedback form in October.

Communications also created a sample schedule webpage where families could view what a sample day might look like, and answered questions via social media for families. As levels either welcomed students back in-person or planned for doing so in the future, Communications continued to support leaders with planning and messaging.

Qualtrics

When schools first closed the volume of questions and requests was extremely high and difficult to respond to in a timely manner. To provide the best possible support to our staff, families and community we first developed a general feedback form in Qualtrics (bellingshamschools.org/feedback). Qualtrics is a survey software we have primarily used to administer our annual school climate survey, but since March use expanded greatly.

This first iteration was an online form with two boxes for questions and comments. After reviewing the initial questions coming in, communications staff were able to organize them into categories which included staff questions, child care, requests for help, tech support, school meals and general questions. We have continued to build and adapt this form to its current iteration which is designed to route visitors to the correct person to answer their need or request. The form is also translated into five different languages which are Spanish, Chinese, Punjabi, Russian and Vietnamese.

Since this initial form Qualtrics use has expanded greatly and is being used by a number of departments. All initial training and troubleshooting was provided by the Department of Communications and Community Relations.

Here are examples of ways Qualtrics has been used since March 2020:

1) Health and Safety

- a) Health Attestation for Families
- b) Check in/out for staff and students

2) Human Resources

- a) COVID-19 Leave Request
- b) Leave of Absence Request
- c) Retirement/Resignation Notification
- d) Substitute Check In

3) Business Services

- a) School Meal Reimbursement Form
- b) Charitable Giving Form

4) Technology

- a) Device Request
- b) Tech Support

5) School Forms

- a) Graduation Ad Order Forms
- b) Waiver Forms
- c) AP Payment Forms
- d) BVL registration and electives

Signage

The development of signage has been important work throughout the pandemic for clarity and for safety to stop the spread of the virus. Communications produced and printed welcome signs, door signs, directional signs, working on-site masking procedure signs and signs for fields/playgrounds. Many signs, including the three examples below, were also translated into Spanish.



Click to enlarge.

Closure Signs and Phase 2 Signs for Playgrounds and Fields

A message was sent to families and our community on March 30, 2020 alerting to the closure of outdoor school facilities. The accompanying signage was created to further communicate this information.

CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

This school playground is currently closed to the public, but will remain open for the childcare currently being provided onsite for our community's first responders and healthcare providers.

Thank you for your understanding.



Closures

Due to health concerns about coronavirus spreading in our community, we have temporarily closed **all school playgrounds** and **outdoor basketball and tennis courts** until further notice.

When using our fields*, please be sure to use careful physical distancing at all times.

*Dogs are not allowed on artificial turf fields.

While we want to encourage families to remain active, we need to balance that with social distancing practices to keep everyone safe.



Phase 2 rules for outdoor facilities and fields

- ✓ Individual use and informal workouts of groups of five or less (not organized, sponsored or supervised by school staff) **are permitted** if they meet Phase 2 guidelines and follow strict social distancing.
- ✗ These facilities **are not available** for rentals during phase 2.
- ✗ Private club teams and businesses **cannot use** our facilities for organized practices, workouts and contests.

Reminder: Dogs are **not permitted** on artificial turf fields or tracks.



Grading Support for All Elementary Schools and Summer Send-off Postcards for Elementary Students

Communications supported end-of-year grading communications and the production of 78 versions of elementary principal letters (14 schools, English version and up to 4 language translations). In addition, four postcards were printed for teachers to send home to students with a personal note.

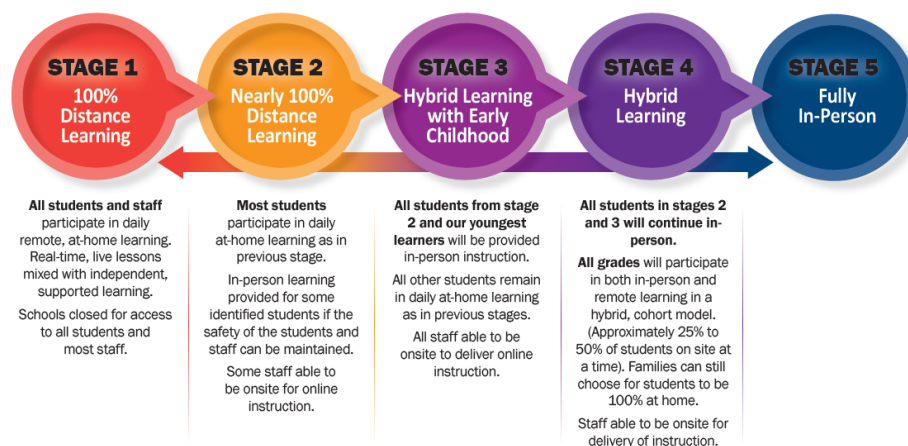


Reconnect Plan

The Reconnect Plan was developed in summer 2020 to give staff and families a visual, clear roadmap on how we would return to school and reopen for in-person instruction. Based on county data, the district now had a way to make decisions on who to bring back first based on safety and equity. All schools and programs started in stage 1 (100% remote,) but by November, we had moved into stages 2 and 3 of the plan. The Reconnect Plan was shared with staff, families and the community through email communication, social media and web updates.

Reconnect Plan for Bellingham Public Schools, 2020-21 School Year

Five stages based on safety and equity



Other options in 2020-21 include:

1. Home school support through our Family Partnership Program
2. Fully-remote, online learning for students needing to remain online full-time until Stage 5.



bellingshamschools.org

Online Registration for BPS; Online Transfer and Registration Process for FPP/BVL

During the summers, communications generally supports the district by providing a central summer registrar at the District Office, to help families new to our area register their children for school and provide important and timely information that may affect staffing and/or class sizes.

During summer 2020, with the District Office and schools all closed to the public, communications supported educational technology in creating online registration forms linked directly to Skyward, acting as thought partners to make sure the registration “packet” was as family-friendly and accessible as possible. The new online registration process was shared with families and the community via email, website and social media messaging on May 5, 2020.

Communications created a How to Register Online webpage for families which included both instructions and videos on the new online registration process. Communications also created an online form for families to submit questions or seek help with the process.

The introduction of the Reconnect Plan created a need for simple processes for requesting transfers/registering from neighborhood schools to both the Family Partnership Program and the expanded Bellingham Virtual Learning program. Using the infrastructure of our electronic transfer

form, previously launched to replace paper transfer forms, Communications added a mechanism to request a transfer into BFPP and BVL.

Weekly Learning Guides

I shared with families on March 20, 2020 that learning guides would be prepared with weekly content beginning March 30. The guides were created in OneNote by staff in the Department of Teaching and Learning and updated weekly. The learning guides were shared on a new Learning Resources webpage. We added secondary resources to the Learning Resources webpage on April 3. We shared with families a Remote Learning FAQ in a message on April 16. We added a Remote Learning link to all elementary school homepages April 21 for easier access. The Learning Resources webpage was the most viewed webpage on the district website from March through June.

Storytelling, The Call to Action Early in the Pandemic

As soon as the school closures took place, staff and student superheroes emerged amongst us. These stories represent a few of the initiatives begun in the spring to address the needs in our community.

Teacher and students use 3D printers to meet PPE shortage, April 8, 2020

Sehome sisters produce face shields for healthcare workers, April 13, 2020

Shuksan eighth graders prove they are heroes, April 20, 2020

Partnership provides emergency shelter at BHS, May 13, 2020

How a district and community pulls together to feed kids, May 22, 2020

Summer 2020: An especially important edition that included many pandemic closure stories and highlighted our graduates of 2020.



Fall 2020: This edition included an overview of the Reconnect Plan and went to press just as students returned in-person, so it included lots of masked faces and smiling eyes.



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. In this period, we supported critical messaging and updates from the time of the school closure on March 13, 2020 through November 2020 when we resumed in-person school with our youngest learners and students served in Life Skills and BRIDGES programs.

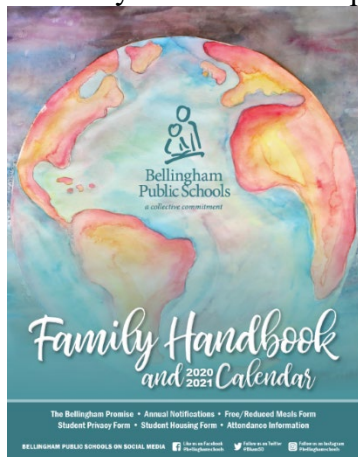
Aside from these critical district communications, we support principals and other school personnel to use the SchoolMessenger system to send weekly or monthly messages or newsletters to regularly inform their families about school news. We also encourage use of a web-based newsletter called Smore, which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

C) Other publications shared with family and student stakeholders:

Family Handbook and Calendar 2020-21:

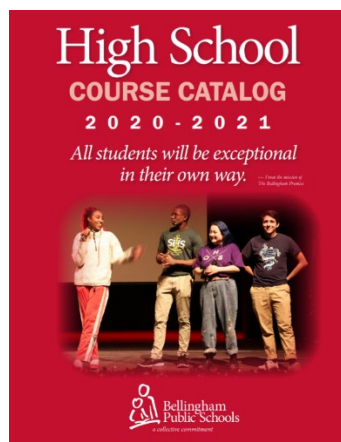
This annual publication is traditionally mailed home before the start of the school year and includes important notifications and a full calendar highlighting student artistic talent. It is printed in both Spanish and English.

We chose to postpone the 2020-21 handbook by one month, holding until the decision to begin the year in stage 1 of the reconnect plan, fully remote learning, had been finalized. We also streamlined the publication from 56 to 40 pages, by referring readers to online versions of some hard-copy forms and online information for efficiency. Families continued to be able to access all necessary forms in hard copy upon request. (See below for story on the cover artist.)



High School Course Catalog:

Working with the Department of Teaching and Learning, communications staff updated the high school course catalog for 2020-21. 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.



Promotional materials for kindergarten registration, career and college planning events, levy campaign, education priorities for the state legislature: These flyers and posters and postcards are updated, printed and mailed every normal school year or levy election. Before the lockdown, many of these were produced and distributed for the school year.

In fall 2020, most events for college planning moved to a virtual setting. We mailed a postcard in fall 2020 to seniors alerting them to support for the FAFSA. It was sent in four languages.



Click to enlarge.

Other publications:

Posters/signs (general): Communications supports departments and schools with diverse needs. Here are examples of this kind of support during this EL-3 window. Our volunteer coordinator desired a new and clearer visitor/volunteer check in sign for front offices and reception and also a new flyer for volunteer recruitments to clarify internal safety processes after a sensitive situation at one of our elementary schools.



Our most unique publication of all in 2020 was a life-size cut-out of me!



Translations

Communications works collaboratively with the Department of Family Engagement to meet translation needs of key communications. The Family Handbook, calendars, the front pages of the High School Course Catalog, and social media graphics about meal box distribution times and locations are a few of the key documents translated into Spanish and other languages. Supporting our Family Engagement Department and policy and procedure 4218 (the language access plan), a multi-language HELLO sign was developed in late 2019 and hung in all school entrances and district buildings early in 2020.



Click to enlarge.

All critical communications, updates and graphics for the Reconnect Plan are translated into, at minimum, Spanish.

Plan de Reconexión para las Escuelas Públicas de Bellingham, Año Escolar 2020-21

Cinco etapas basadas en la seguridad y la equidad



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:

- Washington School Public Relations Association Storytelling Conference attended by the communications manager in February 2020.
- Emergent Strategic Designs’ anti-bias training attended by the executive director of communications in Feb. 2020 at District Office.
- Qualtrics webinar Work Different attended by the communications technician and communications specialist on Aug. 12, 2020.
- Book study of Ibram X. Kendi’s How To Be An Antiracist by the communications team. October through December 2020.
- The communications team participated in a variety of professional development opportunities on Lynda.com/LinkedIn including lessons and classes that focused on administrative professional tips, Photoshop, graphic design, Canva, writing, Excel and six morning habits of high performers.

- Communications specialist joined a summer REACH workshop hosted by WRDC, as well as several staff wellness courses early in the pandemic.

E) Website and Social Media

Website Statistics

During this reporting period, the district website had 2,000,846 pageviews. This was significantly higher than last year with an increase of almost 400,000 pageviews. Peak website traffic occurred on days where the school schedule was impacted and the first day of school in September 2020.

Highest web traffic days:

Jan. 13, 2020 – 61,068 pageviews (schools closed due to inclement weather on Jan. 14)

March 13, 2020 – 33,999 pageviews (schools closed due to COVID-19)

Aug. 5, 2020 – 21,416 pageviews (school year to start remote announcement)

Sept. 8, 2020 – 19,197 pageviews (first day of school)



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

Calendar – 57,579 pageviews

Contact (the staff directory) – 45,664 pageviews

Human Resources – 31,376 pageviews

Elementary Schools – 26,790 pageviews

Monitoring communicable diseases* – 26,088 pageviews

Reconnect Plan* - 20,262 pageviews

Reconnect Plan Draft Schedules* – 19,162 pageviews

Learning Resources* - 17,722 pageviews

School Menus – 16,564 pageviews

Human Resources Collective Bargaining Agreements - 16,254 pageviews

**Denotes a webpage that was created to communicate information related to the pandemic school closure.*

Social Media

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

Twitter: Gained 264 followers, giving us 2,222 followers. We gained 45 new followers in March 2020 alone due to closures due to COVID-19 and gained 103 followers in January 2020 when schools were closed due to inclement weather. In January 2020, we received 68,500 tweet impressions (or views).

Facebook: Gained 1,080 likes, giving us 4,470 likes as of Nov. 23, 2020. Page likes growth has been steady with two big jumps, one in January 2020 with an increase of 599 new likes and another jump in March 2020 with an increase of 228 likes.



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

Date	Post	Post Clicks	Interactions (reactions, shares comments)	Reach (people reached via their newsfeed)
3/13/20	Schools closed through April	5,432	2,170	36,753
1/16/20	After three consecutive snow days, staff and volunteers helped serve meals.	3,230	1,317	10,625
8/5/20	BPS starts school year remote	3,074	1,747	4,635
1/15/20	Bellingham Public Schools will be providing free meals tomorrow.	3,007	2,399	51,637
6/1/20	"We see you," from Supt. Baker	1,490	1,856	18,753

Instagram: We gained 1,981 followers during this reporting period. We hit a milestone of 5,000 followers prior to the start of the school year. We started the use of Instagram stories in this reporting period.

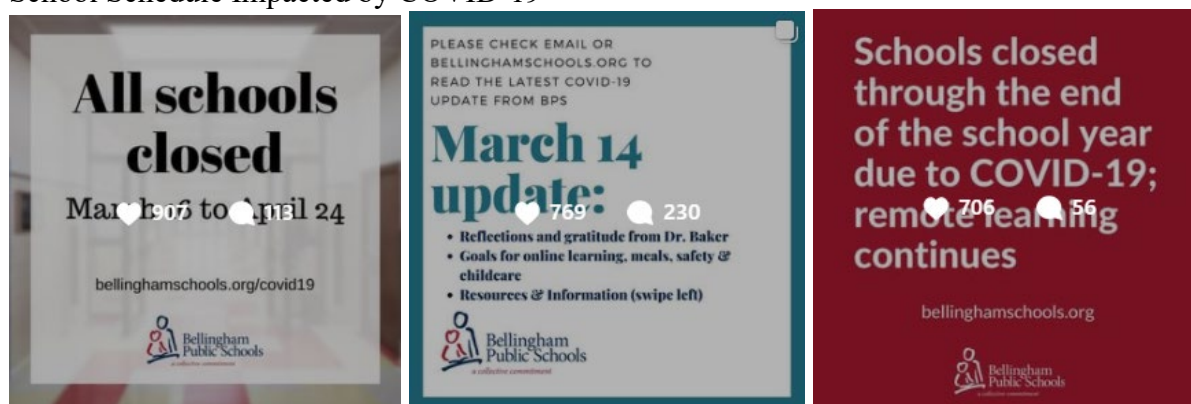
Popular Instagram posts:

The hearts are likes and the bubbles are comments.

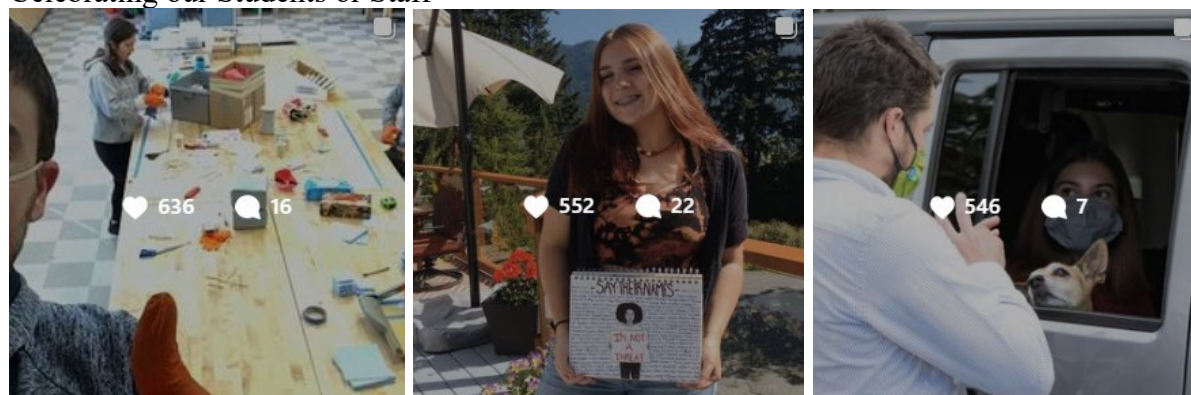
School Schedule Impacted by Inclement Weather



School Schedule Impacted by COVID-19



Celebrating our Students or Staff



Social Media Campaigns:

#Big4forWellness

As the pandemic closure began, a passionate group of staff came together to talk about how we need to take care of each other and ourselves. This led to the Big 4 for Wellness campaign which included web postings (see dropdown for self-care), inclusion in the June 2020 Food Services and Wellness Update, (scroll to end) and weekly Wellness Wednesday posts for 10 weeks.

Sample social media posts on Facebook and Instagram included a weekly activity for each category of the Big 4: social connection, physical activity, mental/emotional health, and reflection.

Monitoring Report for EL-3



#bpsheroes

Finding ourselves in the middle of the pandemic, we found that many of our posts were about staff going above and beyond, so we started a new hashtag (#) campaign called #bpsheroes

These posts covered our network technicians, family resource center staff, and our nurses, to name a few:



#MeettheArtistBPS

With the start of the 2020-21 school year, a new campaign was begun to highlight the artwork and the artists chosen for the Family Handbook and Calendar. Here are a few of the social media posts, plus a related Promise story on the cover artist:

Monitoring Report for EL-3



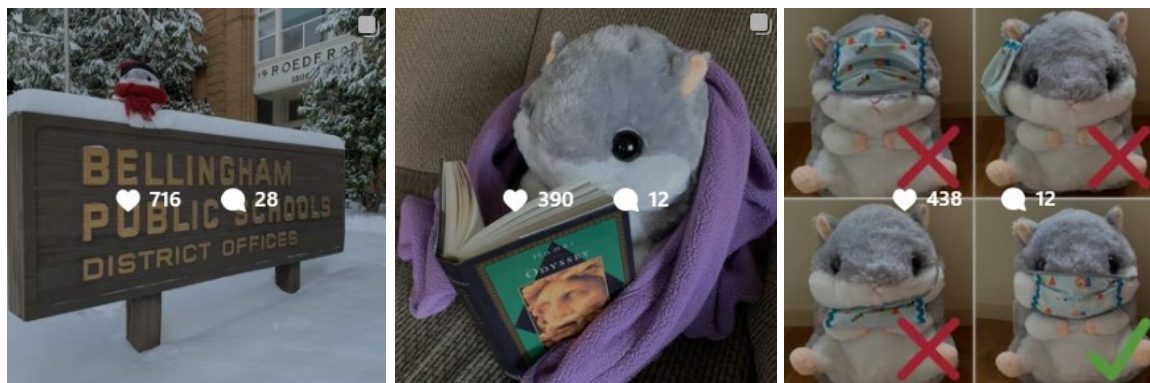
Humans of BPS 2.0

We continued our Humans of BPS campaign this past year even through the pandemic school closures. The campaign is a great way to highlight our diverse and hardworking staff. Though not our most engaging posts as measured by of likes and comments, these always are well received with numerous positive comments from staff and families. Click on an image below to read their story. #humansofbps



District Mascot, Hami

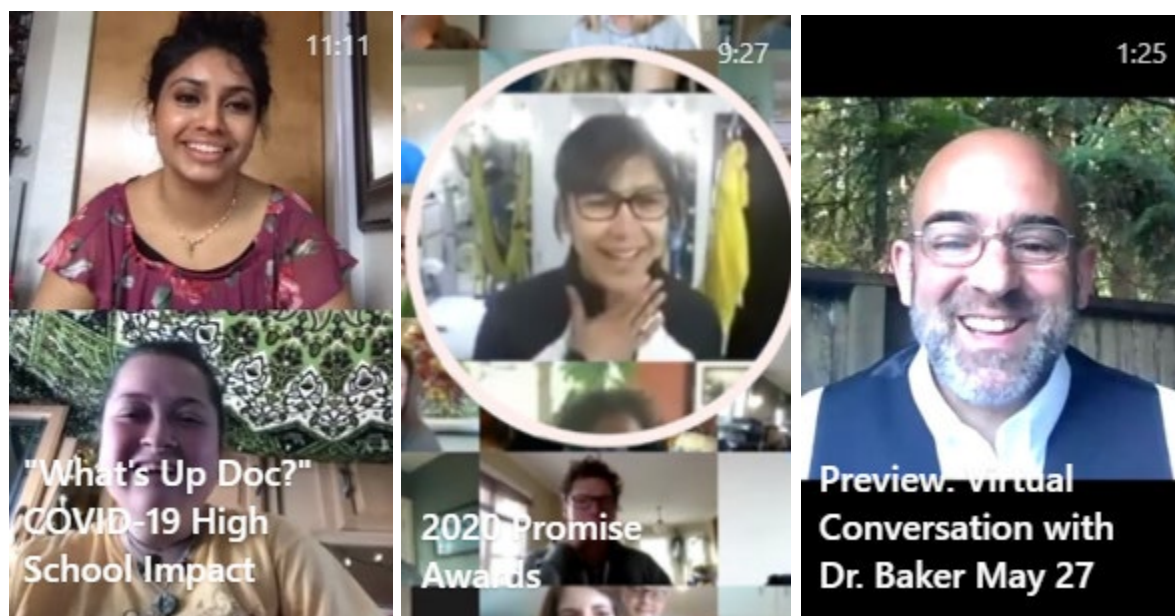
We first introduced Hami in mid-November 2019, but they really rose to fame this past year. Hami is a large stuffed animal hamster that travels to our schools. Students interact with and recognize Hami. This is a creative way to get our stakeholders excited about the activities happening in our schools. After discussing with colleagues and community partners, we chose to make Hami gender-neutral, using they/them pronouns.



IGTV

Looking for better ways to communicate with students during the closures, we began using IGTV. This is part of our Instagram account and allows us to post videos up to 60 minutes in length. A

short preview of the video appears on our feed and allows followers to click and watch the entire video. Since April 2020, we shared nine videos via IGTV. Most videos reached over 1,000 views with a total combined for the nine videos at 10,983 total views. [View our IGTV channel.](#)



F) Traditional Media

Media Coverage

With the changing face of mass media in recent decades, we function as our own newsroom via our messages with the community and our Promise Stories. We also continue to pitch story ideas to mass media and to respond to their requests. The majority of our media requests and inquiries are from the Bellingham Herald and KGMI; we also receive many requests for a wide range of stories by Western Washington University and other student journalists. We strive to cultivate responsive, proactive and positive relationships with all our local media.

Beginning in March 2020, most, although not all, media requests were grounded in the effects of COVID-19 on our schools, families, students and community.

Media coverage we facilitated during this reporting period included: many inquiries connected to Sunnyland Elementary School and the loss of Lynn Heimsoth and Sukha; snow days and meal access; transitional kindergarten (Promise K) and its adoption across the state; replacement levy election information; civic education curriculum; homelessness and poverty in our community; menstrual product access in restrooms; sustainable practices in cafeterias, plans for spring remote learning, cancelled athletics, trips and events; our partnership with the Lighthouse Mission's drop-in center temporarily hosted at Bellingham High School; food access for children and families; school nurses' roles; graduation of class of 2020; grading policies and drivers education; teachers' experiences with remote teaching; the district's contributions to our community efforts; unemployment fraud; possible impact of the pandemic on school calendars; the work of our Reopening Schools Advisory Group and associated workgroups; possible budget implications, such as layoffs; first day(s) of school, including supply distribution; social-emotional learning;

equitable support for learning pods and child care programs; BHS' mascot; death of a Sehome alumnus; for COVID screenings, tracking and communication when returning to in-person school; effects of COVID-19 on kindergarten and overall district enrollment and funding; teaching innovations for the digital classroom; supporting preferred name and gender identity for transgender students; our role in the Whatcom County Farm to Freezer program; the tragic loss of two students who attended BFPP; capital projects such as the transportation garage and Parkview and Alderwood elementaries; the arrest of a prominent district leader; reopening of some in-person classes and programs; role and hiring of a district resource officer; mental health supports for students during remote learning; Referendum 90 on comprehensive sexual health education; attendance rates in fall 2020 compared to typical years; confirmed COVID-19 cases returning classes to remote learning.

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.

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

We continue to organize and promote school board linkages. During this reporting period, the school board expanded linkages to include student-focused round tables. We helped the board to host a community linkage focused on exceptional students at Options High School on Jan. 29 and a student roundtable at Carl Cozier Elementary on March 4.

The Bellingham Promise is referenced in most of our communications. During this reporting period, we have published 41 Promise stories with 34,825 pageviews on the Promise website. We continue to email these stories to staff and families regularly and post them on social media.

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

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.

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.

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:

Sehome sisters produce more than 500 face shields for healthcare workers

April 13, 2020

Category: Students and Families in Action

Monitoring Report for EL-3

Outcomes: Critical Thinkers and Problem-Solvers; Innovators and Creators; Respectful and Compassionate Humans; Skilled Users of Technology and Information

Shuksan eighth graders prove they are heroes in more ways than one

April 20, 2020

Category: Students and Families in Action

Outcomes: Confident Individuals who Continuously Challenge Themselves; Multilingual Readers and Speakers; Readers and Writers

Teacher and students use 3D printers to meet PPE shortage

April 8, 2020

Category: Educators in Action, Students and Families in Action

Outcomes: Artisans and Technicians; Critical Thinkers and Problem-Solvers; Innovators and Creators; Respectful and Compassionate Humans

How a district and community pulls together to feed kids

May 22, 2020

Category: Community in Action, Educators in Action

Outcomes: Leaders, Collaborators and Team Players; Respectful and Compassionate Humans

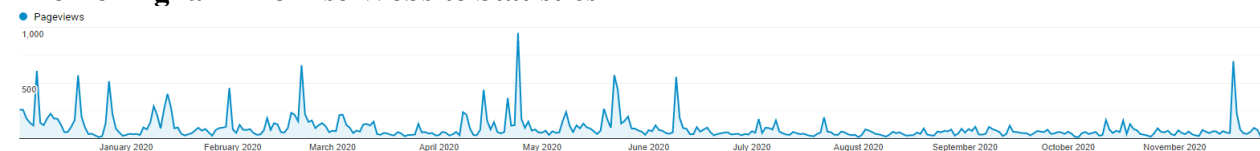
Partnership provides emergency shelter at BHS during COVID-19 crisis

May 13, 2020

Category: Community in Action

Outcomes: Respectful and Compassionate Humans

The Bellingham Promise Website Statistics



The chart above (December 2019 to November 2020) shows the spike in pageviews after each communication to families, staff and community about our latest Promise stories.

Also from EL-3:

provide an affirmative (or negative) statement that the following actions have been taken: a process is in place to address student, parent, and stakeholder concerns in a timely manner;

Affirmative. The process is outlined on page five of the Family Handbook. The Department of Teaching and Learning and other executive team members meet regularly with parents and others who need their concerns addressed. These proactive communications practices, in support of policy governance, have resulted in a decrease in the past several years in the number of complaints reaching the school board. During this reporting period, we had three in-person board meetings and all other board meetings were held via Zoom. We did not have any audience speakers this reporting period (either in person or via Zoom), and 33 people submitted Listening Posts containing complaints, concerns, or general comments (we have approximately 7,500 district parents, 11,000 students and 55,000 households and businesses within district attendance areas). Parents or community members who email or call the district with concerns typically

receive a phone call, email or an offer to meet with an executive team member or staff member. 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.

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

Alderwood Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee

Bellingham High School Turf Fields Phase 2 Committee

District Office Design Advisory Committee

Parkview Educational Specifications/Design 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

First Grade Alignment Task Force

Foundational Literacy Skills Curriculum Committee

GRADS Advisory Group

Instructional Materials Committee

High School Grading Practice Task Force

Joint District- BEA Professional Development Study Committee

Kindergarten Alignment Task Force

Superintendent

Student Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Other

Good Food Promise Implementation Committee

Occupational Health & Safety Committee

Promise Awards Advisory Group

Routes to School Advisory Group

Reopening Schools Advisory Committee

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