Bellingham Public Schools
a collective commitment

Board Summary: Community Linkage Meeting
Connecting with Club Sports Organizations
October 23, 2014

The Bellingham School Board and Superintendent Greg Baker welcomed audience members, invited guests, and district staff to a linkage meeting focused on connecting with representatives of club sports organization.

The following were guiding questions:

- *Where do your organizations' interests and work intersect with The Bellingham Promise's Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs, and Outcomes?*
- *Is there anything you would add, change or remove in these parts of The Promise?*
- *How might we work together better to improve opportunities for all students, the able, differently able, and disinterested, alike?*

Many components of The Bellingham Promise resonated with attendees; specifically: learning is lifelong and essential to a high quality of life, and we develop students and graduates who are healthy, active, and confident individuals who continuously challenge themselves.

During discussion, attendees asked for help in getting the word out to students regarding programs that are offered. Various ideas were mentioned, including allotting specific time for club representatives to come to the schools to present their offerings during district-sponsored activity nights and collaborating with physical education teachers who could then in turn introduce a variety of sports to students during the school day. The district website was also mentioned to spread the word about the numerous opportunities offered by club sports.

Discussion also focused on the use of district facilities. As a result of the bond, new fields will be developed at Bellingham, Sehome and Squalicum high schools, including lighted fields that can be used at night. Attendees asked the district to provide leadership and administrative support to facilitate and coordinate community usage of these new fields when they are not being used by the schools.

Meeting minutes are attached.

Official Minutes of the School Board Community Linkage with
Club Sports Organizations
District Office Board Room
October 23, 2014

Linkage Attendees:

- Club Sports Organization Representatives:
  - Christina Archer – Northwest Silver Stars Cheer Squad
  - Bob Diehl – Whatcom Rowing Association
  - Lance Calloway – Whatcom County Youth Soccer
  - Jed Clark – Whatcom County Speed Skating
  - Bob Diehl – Whatcom Rowing Association
  - Matt Oswin – Whatcom Warriors LaCrosse
  - Doug Robertson – Bellingham Tennis Club
  - Ed Sullivan – Tesseract Cross Country Running
  - Brad Swanson – Whatcom Football Club (WFC) Rangers Soccer
  - Amy Terrell – Whatcom County Amateur Hockey Association
- Directors Kelly Bashaw, Doug Benjamin, Ken Gass, Camille Hackler, Steve Smith
- Superintendent of Schools Greg Baker
- Bellingham Public Schools Foundation Executive Director Kim Lund
- District Administrators/Staff: Assistant Superintendent Steve Clarke, Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland, Assistant Superintendent Ron Cowan; Executive Director Nora Klewiada; Executive Administrator Rob McElroy; Executive Director Tanya Rowe; Activities/Athletics Director Colin Cushman; Executive Secretary and Recorder Ruth Rasmussen
- Audience

1. OPENING ITEMS

Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Steve Smith, School Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. He welcomed the group and introduced Dr. Baker. Following Dr. Baker's welcome and opening comments, the invited guests, audience members, board members, and district staff introduced themselves.

2. COMMUNITY/BOARD LINKAGE

Dr. Gass explained the purpose of linkage meetings, noting that it is an opportunity for board members to strengthen connections with stakeholders. These special board meetings occur about five times per year, he said, and the board's role is to listen and learn. He added that the district's strategic plan, The Bellingham Promise, serves as a framework for discussion during linkage meetings.

Dr. Gass introduced Tanya Rowe, the meeting's facilitator. She described some specific components of The Bellingham Promise that are relevant to this meeting:

- *The whole child is important.*
- *We develop students and graduates who are healthy, active individuals.*
- *A key strategy is a One Schoolhouse Approach to close opportunity gaps for children and to create equity and greater access where disparities exist.*

Ms. Rowe said the following guiding questions would serve as a framework for tonight's discussion:

- *Where do your organizations' interests and work intersect with The Bellingham Promise's Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs, and Outcomes?*
- *Is there anything you would add, change or remove in these parts of The Promise?*
- *How might we work together better to improve opportunities for all students, the able, differently able, and disinterested, alike?*

Summary of comments from invited guests:

Connections to The Bellingham Promise:

- Students gain a lot by participating in sports; for example, learning how to work with others. This is one of the things I love about team sports; it reinforces lessons taught in the classroom.
- Many of the adults in our club participated in this sport (speed skating) as children. This speaks to the vision highlighted in The Bellingham Promise of lifelong learning and development of healthy, active individuals.
- We are a character-based program. This is a competitive sport (cheering), and we very much adhere to the goal of developing the whole child. Coaches have a unique platform in children's lives; we have a duty to them to help mold them into responsible citizens and healthy adults.

Opportunities/Communications:

- It would be great if we could get information to students in a cost-effective way.
- We have a good relationship with the district and good interaction with coaches. It would help considerably if we could distribute information. Also, since we depend upon the school calendar, we would like to get advance notice of schedule changes, or immediate notice of snow days.
- We would like to see more kids involved. A newsletter or a leisure guide for children would be useful. The more we can reach out, the better it will be.
- Our biggest problem is getting information out there to young kids. We are trying to create a variety of options, but we have no way to let people know.

- Please consider using the district website as a means of getting information to students and families. "If you are interested in this sport, go to this link." This

would remove any burden on the classroom teacher for distributing information while expanding opportunities for kids and answering questions from parents.

- The district should consider sponsoring an activity night as a method to get information to students and families. Ideally, it would be scheduled towards the end of the school year for the fall programs.
- We should have opportunities to work with the physical education teachers to help them present an organized unit on various sports. Students would get introduced to a variety of activities, and that initial exposure could motivate them to go home and say, "Mom, can I play…."
- We can provide this expertise to a district PE teacher by presenting modules for different ages. This would allow an introduction of a variety of different sports, some of which students have not previously experienced.
- We would love to have the opportunity to present a brief class to kids in your school district who would otherwise have nothing to do with a sport.
- It's one thing to hear about a sport; it's another thing to actually participate. This approach (going into the schools, working directly with PE teachers and students) would give kids an opportunity to try different sports.
- I love the idea of getting into the schools. It would be a way to let kids know they are more capable than they think they are.
- We would really appreciate the opportunity to come into schools once or twice a year and talk about our club. We are a year-round sport (rowing). We need your support in having the ability to come into the schools and teach kids what's involved.
- One of our challenges is expanding our running club's membership. High school coaches have told students they don't want them training with us. That to me is breaking The Bellingham Promise. If someone has a passion for the sport, they should be able to use our club. We would like to be treated like the other clubs. We feel pressured by a handful of coaches.
- It would be helpful to have more of a partnership with the district; for example, if our club recognizes or honors students for specific achievements, that news should be shared at school as well.
- Regarding equity for students: We have scholarships available. Parents need to know that.

Facilities:

- One of the challenges we have had is facilities. How can we work effectively with the district in coordinating the use of fields? The lighted fields will be great for our older players, once they are available. How can we streamline the process for using the fields, so it will work for everyone? We should start talking now.
- In the spring, field use is on a reservation basis. It has become our group's responsibility to make this work. How can we make facility usage run smoother? Will it be the responsibility of the district or parks and recreation? If we can work out reasonable use fees and structure use of fields in a way that they can be accessed equitably, it will be helpful for all the groups.

- Could we take all of these scheduling issues and consolidate them into one place?
- Let's all come to the table to try to get groups to work together to best utilize the space.

Following the general discussion, Dr. Baker summarized key points, including how The Bellingham Promise connects to sports programs. It is clear, he said, that attendees have a desire to: enhance communications, coordinate and collaborate on the use of facilities, and to work with the district to bring more opportunities for all students to participate in sports programs.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Steven H. Smith, Board President

Attest:



Greg Baker, Secretary to the Board

Minutes Approved: *Nov. 13, 2014*