



MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Directors

From: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent

Date: February 10, 2021

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

I certify that the following is accurate as of February 10, 2021. The reporting period is from February 20, 2020 through February 10, 2021.

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), 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.

Over the past years, the human resources staff has worked with many of our administrators and supervisors to streamline screening, interviewing and referencing using the HRM+ system and electronic reporting and storage. The work is continuing this year with our hiring processes. The goal is to significantly reduce the use of paper, filing and storage.

After the March 16 school closure many of our current practices needed to be significantly revised and in some cases we were required to create new ways of doing business. Our timelines for budget, enrollment and staffing were progressing as normal early in January 2020 and the Human Resources Department continued to follow aggressive timelines to open many positions earlier than most districts in an effort to obtain the best candidates prior to other districts’ processes. As in the past, the practice of using “pool” openings in many job areas

continued. 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.

What changed in the 2020 hiring season was since almost all staff were working remotely, our typical practices changed completely. These included:

- All principal/administrative and human resources coordination was electronic and via remote meetings
- All interviews were remote via Zoom
- Most of our coordination and communication with new employees were conducted remotely
- New PPE requirements for close contact with new employees, such as fingerprinting

Even though many of our typical “in-person” processes associated with onboarding changed to electronic means, we still needed to provide some in-person services. The human resource team, in coordination with technology and other departments, organized two “onboarding days” in July and August. The onboarding days took place at Birchwood Elementary School. The school provided a central location which included convenient parking, outside entrances to large common areas, use of a covered play area and a handwashing station just inside the entrance. The staff felt with these conditions, we could safely onboard new employees in person. New staff waited in their vehicles until their appointment time and then entered the building one at a time. They completed critical paperwork, were fingerprinted, and their pictures were taken for employee identification. **In addition, representatives from our technology department were on-site to issue new employee laptops, assist with initial logins and provided support that would allow staff to begin their remote connections.**

As we know, our 2020-21 school year began with remote instruction. Throughout the late summer, we experienced our enrollment shifting in many elementary schools as some families chose other options offered by the district such as Bellingham Virtual Learning and our Family Partnership Program. This created a need to make several staffing changes prior to the first day of school. The enrollment changes, coupled with creative staffing strategies, allowed us to reduce our primary classes to approximately 15 students each. We anticipated that we would be bringing our youngest learners back to in-person learning first, and these lower class size numbers would allow us to bring these students back four days a week rather than a two day a week hybrid model.

In late August, we moved a significant number of staff within our district to best meet the needs of students and families. This included moving existing staff to Bellingham Virtual Learning and our Family Partnership Program, shifting staff to the K-1 grades and reallocating staff in grant-funded positions to better meet needs. Making a significant amount of staff

assignment changes in late August is never a desired practice but staff, principals and human resources all worked together to make the changes. When the school year started, the shifts were made and each **classroom/program in Bellingham Public Schools was staffed with a qualified teacher.**

Throughout the fall and winter, the human resources team has been extremely busy with hiring the replacement of staff. Many of the replacements are typical with any year such as maternity, paternity and other medical-related leaves. As we have brought students and staff back to in-person learning, many staff have not been able to return due to [health conditions and an increased risk associated with COVID-19](#). **This has created the need to hire many new employees to fill vacated positions.** In addition, we were able to accommodate and place many of the staff not able to return to in-person work to remote positions in areas such as Bellingham Virtual Learning, Remote Reconnect and Family Partnership Program.

Substitutes

The district has continued to be aggressive in our recruitment and hiring of substitute employees. **The number of substitutes in most employee groups has increased consistently over the past few years. In 2019-20 up until the March closure,** many districts continued to experience substitute shortages that created a significant disruption in the district's daily operations. **You can see in the chart below for the 2019-20 school year, our district experienced minimal unfilled positions.**

Substitute Fill Rate 2019-20 School Year					
Total Absences/Vacancies*	Absences Needing a Substitute	Absences Not Needing a Substitute	Unfilled	Filled	Percent of Absences Filled
19,002	15,290	3,712	299	14,991	98.04%

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

Part of our success to have filled positions is due to **several additional strategies to our recruiting and retention of substitutes.** Our most successful strategies are the continued efforts to coordinate planned absences for professional development and reduce the overall need for substitutes. The Department of Teaching and Learning maintains an extensive professional development calendar of all trainings. This calendar helps to plan trainings more thoughtfully and balance the need for substitutes on any given day so not to deplete our substitute pool. The human resources team has been meeting with all building principals and our Department of Teaching and Learning team to further **coordinate building training needs with traditionally**

high substitute days to reduce substitute shortages. Principals also discuss high substitute days with their staff in an effort to change behaviors and requests for personal or other leave time to avoid substitute shortages. In addition, we continue our “personal day buyback” incentive to further reduce staff absences.

We have continued to track staff excused absences for certificated teacher training/in-service with our overall goal to reduce the number of absences and the reliance on substitutes. The data in the table below shows an overall reduction in excused teacher absences **by approximately 50 percent** to date since the 2013-14 baseline school year. **This data demonstrates that the reduction has been maintained even though the number of certificated staff has increased by approximately 15% since our baseline year.**

Bellingham Public Schools Excused Absences for Certificated and Special Education Certificated Staff (Including Individual Staff Development) <i>COVID-19 School Building Closures Began March 2020</i>							
Month	BASELINE YEAR 2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
September	249	287	313	179	181	163	170
October	837	765	411	343	342	420	403
November	620	281	261	277	216	215	261
December	304	368	413	151	138	112	173
January	787	589	335	343	357	340	224
February	456	528	513	287	354	183	419
Total Excused Absences	3253	2818	2246	1580	1588	1433	1650
Percent Monthly Absences from 2013-14 (Baseline Year)		-13%	-31%	-51%	-51%	-56%	-49%
Total Certificated Staff Per Year (as of September)	725	755	773	780	814	867	846

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 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, 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 2020 in [February](#), Staff Appreciation Week 2020 in [May](#), and American Education Week 2020 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, [our Promise award surprise visits were heartwarming and appreciated](#). All Promise award recipients received engraved trophies. In addition to those awards, the [One Schoolhouse Award video](#) was released in December 2020 highlighting the important work of our food services staff during the pandemic.
- 3) **Retirements:** Traditionally every spring, communications plans and hosts a semi-formal dinner to honor all retirees in the district. This year, the dinner was cancelled due to the pandemic, but every retiree received an engraved vase on behalf of the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation (31 vases were delivered or picked up in July 2020).



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



- 4) **Staff Kick off:** During this reporting period, we were unable to host our annual all-staff event due to limitations on large gatherings, but we still felt it was important to start the new school year with some inspiration. [Dr. Baker made a hopeful appeal to staff](#) to make it the “greatest most joyful year ever...why the heck not!?” and the video was viewed over 1500 times.

Volunteers

At the beginning of the 2020 year the volunteer program was operating at full capacity with over 5,000 volunteers in the database serving in a variety of programs and capacities including AVID tutors, high school learning center tutors, balance bikes cyclists, after-school enrichment club supports, mentors, classroom aides, service learning and field trip chaperones. In addition, the community partnership program continued to grow with 24 members including a variety of non-profit programs and faith-based organizations. These partners signed agreements with clear goals and objectives, met quarterly for district updates and received social media boosts from the district for their work. An appreciation event was scheduled to take place in April for volunteers and partners but unfortunately was cancelled.

Due to school building closures on March 16 from COVID-19 and the move to virtual learning, the volunteer program was put on pause for the remainder of the school year. The volunteer coordinator was reassigned to support the Family Resource Center in food and supply procurement for distribution to our highest needs families which continued until the end of the school year. During the summer break the volunteer coordinator supported food

services with the distribution of 500 Food Lifeline family pantry boxes each week from Whatcom Middle School utilizing high school students and volunteer drivers. This program distributed over 7,000 boxes of food from May to August with all safety protocols being strictly followed. This fall 15 volunteers were recruited and worked under the direction of food services building student meal boxes at the central kitchen.

With school buildings closed this fall the volunteer program remained on pause and the volunteer coordinator continued working with the Family Resource Center in food and supply procurement and distribution as well as supporting families who required internet support. From August to December nearly 400 families were contacted and received one of the district's sponsored internet resources, Xfinity Essentials or a Verizon Hot Spot. After several families requested support with their internet billing, the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation developed a subsidy program to help keep families connected which was also administered by the volunteer coordinator. Towards the end of the year teachers began to request virtual volunteers for a variety of roles including academic support, technology assistance, helping students stay on task and focused as well as making social and emotional connections. These volunteers will onboard in January 2021 and the volunteer program will slowly resume as demand and in-person services resume.

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 these guiding principles:

- Content knowledge
- Opportunities for active learning
- Coherence with other learning experiences
- Form leads to function in practice
- Ongoing duration of experiences
- Collective participation of cohorts

Due to the closure of schools in March, the primary focus for spring, summer and fall professional learning was preparation and ongoing support for remote learning. Work teams comprised of teacher leaders, educational technology coaches, administration, and the Department of Teaching and Learning developed districtwide, school specific, and content or grade level specific professional learning opportunities that were available online (live and asynchronous).

All certificated staff were invited to use their technology learning hours to complete five 90-minute online modules. These modules were built around the following five critical areas of focus for remote learning:

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

Additional choice boards were created for staff who asked for training specific to online learning tools. Choice boards were available in early August for Microsoft Teams, OneNote, Office 365, Seesaw, and iPad resources.

Here is a sample choice board for Microsoft Teams – each specific button opened to a short video tutorial and written directions:



An online learning resources notebook was created and continues to be built out to support remote and hybrid learning. Other key sections (in addition to critical areas of focus modules and choice boards) include a FAQ section, classroom examples of online and hybrid learning organized within the 5D framework, and additional technology tutorials.

When teachers returned to work in late August, live professional learning was provided by buildings and by job-alike areas. Certificated staff alternate Wednesday afternoons between building and job-alike professional development. During job-alike professional development time, content specific facilitators help guide teachers through choosing essential standards and

identifying curriculum/lessons best suited for teaching online. This time has greatly supported district coherence across schools and been beneficial for distributing the load of content creation across all district staff.

Paraeducator Training and Professional Development

As reported previously, the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) was passed by the state that 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 (including substitutes) meet the following minimum employment requirements which 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 paraeducators. The FCS consists of 28 hours of training.

The specific requirements of the FCS are:

- All instructional K-12 paraeducators were required to complete 14 FCS training hours during the 2019-20 school year.
- **For this school year**, all paraeducators hired on or before September 1, 2020 must complete the remaining 14 hours or all 28 hours of the FCS by June 30, 2021. In addition, new paraeducators hired after September 1, 2020 to work in districts with 10,000 or more students, must complete two days (14 hours) of the FCS hours within four months of the date of hire or by September 1, 2021, whichever is sooner. New paraeducators hired after September 1, 2020 are encouraged to complete all 28 FCS hours by June 30, 2021.

The chart below lists the hours and each unit required by the FCS.

Support Educational Outcomes	Hour(s)
FCS01: Introduction to cultural identity and diversity	4
FCS02: Methods of educational and instructional support	4
FCS03: Technology basics	2
FCS04: Using and collecting data	1
Total	11
Demonstrate Professionalism and Ethical Practices	Hour(s)
FCS05: District orientation of roles and responsibilities	3
FCS06: Equity	3
Total	6
Support a Positive and Safe Learning Environment	Hour(s)
FCS07: Behavior management strategies including de-escalation techniques	2
FCS08: Child and adolescent development	2
FCS09: Emergency and health safety	1
FCS10: Positive and safe learning environment	3
Total	8
Communicate Effectively and Participate in the Team Process	Hour(s)
FCS11: Communication basics	2
FCS12: Communication challenges	1
Total	3
Total Hours	28

Due to the school closures to in-person learning and to support districts as they navigate traditional and virtual classroom options, the Paraeducator Board has issued an emergency rule providing greater flexibility to meet training requirements for paraeducators on the FCS. The FCS consists of 28 hours of training, *seven of which are required to be provided in person*. The new emergency rule allows districts to meet the in-person requirement if they provide training to paraeducators through a virtual format with an instructor that uses

synchronous learning. Synchronous online learning that took place with an instructor beginning on March 1, 2020 will count towards meeting the in-person requirement of the FCS. This rule is in effect until September 1, 2021. Our district provides multiple synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities throughout the school year. Paraeducators enroll in courses through ProDev to participate in FCS training.

Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, the district added a new asynchronous FCS learning option for paraeducators through NW ESD 189. All paraeducators (including substitutes) may register for courses through CANVAS and complete the training online at a time that is convenient for them. This provides some paraeducators the flexibility they need to participate and complete the required FCS course hours.

In addition to the FCS, the district provides other professional development opportunities. Funds are designated by the district for BASE employees to promote participation in job-embedded professional development opportunities and collaboration activities with the end result of supporting professional growth and learning. District funds may be used for:

- Participation hours; and
- Expenses related to attending trainings such as registration fees, books, and materials.

BASE employees have found more online training opportunities to be available which is beneficial in limiting time away from work and saving costs related to travel expenses.

Beginning Educator Support

The **Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) grant is now in year six.** 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, human resources administrators and we have recently added a WWU education department professor to help us focus on our new stakeholder goals. The team meets 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 and monthly induction leader roundtables sponsored through OSPI. This year we are also attending Induction Coordinator Zoom meetings and are learning specifically from larger districts such as Federal Way and Seattle regarding the principal role in induction and hiring staff of color.

Using a blend of BEST grant and Title IIA funding, we have a TOSA mentoring new teachers. Per grant assurances, the TOSA may mentor up to 20 teachers and is currently mentoring 16 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 set-up, 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. This year we have revised our supports to better meet the context of remote learning. Classroom set-ups happen throughout the year as new teachers return to live learning and are completed with the district mentor and the district COVID-19 safety officer in partnership. We have decreased our monthly learning sessions in response to "Zoom-fatigue" and increased the amount of 1:1 mentoring.

In addition to mentoring, we support our novices to **provide high quality learning sessions designed especially for them.** We have continued the focus on timely topics such as classroom environment and culture, family engagement, self-care, working with diverse learners and integrating best practices in technology. Based on their feedback, we are now offering optional, discipline specific, small group sessions for more targeted support; Bridges and Number Corner implementation, course planning, workshop model, and inquiry approaches. We continue to seek feedback from novices and expand their professional learning. For this year only, we have decreased our monthly learning sessions in response to "Zoom-fatigue" and increased the amount of 1:1 mentoring.

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

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 2021-22 school year.**

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 which includes all the topics, links and handouts, and is on our intranet 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, coaches, afternoon paraeducators and custodians.

This year, we have gone remote for our new employee orientation. We use the Zoom platform and engage with our new employees on a very similar agenda as before. We are able to use video, such as our [Promise video](#) to still bring the faces of many district staff to the orientation. As we move out of COVID times, we may continue to offer some remote options in the future to better meet some employee needs. Even though it works, we still believe we cannot replicate the human touch of in-person.

The chart below shows the high rate of the district's efforts in meeting with and training new employees during new employee orientations.

New Employee Orientation				
Percentage of Staff Attending Each Year				
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
86%	87%	93%	92%	88%

Other trainings that are normally coordinated by the Human Resources Department and held in person throughout the summer months were greatly revised. Almost all the trainings and information associated with human resources, payroll, benefits and technology were done remotely.

SafeSchools

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 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 SafeSchools 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, with a remote instructional start of the school year and a lot of new learning and work, we delayed our rollout of our annual required trainings. We assigned these trainings in December and have provided a window of time for completions through February 5.

The chart below shows the number of online trainings that are completed on an annual basis and year-to-date for 2020-21. 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 SafeSchools 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).

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

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

For the 2020 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 (Teamsters, SEIU and BASE) as well as new contracts with BEA and BAO. Other non-represented employees such as many district office staff, executives and coaches were also adjusted.

Early in 2020, we started working with BEA (Bellingham Education Association) and BAO (Bellingham Administrators' Organization) to negotiate successor agreements set to expire in the summer of 2020. 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 BEA agreed to a three-year contract (2020-2023). Although we started this work with BEA early in the year, after the building closures we conducted all our negotiations remotely on Zoom, another new way of doing our work. We successfully concluded this bargaining which also included a school day calendar for the same term. The term of this agreement will also better assist the district in our long-term budget planning during the next couple years. **The district and BAO agreed to a two-year contract (2020-2022).** Our work throughout negotiations with both employee groups was very collaborative and positive.

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	2019-2021
BASE (Bellingham Association of School Employees)	Administrative assistants, paraeducators, business/accounting, educational support, specialists	2019-2021
BAO (Bellingham Administrators' Organization)	Principals, assistant principals, directors	2020-2022
BEA (Bellingham Education Association)	Certificated instructional staff	2020-2023

For 2020-21, 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.

Due to COVID-19, the initial school closures and the implementation of reopening our schools this fall have created an ongoing and continuous need to work closely with all our bargaining groups. We have continued to bargain with all our labor unions since March. The first round of bargaining consisted of negotiating the terms of the initial “shut-down” and most of those agreements expired on August 31, 2020. The successor agreements were focused on the start of the 2020 school year, remote learning, keeping employees safe and the phases and conditions of reopening face-to-face instruction.

In addition, the district has continued to bargain other terms and conditions of the contract due to changes in the law or new programs such as paid family medical leave and the impact of SEBB.

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 three 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 the cycle 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 *Learning Walks* with UW CEL for administrators. Administrator supervisors meet quarterly with a UW CEL Framework author for ongoing 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. **Based on the March closure and the instructional model going remote for the rest of the year, OSPI provided [revised guidance for school districts related to the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program \(TPEP\) for 2019-20](#)**. To implement these changes, the Departments of Teaching and Learning and Human Resources provide training for all evaluators of certificated staff. A [PowerPoint training guide](#) was prepared and provided for both evaluators and teachers.

Although the closure did not affect most other employee evaluations tools, **the process for evaluation review with employees, signatures and evaluation collection needed to be completely revised**. Systems were implemented such as Zoom evaluation meetings with employees, electronic signatures on evaluations and all evaluations were sent, collected and stored electronically by human resources. **Like so many other processes that have been implemented during this time, these new strategies will be continued moving forward.**

Again for the 2020-21 school year, [OSPI revised the TPEP guidance](#). 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 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 2020 progress report was on the May 13, 2020 board report and can be accessed on our [human resources website page](#).** That report shows for the hiring year ending in May 2019, 15.2 percent of certificated hires were people identified as having ethnic minority status. This percentage was the highest for any year since 2013.

At the time of this report, the district is **collecting data for the 2021** report and will be submitted to the board in the coming months.

This past spring, the district hired our new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Director. One important role of our new director is teaming with our Human Resources Department to make **improvement towards the hiring and retention of under-represented minority staff.** **Current work includes the examination of our hiring practices and job descriptions to eliminate any barriers and unintentional bias. The team is also working to update our application website to provide a more inclusive design and to assist in our recruitment efforts. In addition, and reported in EL 10,** district leaders have organized an affinity group meeting on a regular basis to provide support for our staff members who are people of color. This group is actively up and running now.

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