



## **Summary Notes for Safety and Security Planning Committee**

**Meeting 3: 4 – 5 p.m., Thursday, May 15, 2025**

**Location:** District Office, 1985 Barkley Boulevard, Bellingham

**Present:** Russ Robinson, Director, Safety and Security, co-chair; Jessica Sankey, Chief Operations Officer, co-chair; James Hayes, Director, Athletics and Activities; Dana Smith, Assistant Director, Communications; Micah Smith, Birchwood Elementary; Heather Jones-Jennings, Custodial Supervisor; Josh Knutsen, Bellingham Police Department; Derik Scott, Bellingham Fire Department; Dionte Thomas, Campus Monitor, Squalicum High; Kelly Balzer, Paraeducator, Northern Heights Elementary; Roxanne Borders, Preschool Teacher, Silver Beach Elementary; Lauri McBeath, Systems Analyst; Analisa Ficklin, Director, Special Education; Jennifer Kilmer, Parent/Guardian, Columbia Elementary; Josh Bates, Parent/Guardian, Squalicum High, Shuksan Middle; Dawnette Chadwick, Parent/Guardian, Bellingham High, Birchwood Elementary; Fernando Olvera, Parent/Guardian, Kulshan Middle; Cooper Stafford, Student; Angie Ritchey, Operations Specialist; Katie King, Administrative Assistant, Facilities.

Chief Operations Officer Jessica Sankey welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. Russ Robinson, director of safety and security read the finalized vision and mission statement and asked the group to review at their tables.

### **Final review of vision and mission statement**

Dana Smith, assistant director of communications asked to hear from each table group to ensure that the document would resonate with someone picking it up in a school lobby and whether it effectively reflects the district's core safety "buckets."

Key points included:

- Consider linking to I Love U Guys protocols using sidebar images.
- Adjust graphics and layout—some felt the graphics were too large, and the top BPS sign could be removed to create more space.
- Improve formatting by using bullet points for numbers and links, and refining grammar and wording.
- Reevaluate the location of the QR code for better visibility.

- Clarify the intention behind supervised school starts and ensure language is inclusive of all grade levels.
- Emphasize partnerships with outside agencies and the importance of a welcoming environment, including during events.
- Ensure the safety tipline number is clearly labeled and easy to find.
- Reconsider whether “policies and procedures” is the best section title for certain content.
- Add a Safe Schools logo or icon for visual identity and recognition.
- Encourage language that empowers families and staff to raise questions or concerns.
- Reinforce that it’s okay to seek help and that the system is designed to support open communication.

The group also discussed how the final version will appear on the district webpage, ensuring it is accessible, user-friendly, and visually aligned with the district’s branding.

### Upcoming priorities

The committee reviewed and discussed key focus areas for the upcoming year, organized into three main categories:

#### **Proactive safety practices**

- Training initiatives
  - Dana talked the flipbooks and that we used those to help base a short training video that can explain the protocols for anyone.
  - A short video was shared to introduce the district’s five standard response protocols, intended for staff, students, and families. The group responded positively, noting it was clear, customizable, and useful for first-day communications or pre-drill preparation.
- Additional training
  - Situational awareness training is being developed, especially for paraprofessionals and front office staff.
  - Reunification training will include exercises, videos, and simulations.

#### **Physical security measures**

- Continued efforts to audit and improve door locks across campuses.
- Exploration of wearable technology to enhance safety and communication.

#### **Cultivating care & belonging**

- Russ highlighted student feedback, particularly from middle and high schools, showing that bathrooms are frequently identified as unsafe spaces.
- How to create safer, more welcoming environments and how to use this data to guide conversations and improvements.
- Jessica noted that climate survey results will be used as a key data point to inform this work.
- Emphasized the importance of being intentional with data collection and analysis.
- Plans include continuing to build a data-driven system and using climate surveys to identify key themes and guide strategic actions.

## Communications

Dana, led a walkthrough of the district’s website, highlighting updates and gathering feedback from the group.

Key highlights:

### **New website preview**

- A modern, ADA-friendly redesign is launching this summer.
- Improved search functionality

### **Safety tipline visibility**

- Now prominently displayed at the top of every page on our site and highlighted in red.
- Also linked from the contact page and included on staff IDs.

### **Contact tools:**

- A general contact form is available and widely used, with inquiries triaged to the appropriate staff.
- A “Who to Contact and How” flowchart is included in the family handbook and will be made more interactive on the new site.

### **Navigation & structure**

- The “Families” menu includes a dedicated safety section, where protocols will be added.
- All school websites will follow a similar structure

### **Communication**

- Pre-written messages for ParentSquare are ready for use during incidents, with customizable school names.
- Staff, parents and students are encouraged to reach out if alerts seem unclear.

### **Printed materials**

- Discussion around expanding the family handbook or creating a flyer version for easier access to basic safety information.

### **Closing**

Jessica, Russ and Dana closed the meeting by thanking participants for their time and contributions. They encouraged continued feedback and emphasized the importance of ongoing improvement. Jessica noted that the input gathered will be compiled and, pending final review, shared with Dr. Baker for next steps.