



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
DATE: February 19, 2026
RE: Monitoring Report for EL- 3, Treatment and Communication with Public, Parents and Students

I certify that the following is accurate as of February 6, 2026. The reporting period is from December 1, 2024, through November 30, 2025.

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, significant communications and/or change management around the following topics and/or initiatives:

- **Budget planning:** Facing significant budget challenges, we adhered to the guiding principle “communicate early and often” about our budget process, offering context, process and avenues for advocacy/education. Generally, we share messaging about the upcoming budget in January through the spring, but in the 2024-25 school year, we started messaging in the fall re: budget planning for 2025-26.

During this reporting period, we relied on email messages, videos, and numerous presentations to staff, leaders and community groups. We [shared a message about the school board’s recent actions, including an open letter to legislators and a resolution](#). We also communicated via [traditional media and letters to the editor](#) to help amplify school board members' voices, as well as with representatives from state organizations and the state superintendent of public instruction. In January 2025, the superintendents of Whatcom County sent a joint letter to the editor, which was published by Cascadia Daily News, the Bellingham Herald, the Salish Current and other local publications.

We use a [webpage as a key resource](#) to track our budget messages and tools, including our Final Budget (which is often referred to as the “budget book”), and Priorities for Progress, which helps identify our key investments. The webpage was updated throughout the school year to include cost-saving measures and frequently asked questions to demonstrate transparency. We also asked for feedback via a digital form so families, staff and students could weigh in on cost-savings ideas, including reducing the school year by one day and asking families to help subsidize high school sports and traffic safety. This work culminates with the [annual budget book](#).

Budget planning for 2026-27 started in fall 2025, and we relied on similar strategies and tools for communicating with staff, parents/guardians, students and community members. Two differences to note for this budget cycle: we were concurrently running

[two ballot measures in fall 2025 while also sharing difficult budget news](#), and 2) we wanted to look at changing the high school schedule as a cost-savings option. We shared multiple messages about the [schedule, offering feedback forms](#) and a [video](#).

- **Capital projects:** We regularly share information and look for ways to engage with our community around construction and capital projects. Projects that were of importance during this reporting period include the work of our design advisory committee and educational specifications process for both [Roosevelt](#) and [Carl Cozier](#) elementary schools; [ground breaking for the new Community Transitions](#) building on Whatcom Community College's campus and [committee work on site enhancements and ADA upgrades for Lowell Elementary School](#). Roosevelt, Carl Cozier and Lowell families, staff and neighbors were all invited to attend open house evening meetings on behalf of their respective committees during this reporting period.

A group of staff have been engaged with representatives from the City of Bellingham's mayor's office and parks department to discuss relocating Cozier to park land within the Civic Complex and selling the current school to the city. The city has included Cozier representatives and parents as well as our district in planning consortium meetings to get community feedback re: the Civic Master Plan. While plans have not been finalized, we look for opportunities to [share updates on our progress](#).

During this reporting period, our capital projects and facilities teams worked to prepare for the upcoming [facilities maintenance levy](#) that was on the ballot in November. Staff worked closely with a committee of diverse representatives across our district to help determine what would be included in the ballot measure and how to educate our community on needs and rationale for this funding source. See more about the levy below.

- **Politics / election:** Provocative speech and violent acts across the country and in the news continues to affect our schools and community.

In early 2025, concerns regarding funding for immigrants and immigration services were top of mind for many students and families, including threats of ICE agents targeting schools. We shared [this message](#) to offer some reassurance and resources. In February, following federal executive orders regarding equity, diversity and inclusion, we shared [this message](#) to provide information as well as our steadfast focus on supporting our students. These commitments are shared by our staff and many families across our district, and I often talk about our values when speaking to community groups, centering our work on The Bellingham Promise.

Looking ahead: some middle and high students participated in different walkouts/protests against ICE in late January/early February 2026.

- **Safety concerns and utilization of safety protocol:** Our team helps support different safety related concerns and incidents at our schools throughout the year.

During this reporting period, Alderwood went into a Secure protocol two different times related to a loud “bang” sound heard on the playground. The source of that noise was a tool that helps scare away birds at the airport (January and March 2025). Northern Heights went into a brief Secure after a bobcat sighting (March 19, 2025). A number of schools briefly utilized the Hold protocol during this reporting period to give space and privacy for student-related issues. Both Kulshan and Whatcom middle schools managed incidents involving students making threats and subsequent discipline and messaging. In November 2025, our district responded to media and staff impacted after a parent was arrested for involvement in a shooting in DC.

Big picture, our district continues to follow the [standard response protocols](#) and similar templated messaging from the “I Love U Guys” Foundation. We continue to look for opportunities to proactively share updated policies and staff and student rights related sexual harassment, bias or hate speech incidents, and student discipline. These include messages, annual handbook, video, posters, lessons and trainings, which are updated regularly.

- **Prepping for levy elections:** In spring of 2025, our district pulled together a [Capital Levy Planning Committee](#), representing a variety of stakeholders, to better understand the needs and physical conditions of our schools and facilities to help inform a capital levy proposal for fall 2025. This committee put forward a recommendation in June, which provided compelling reasoning to move forward with a six-year facilities maintenance levy on the November ballot. Additionally, the state legislature lifted what is known as the levy lid, allowing districts to ask voters to maximize local funding through its operations levy. We decided to go out for two ballot measures in November, which meant planning and strategizing during the months leading up to the election.

During this reporting period, we worked on determining the effective key messages, while staying in bounds of what districts are allowed to share, with an emphasis on educating, informing and student safety and wellness. We planned and developed a levy [webpage](#), [videos](#), [printed fliers](#), [FAQs](#) and several messages in [email](#) communication and social media for external communications. We also created a

levy toolkit for small-group meetings with staff and parent groups, empowering principals and other leaders to access a slide deck for back-to-school nights and events at their schools and in their school-based communications. We also created and shared a robust webpage titled “[How my school will benefit](#),” which allows users to see a list of improvement projects by school or site.

Voters approved our supplemental operations levy by 69% and our facilities maintenance levy by 64.5%.

Sustainability

Our efforts around sustainability have continued during this reporting period. Since we publicly shared our Climate Action Plan (CAP) in fall 2023, we continue to take steps toward a sustainable and resilient district, looking for opportunities to measure progress, share updates and stories and engage staff, students, families and community in this critical work.

In summer and fall 2025, solar arrays were installed on five schools as part of a \$2.7 million grant award. This sustainability work was supported with funding by the Washington State Climate Commitment Act.

Other sustainability-related progress and engagement included: the arrival of three propane buses; the continued connection with the Food Recovery Program of Sustainable Connections to pick up unused food from school cafeterias for use in the community; and continued efforts in waste reduction in school cafeterias with new donated receptacles and updated signage.

A dynamic Energy Use Intensity (EUI) and Carbon Benchmarking dashboard is available on our website.

The Sustainability Standing Committee is currently on hold.

Public Records

Communications received more than 100 records requests during the reporting period. This is a similar volume to the previous two reporting periods.

Requests included those requested under the state Public Records Act (PRA), requests furnished to students and/or their guardians under the Family Educational Records and Privacy Act (FERPA), and requests that include elements of both. Additionally, the records officer supported the records components of Title IX investigations, for many legal

proceedings, and with agencies such as the Office of Civil Rights, each of which must be handled with care, efficiency and accuracy.

As in previous reporting periods, the scope of each request ranged from a single piece of information about our district to thousands of responsive records requiring extensive review and redaction.

The quantity of requests remained stable compared to the sharp growth observed in previous reporting periods; however we continue to observe individual requests being complex and broad, e.g., “any and all communications” regarding a topic or an individual.

Video requests for our district security camera footage continue to represent a sizeable portion of this work. Communications works closely with our district educational technology team, director of safety and security, and legal counsel, if needed, to fulfill video requests and make redactions. Communications and the director of safety and security also provide guidance for administrators for saving, furnishing and using security footage as needed; they also support working with law enforcement to ensure that video requests involving public safety needs are fulfilled efficiently and accurately.

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 public records requests, which is an important function of transparent government.

The assistant director of communications, who is the district records officer, continues to receive regular training in public records law and best practices by regularly attending training conferences, workshops and webinars hosted by the state Attorney General’s office and the Washington Association of Public Records Officers (WAPRO). During this reporting period, the records officer also collaborated with PRO colleagues at several other school districts to provide open comment on proposed updates to the model rules for processing public records. This open comment focused on the specific needs of school districts compared with other types of public agencies.

A major achievement this reporting period was to initiate a retention and destruction protocol in alignment with state guidance, so the district is not retaining public records requests beyond the requirements of the state schedule. The records officer continued to work closely with an administrative assistant for a limited number of additional hours authorized by the superintendent. The administrative assistant was instrumental in helping the records officer remain organized and on deadline with this complex work.

The records officer also receives support for questions regarding records requests from our district legal team as needed and appreciates their timely responses, which allow us to fulfill complex requests with efficiency and confidence.

Graduations

For the class of 2025, we continued our recent tradition of hosting graduation ceremonies at one location and providing online streaming access. For the fifth consecutive year, the district hosted all four high school graduation ceremonies at Civic Stadium. For the second consecutive year, the Options High School graduation took place Friday evening, followed by graduations for Bellingham, Sehome and Squalicum on Saturday.

Communications did not support the Community Transitions program with photography, as has been the case for the last several years. The Community Transitions program typically holds its graduation event at Depot Market Square on the Thursday before the four high school weekend ceremonies. However, Community Transitions (CT) honored its graduates differently in the 2024-25 school year due to a state law which allows BPS to provide Special Education services to eligible students only through their 22nd birthday. CT opted to host rolling celebrations to recognize graduates on/near their 22nd birthday and a special end-of-year party for our CT community, moving away from the end-of-year graduation event. Next reporting period, we plan to return to an end-of-year celebration.

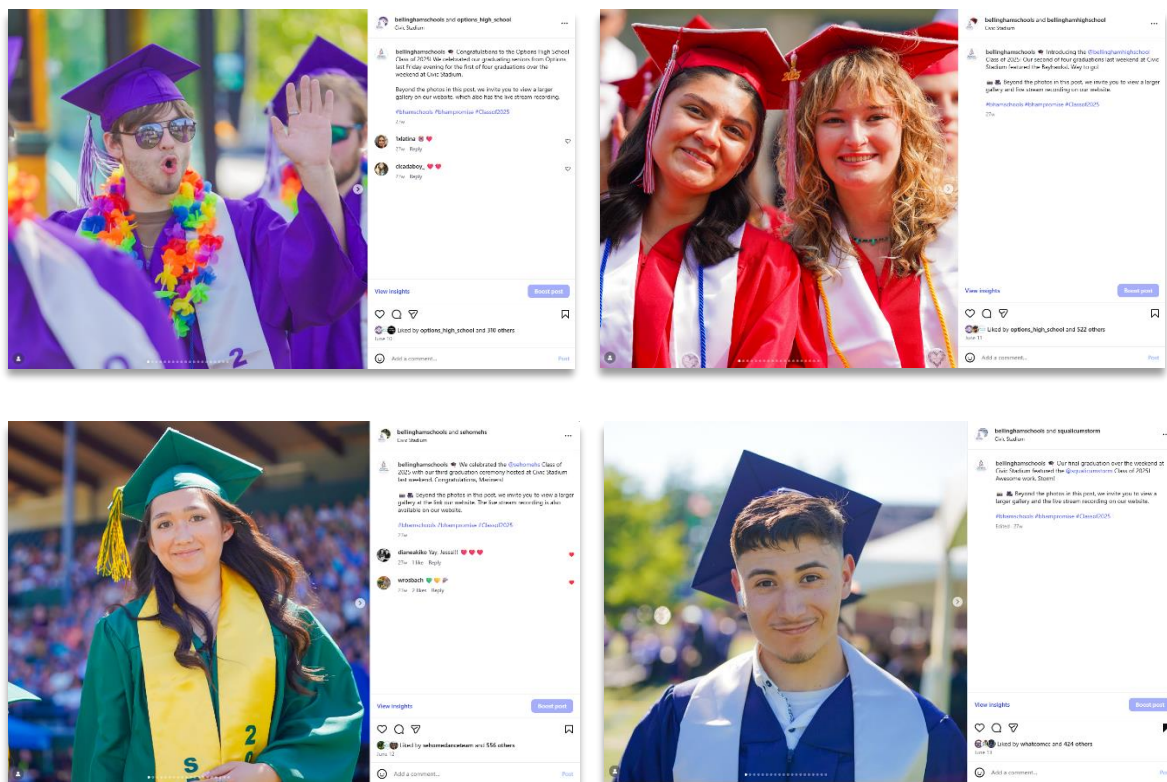
Considerable time was spent planning, listening to stakeholder feedback and messaging seniors, staff and families with details and expectations of the graduation events for our four high schools. BPS staff and students streamed all four ceremonies to the BPS YouTube channel, which totaled nearly 4,600 collective views, including live streams and on demand replays.

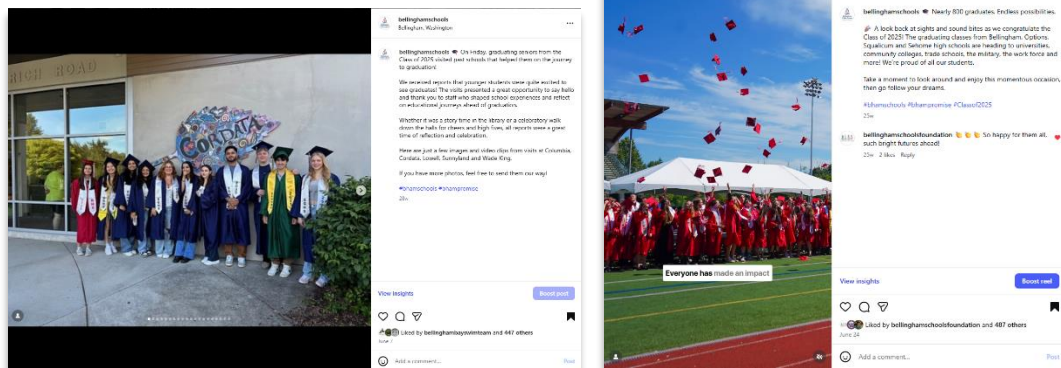
For the second consecutive year, BPS Communications was the primary photographer team for all graduation ceremonies. Previously, the district had contracted with a third-party photo company for photos. We made this change a couple of years ago as a cost-saving step and an enhancement to photo turnaround time. We appreciate both a better product and having more control of the process.

The communications technician specialist was the sole primary photographer for the Options High School graduation, due to the smaller number of graduates requiring only one photographer.

The communications technician specialist and one contracted photographer (a former BPS employee) collaborated to cover the Bellingham, Sehome and Squalicum graduations on Saturday.

In total, over 6,100 downloadable graduation photos taken by BPS Communications were published to Flickr by midday Tuesday of the week following the conclusion of the graduation events. The photos generated over 20,600 views on the platform. The team shared subsets of each collection shared to social media in well-performing posts ([BHS](#), [SHS](#), [SQHS](#), [OHS](#) plus [a post of crowdsourced photos of seniors visiting elementary schools in graduation caps and gowns](#) and a [reel post summarizing graduation season with quotes from graduation speakers](#)) for a combined accounts viewing total of over 158,000 across all social mediums (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube – reel summarizing graduation season), not including the 20,600+ views on Flickr.





Communications supports the creation of graduation programs to give each high school similar, consistent production and print values. The Sehome High School trifold program is shown below as an example. Graduate names are listed inside.

Program

Please rise and remain standing during the procession.

Processional....."Pomp and Circumstance" by Edward Elgar
Sehome Band, Chase Kobylarz, Director

National Anthem.....Akhia Carr, Vocal Soloist

ASF Interpretation.....Lamina Compan, Annika Johnson,
Gerry Luviano Monterola, Zoe Marshal-Schneider,
Miles Remmel, Lucy Major, Jessa Parfet, Sydney Harri

Land Acknowledgement.....Natalie Angiatik, Sehome Staff

Welcome.....Parker Norman, ASB President

Student Speaker, selected by the senior class.....Ellis Hawkins

Choral Performance....."Dedicated to the One I Love"
Loreman Pauling and Ralph Bass / Arr: Audrey Snyder
Sehome Chamber Choir, Vanessa Katz, Director

Faculty Speaker, selected by the senior class.....Max Zentner

Orchestral Performance....."Kiss from a Rose"
Seal / Arr: Jae-Yoon Lee
Sehome Senior Orchestra, Kirstin Dond, Director

Presentation of Class.....Sonia Cole, Principal

Acceptance of Class.....Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent of Schools

Presentation of Diplomas.....Sonia Cole, Principal
Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
Scott Ritchey, School Board Member

Closing.....Sonia Cole, Principal

Turning of the Tassel.....ASB Senior Representatives
Yengrou Liu, Troy Mitchell, Miles Remmel, Oz Resnick

Recessional....."Anchors Aweigh" by United States Navy Band
Sehome Band, Chase Kobylarz, Director

Please remain at your seats during the recessional.

Program Cover Art by Gem Davey Ramos

Sehome Staff 2024-25

John Aguilar	Derek Hahn	Patricia Neely
Haruna Allen	Jessica Humerick	Erin Neisinger
Frank Alvarez	Amy Hunkinson	Ngoc Chau Nguyen Truong
Natalie Angiatik	Phillip Hensoch	Gwen Nyman
Susan Anli	Lester Herting	Dana Paltison
Michael Bechowski	Julie Hiet	Brian Powell
Ashleigh Bobowski	Magdalena Hite	Kami Quessenberry
Jesslyn Bowen	Eric Hofstedt	Gulzar Rahman
Robert Burgess	Tucan Holger	Kyle Ringo
Jay Caldwell	Mary Hosker	Anna Rittmuller
Christina Campbell	Alysa Johnson	Catherine Rosvama
Cecilia Josi	Kari Kane-Ronning	Julie Ross-Backmaster
Marcelle Capps	Larred Kararay	Kevin Ryan
Shannon Carey	Vincent Katz	Brittney Sambroski
Kristin Carentia	Kacy Keck	Amanda Sanderson
Jordan Chalfant	Anna Keegan	Charles Schelle
Tina Christensen	Mackenzie Kestling	Stephanie Schroeder
Kerri Clary	Colleen King	Heldi Schreyer
Sonia Cole	Kimberly Kirk	Scott Schreyer
Monica Contreras	Garrett Knoll	Hana Schutz
Nicky Cook-Deiler	Chase Kobylarz	Adrienne Sheard
Mike Couto	Malory Lahti	Ryan Smith
Randell Crawford	Alex Larx	Sarah Spicer Jaguay
Colin Cushman	Austin Larsen	Sasha Strane
Ella Davia	Keri Lee	Jennifer Styer
Valerie De Fehr	Isoli Letts	Steven Titterton
Sтивен DeMone	Lindsay MacDonald	Jennifer Thornton
Angela Desler	Carter Maden	Lauren Tucker
Darrian Di Nittio	Stacey Major	Nathan Turner
Recky Dominio	Madison Marko	Kristy Van Tgdom
Kirstin Dond	Phillip Marx	John VanderHillen
Kristin Dungan	Michel Mason	Chezarie Villarreal
Launery Longa	Colleen McDonnell	Bernett Vis
Shanawn Embank	Kandace McGowan	Shawn Walker
Margaret Fogarty	Tamara McGowan	Edward Wisomg
Kelly Fuentes	Bridget McGuinness	Jeffrey Wood
Erin Furda	Holden Miller	Christopher Wiresten
Holly Furbelle	Camille Mora	Brian Young
Yous Golan	Catherine Moran	Martha Zender
Katarina Gombocz	Sonya Morrison	Maxwell Zentner
Jared Greenwood		

School Board

Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hacker,
Jenn Mason, Scott Ritchey, Katie Rose
Superintendent: Dr. Greg Baker

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:

- In January 2025, the executive director of communications and community relations attended the Superintendents Advisory Committee meeting at the ESD in Anacortes, WA.
- In March 2025, the executive director of communications and community relations attended a training for school staff on responding to sexual and domestic violence. This training was hosted by the Bellingham Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence.
- In July 2025, the executive director of communications and community relations attended the NSPRA annual conference in Washington D.C. She was recognized as one of the top school communicators in the country.
- The Communications Department attended a one-day team retreat in August 2025. During this time, the team primarily worked on website migration as the new website launch was scheduled for the end of the month. The team also set goals, planned for upcoming events/messaging and brainstormed future strategic work for the 2025-26 weekly meetings.
- The assistant director of communications attended several conferences and webinars related to public records to support her continued proficiency as district records officer.
 - Public Records Training Dec. 4, 2024
 - PRA University – public records training. March 26, 2025
 - Public Records Training Dec. 29, 2025
 - WAPRO Spring Virtual Conference, May 21, 2025
 - Case Law/Legal Update for public records. May 22, 2025
 - WAPRO Q & A: School Records. May 22, 2025
 - PRA Legal Update. Sept. 4, 2025
 - PRA University – Exploring Microsoft Purview. Oct. 30, 2025
- The communications technician specialist regularly attends the Northwest Educational Service District 189 meetings held for communications professionals once to twice per month (typically on Zoom) to share ideas, plans, new laws and/or crises management. The executive director of communications attends when possible.

- The executive director of communications and assistant director of communications continue to regularly attend local/regional public information officer meetings (PIOs). This group provides training, speakers and opportunities for collaboration with communications colleagues from school districts, cities, counties, fire, police, libraries, transit, public works and other public and private agencies. We hosted this group at the district office in November 2025 and led a training on how to become a “backpack journalist” for speedy storytelling.
- The communications technician specialist participated in the following professional development opportunities:
 - Washington state Qualtrics school districts meeting hosted at Bellingham Public Schools for a Lunch and Learn about software use cases (Dec. 3, 2024)
 - Monthly “What’s New Review” sessions with ParentSquare for product development updates
 - ParentSquare Ambassador meetings, which include learning about product use cases from other school districts who utilized ParentSquare
 - ParentSquare webinars on Attendance Plus – a new add-on tool to address chronic absenteeism and ParentSquare pay – an add-on tool for processing payments
 - ParentSquare webinar on approaching crisis communication with empathy (Nov. 20, 2025) The entire communications department, along with some key staff from the Department of Teaching and Learning, watched the recording during a team meeting for further discussion.

2. The superintendent shall not fail to:

- a. Use multiple media resources including, but not limited to:
 - i. Community and school newsletter(s):

A) [InsideSchools](#)

In this reporting period, the Department of Communications and Community Relations produced three editions of InsideSchools, our community newsletter. For each edition, 56,000 are printed and mailed to saturate the entirety of postal routes within School District 501, including both businesses and residences. These newsletters inform stakeholders about our schools and engage them in the collective work of The Bellingham Promise. InsideSchools is also published online and shared via email and our website.

Stories highlight major initiatives and areas of focus; other articles recognize staff, students and community partnerships. Most editions include updates from facilities, the school board and the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation. Starting in fall 2024, the newsletter is now a tabloid fold (four pages) and includes eight stories from our schools with QR jumps to full articles on the Promise website. This is both a cost-saving and paper-saving measure, as the world becomes more and more digital and saturated with news.



Winter 2025: This edition included stories on Girls Flag Football launching in the district, the CTE class Robotics Engineering and robotics competitions, Instant Language Assistants (ILAs) in use in district, the opening of the Health Center at Options High School and Lummi author visit sharing her book *Our Hearts Beat as One*. This edition also included updates from Capital Projects, the school board and the Foundation.

Spring 2025: This edition included stories about ocean science courses, the Salmon in the Classroom program, and on a focus in schools on tribal activist Billy Frank Jr. It also shared about Peter and the Wolf educational concert at the Mt. Baker Theatre, a Fairhaven student's Red Cross fundraiser, and a unique collaboration between Squallicum high school AVID students and Northern Heights Elementary fifth grade students as they worked on their International Baccalaureate projects. This edition also shared the recipients of the 2025 Promise Awards.

Fall 2025: This edition was printed ahead of the fall 2025 election and included important information for the community about our two levies on the November ballot. Articles ranged from the visit of 2001 Squallicum alumnus U.S. Navy Pilot Commander Chris Pratt, author Meri-Jo Borzilleri's visit to Birchwood and Silver Beach elementary schools, the football Mom Clinic at Sehome and the groundbreaking for the new Community Transitions building.

B) Mass messaging tools: ParentSquare

ParentSquare overview and background:

The 2025-26 school year marks the fourth full academic year using ParentSquare.

We use ParentSquare for mass communications (school newsletters, district information, urgent alerts), classroom communication (one-to-one and group messaging, parent-teacher conferences), and related school services.

Training and support of ParentSquare use:

ParentSquare's capabilities represent comprehensive, two-way communication and notification services. ParentSquare provides product enhancements that further its usage and require knowledge and in some cases, further training support.

As such, our team has witnessed our community continue to expand its ParentSquare usage each academic year. We recognize it takes time to become familiar with, and maximize the use of, customization tools available to each user in the platform. Though well regarded as an easy-to-learn tool, the comprehensive aspects of the new tool have called for continued support and education for best use cases.

Our communications team assists staff and parents/guardians daily via phone and email with account settings and permissions to optimize usage.

Much of this support is resolved with the expertise of our team, but we also routinely reach out to ParentSquare's support team to better understand the tool and suggest feature enhancements, based on feedback from our community. For example, the communications technician specialist had 99 ticket conversations with ParentSquare support during the reporting period.

We are currently working to support our high schools in helping students become familiar with StudentSquare, the student companion app to ParentSquare connecting to the same messaging system. One of our high schools has shared feedback about students wanting to receive alerts during safety situations, and beyond safety situations, the tool can be used for classroom and extracurricular communication. Ensuring students know how to use StudentSquare helps ensure their preferred notifications are set and they know how to engage with the platform.

Expanded usage:

We continue to receive a positive response to ParentSquare's role as a communication tool in our community.

Here are a few examples: easy-to-use attendance notifications and excuse notes, language translation in two-way digital conversations when translators are not available, creation of custom groups that are not already rostered classes and offering large-scale messaging to grades or classes along with one-to-one direct messaging all in one platform.

We continue to use the Secure Document delivery feature to send report cards and progress reports. This feature matches ID numbers to recipients via a mass PDF upload and digitally distributes report cards and progress reports for ease in family access.

Using Secure Document Delivery for report cards saves immense time and funds formerly spent on preparing and mailing documents and includes delivery reports to confirm which guardians engaged with the report card. In the cases of undeliverable documents, we can quickly pull the list and find other ways to contact those folks. A conservative estimate in cost-savings indicates we have saved around \$7,000 each time we send digital report cards as opposed to physical copies.

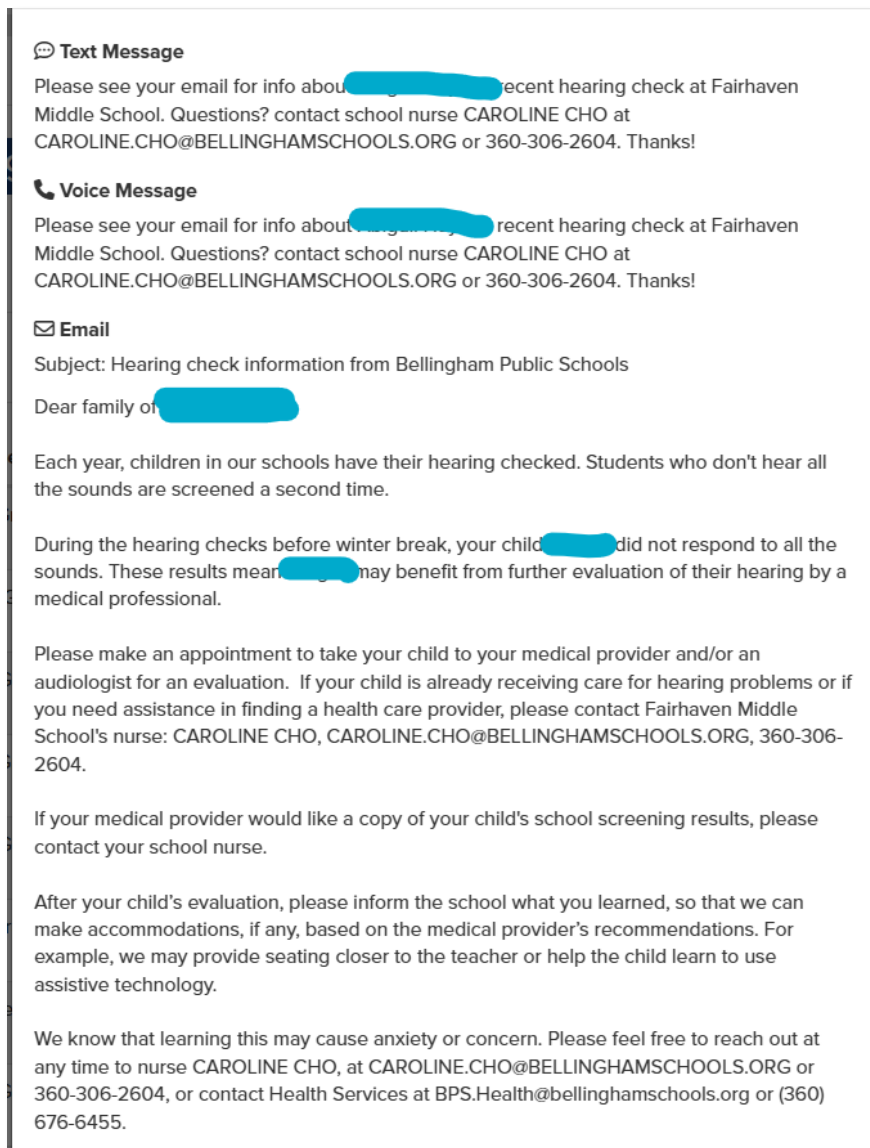
During the most recent reporting period, our team has also supported numerous staff in creating custom groups for communication that extend beyond class rosters. Examples include middle school choir clubs, caseloads of students for special education staff and multi-class groups such as all classes at a specific teaching team or grade level that need to communicate about content unique to this group.

ParentSquare analytics numbers support the expanded usage of the tool in its fourth full year in our school district.

During the reporting period, BPS staff used ParentSquare to send 12,402 posts (district, school or class group messages), 208,166 direct messages (one-to-one or small group back-and-forth messaging – similar to texting), 342 smart alerts (higher priority messages related to school schedules changes due to weather, transportation issues, school safety etc.), 3,922 auto notices* (e.g. attendance) and 297 Secure Documents. (Please note: Auto notices and Secure Documents totals are calculated by how many times a mail merge style template is used to do a mass send, not the number of individuals sending count/recipients.)

Communications used auto-notices to support the nursing/health services team regarding immunization compliance, hearing screenings and vision screenings, and the transportation team regarding custom back-to-school notifications for students' assigned bus stop location, times, route number and driver.

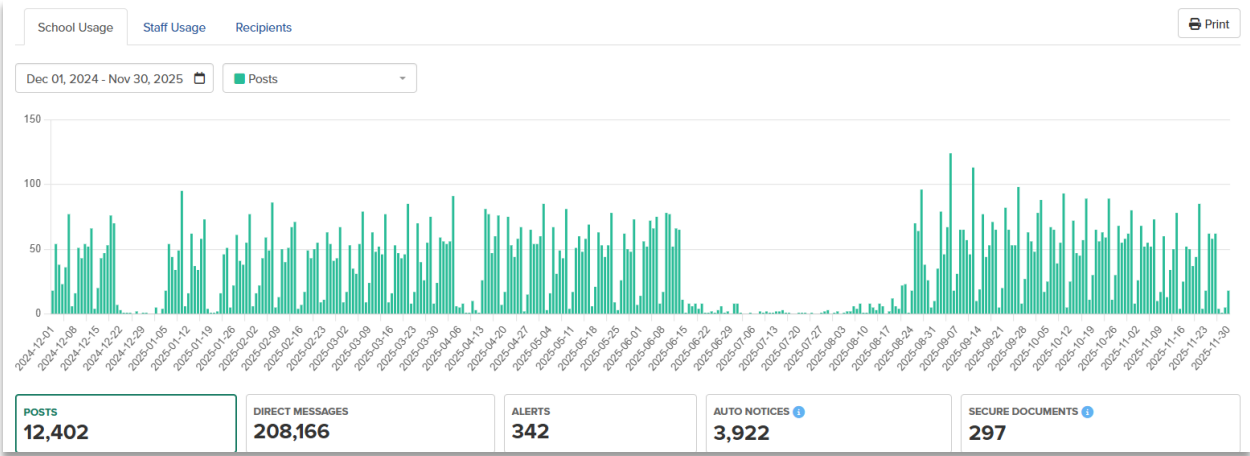
Anecdotally, the nurse team reported significant savings in time (vs. prior practices of sending individual emails or letters) and quicker responses from families for next steps to support their children, and transportation reported fewer phone calls and confusion regarding back-to-school bussing.



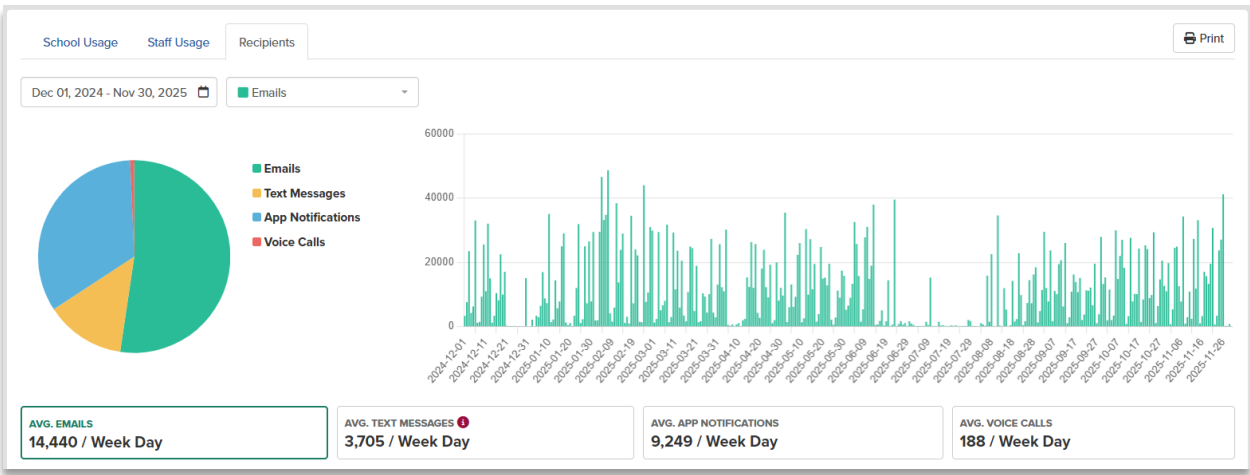
An example custom notice sent directly to guardians regarding hearing screening.

From a districtwide perspective, the tool usage continues to expand with an average of 14,440 emails, 3,705 texts, 9,249 app notifications and 188 voice calls per weekday.

Data snapshots: ParentSquare:



Provides a snapshot of notifications overall usage (districtwide) over the reporting period.



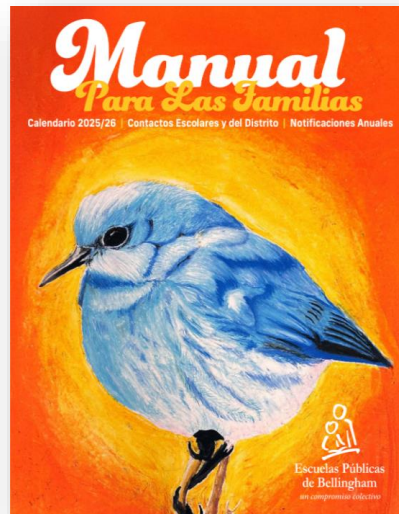
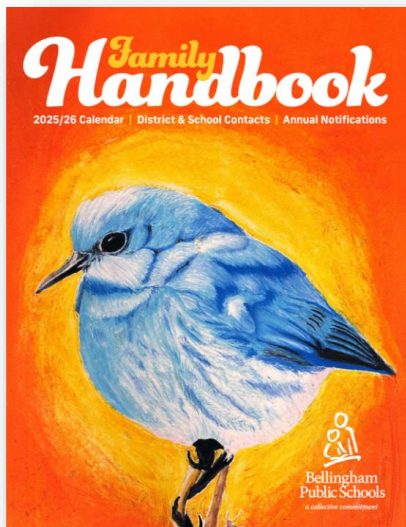
Provides a snapshot of notifications per weekday (districtwide) over the reporting period.

C) Other publications and posters shared with family and student stakeholders

Family Handbook and Calendar 2025-26

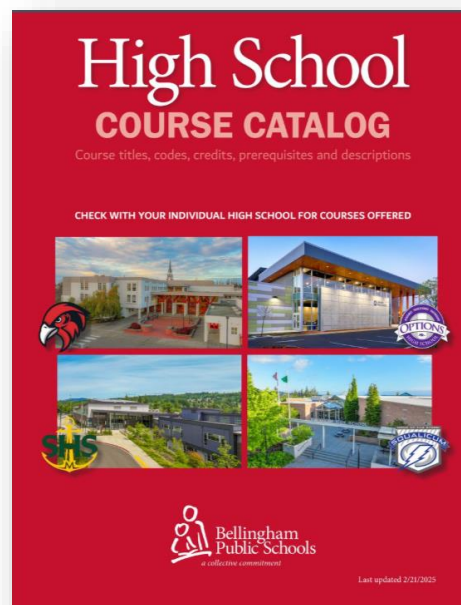
This annual publication is mailed home before the start of the school year and includes important notifications, district and school contact information and administration, and a full month-by-month school calendar. The publication highlights student art on every page

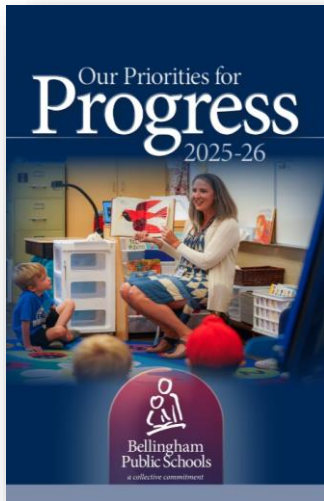
and is printed in full color in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), thanks to support from the Whatcom Educational Credit Union (WECU).



High School Course Catalog 2025-26

Working with the Department of Teaching and Learning, communications staff updates the [high school course catalog](#) every winter. The catalog is used by all four high schools and includes registration information and course descriptions. This remains an important publication relevant to nearly 35 percent of all students and families, sharing important graduation requirements: the credits needed to graduate, the High School and Beyond Plan, and graduation pathways. The front pages of the catalog also include critical information about registration and grading, as well as advanced placement and dual credit opportunities.





Priorities for Progress 2025-26

Produced every fall, the [Priorities for Progress](#) publication is a companion document to The Bellingham Promise that provides detail for anyone who wants to learn about our work in each of the six key strategies. Each key strategy lists the top five priorities, plus a list of other important priorities. In fall 2025, we returned to a printed publication of Priorities for Progress for the 2025-26 school year.

Promotion

Promotional materials for everything from kindergarten registration to career and college planning events are created annually in Communications.

For this reporting period, these included:

Kindergarten flyers and posters were updated, printed and distributed at elementary schools in English and Spanish in spring 2025. See below.

Kindergarten registration for fall 2025!

Registration for kindergarten is open in Bellingham Public Schools. All children who will be 5 before Sept. 1 can enroll for kindergarten. Scan QR code below to get started.

Find out more about registration, attendance areas and childhood immunization schedules at the website below or contact your elementary schools directly.

NOTE: If your child is 4 years old before Sept. 1, you may be eligible for Promise K (transitional kindergarten.) To learn more about Promise K, please call our Early Childhood Education Program at 360-676-6488.

bellingshamschools.org/kindergarten



Inscripciones para el Kinder para el otoño de 2024

La inscripción para el kinder ha comenzado en las Escuelas Públicas de Bellingham. Todos los niños que cumplan 5 años antes del 1 de septiembre pueden inscribirse en el kinder.

Para más información sobre la inscripción, las zonas de asistencia, los calendarios de vacunación infantil y los eventos de visitas a las escuelas, visite la página de internet que aparece a continuación o póngase en contacto con el Centro de Apoyo Familiar — 360-676-6456.

NOTA: Si su hijo(a) tiene 4 años antes del 1 de septiembre, usted puede ser elegible para Promesa K (Kinder de transición). Para obtener más información sobre Promesa K, llame a nuestro Programa de Educación para la Primera Infancia al 360-676-6488.

bellingshamschools.org/kindergarten



Additionally, the seven school districts in Whatcom County put together a joint press release and produced countywide flyers listing all districts. This collaboration assisted families across the county in registering at their correct district. Some families may have childcare in Bellingham but live in Meridian, Ferndale or another county school district.



On the other end of K-12 education, communications staff supported events for job, career and college planning with posters, flyers and social media promotion as well as targeted messaging to our high school students and families.

Above: Sample graphic for Teen Job Fair 2025. Half-sheet flyers and posters and social media were also designed, printed and posted for promotion.

Below: Half-sheet flyer for the 2025 College Fair. Posters, web sliders and social media were designed, printed and posted for promotion.



Districtwide Block Party marketing and support

During this reporting period, Bellingham Public Schools hosted the fifth annual Back-to-School Block Party in August 2025. The Communications team supported the event with promotional materials, social media promotion, flyers, onsite signage and day of support with photography, setup/takedown and other tasks.



Families view this event as an important school readiness event as they prepare for the upcoming school year. It regularly attracts more than 1,000 attendees.

D) Investing in strategic partnerships on behalf of students and families

This year, the Family Engagement team continued its commitment to supporting schools, students, and families through strategic partnerships and innovative programs. We strengthened community relationships, expanded services, and provided essential resources to ensure every school, staff member, and family feels connected and supported. We are deeply grateful to our leaders, partners, staff, and volunteers whose generosity and dedication make these efforts possible. Together, we have created opportunities that remove barriers, foster inclusion, and build trust.

Alongside all of the engagement opportunities, Family Engagement staff uses the district ParentSquare system to reach families in their home language, often with initial and follow

up reminders. These ParentSquare messages are often in addition to personalized messaging by phone.

See example below of ParentSquare messages for Coffee and Bread (Café con Pan.)

Coffee and Bread expansion

We expanded Coffee and Bread (Café con Pan) gatherings to more schools, including middle and high schools, and introduced sessions in other languages to foster inclusivity and community engagement. These events provide families with a welcoming space to connect, share experiences, and build relationships with school staff. By offering these gatherings in different languages, we ensure that all families feel valued and heard.

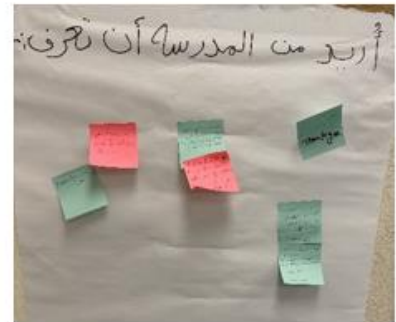
	Cafe con Pan TODAY WMS Cristina Manterola • Spanish Whatcom Sent on Wed, Nov 05, 2025 at 08:10 AM PST	N/A Emails	34 App Notifications Sent	49 Texts Delivered	N/A Calls
	Cafe Con Pan Tomorrow Cristina Manterola • Spanish Whatcom Sent on Tue, Nov 04, 2025 at 06:00 PM PST	N/A Emails	34 App Notifications Sent	50 Texts Delivered	N/A Calls
	Cafe Con Pan Whatcom Cristina Manterola • Spanish Whatcom Sent on Sun, Nov 02, 2025 at 06:25 PM PST	42 Emails Delivered	34 App Notifications Sent	50 Texts Delivered	N/A Calls



Images sent out in a ParentSquare post with details of the event.



Coffee and Bread at Carl Cozier Elementary School on November 25th, 2025, with the Arabic Speaking families.



Messages the families wrote for school. "I want school to know..."

They were translated by the interpreter.



Messages the families wrote for school. "I want school to know..."

They were translated by the interpreter.



Coffee and Bread at Shuksan Middle School on November 12th, 2025, with the Spanish Speaking families.

Targeted ParentSquare messages

Targeted communications, often in the form of ParentSquare Smart Alerts, were sent to families whose students receive services for homelessness (McKinney-Vento), foster care and/or multi-lingual language support to ensure they received critical updates and resources. These include messaging about community partner resources and critical district information on a multitude of topics, such as:

- the districtwide Block Party event
- Operation School Bell (clothing vouchers for students)
- Opportunity Council Homelessness Prevention
- FuturesNW college application and financial aid information,
- sign up events for Puget Sound Energy support resources,
- the state SunBucks EBT program
- ninth grade orientations to high school
- Traffic Safety parent night reminders,
- weather closure updates and snow bus routes.

These additional efforts demonstrate our commitment to equity and access, ensuring no family will miss out on important opportunities.

Graphics, posters, handouts and flyers are often developed and distributed alongside digital messaging to make the information accessible to all.

Sports Readiness Event-Fostering Equal Access

In collaboration with BPS athletics and activities, we hosted a sports readiness event at the district office, where students could receive sports physicals from PeaceHealth doctors. These were also offered at the Block Party. Additional appointments have been available at the Options High School Clinic through SeaMar. This initiative removed barriers for families and highlighted strong partnerships, ensuring students can participate fully in school activities. ParentSquare SmartAlert messages were sent to families who had an appointment for the sports physical. We called the families as well. We also helped families complete their FinalForms forms to get students ready for the Spring sessions.

Photos from the February 2025 event:



Left- Family that benefitted from sports physicals and support with navigating the forms online.

Right- Members of the Family Engagement team helping families complete their forms in FinalForms.



Students getting their vitals before their appointments.

Partnership Events with Puget Sound Energy

Puget Sound Energy continues to partner with Bellingham Public Schools in supporting families. We signed up families to PSE's support programs, including solar panel credits, and later hosted another event where PSE returned to assist families in reapplying for support programs. Opportunity Council also joined to help with Cascade Natural Gas applications. This event supported over 120 families in one evening, demonstrating the power of collaboration to meet essential needs.

Photos from the event:



Families learning about the Solar Panel Credits Support Program from a representative of Puget Sound Energy.



Families were able to get resources from both PSE and OPPCO. Here, families are waiting for the next available staff to help.

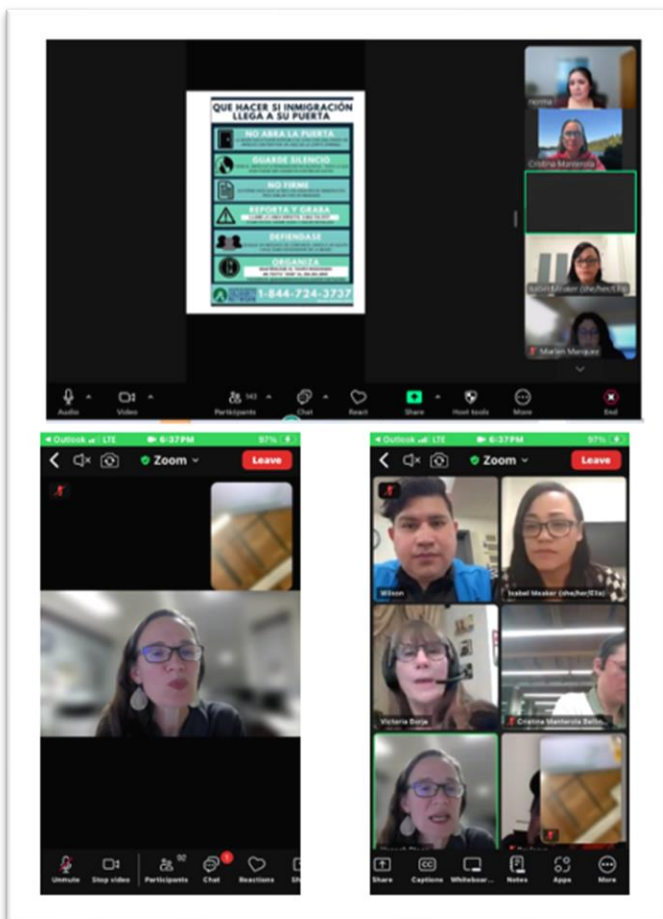


Family Liaisons and staff from PSE and OPPCO helping families complete the application.

Family Emergency Plan Support

We continued collaborating with the Bellingham Schools Foundation, Chief of Police, Chuckanut Law, Hanna Stone, Goodwill, IRIS, and many volunteers to help families know their rights and complete family emergency plans. Documents were notarized, and events were hosted both on Zoom and in community spaces. These efforts provide families with peace of mind and security, reinforcing our commitment to their well-being.

Attorneys Hannah Stone and Erin Glass answered questions and concerns from the parents and explained the process to have an Emergency Family Plan in place. We had 90+ parents connected.





Plan para la Seguridad de Jóvenes y Niños

Acompáñenos el **viernes 18 de abril a las 6:00 PM** en Zoom para aprender como llenar los papeles necesarios para tener un plan de seguridad familiar.

Hablaremos sobre el **Poder Notarial para Poderes Parentales y la Intención de los Padres para el Cuidado de un Niño Menor de Edad.**

También daremos información sobre cuándo y dónde podrán notarizar los papeles.

Enviaremos el enlace de Zoom por ParentSquare 15 minutos antes de comenzar la sesión.



Parent Education Center at Shuksan Middle School

The new Parent Education Center (Portable B at Shuksan Middle School) provided a safe space for families facing sensitive situations. We continue to offer basic computer classes in partnership with the Whatcom Literacy Council and Goodwill to support parents' continued learning. These classes empower families with essential digital skills, fostering independence and confidence. See images below of the space and the promotion for a computer class.



¡Clase de Computación Gratis!



¡Si te interesa tomar la clase, llama al Centro Familiar al 360-676-6456 para anotarte!

Las clases serán en la Secundaria Shuksan

Es una sola clase de una hora y media en la que aprenderemos lo básico de la computadora. Tendremos información sobre organizaciones de la comunidad que ofrecen clases de computación para que puedan continuar aprendiendo.

El cupo es limitado. Si tu familia recibe almuerzo gratis, ¡podrás recibir una laptop al final de la clase!

Interpretation and Translation Services

We maintained robust interpretation and translation services for our multilingual Families, averaging 500+ interpretation requests per month from staff and parents, including quick check-ins, sharing news and updates, inviting families to school events, requesting meetings, and translating numerous documents.

Portable AI translators helped teachers, bus drivers, and newcomer students communicate effectively, significantly improving school experiences. There is great relief from staff when these devices are made available. See email chain snips below for an example of the support these provide:

From: Lemieux, Shannon

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 8:17 AM

To: Meaker, Isabel; Manterola, Cristina

Subject: AI translation

Hi Isabel and Cristina,

Amy sent a message about AI translation devices. We have a new family who [speaks](#) Arabic. We have funding for an interpreter to support them through Feb 21st. (Faten is at Sunnyland 3 hours a day and it is so helpful!)

The [kiddos](#) do not have language peers. Friendships are so important and are the biggest hurdle. The translation apps for Arabic are not as helpful and students in classrooms are sharing the newcomer iPads because we don't have many.

Long story short- I think this family could be a great candidate for this support once interpretation support ends. I was thinking it could be nice for the [siblings](#) especially at recess [times](#)? (would have to find a way for them to share one device at school, but we could solve that!)

Thanks for [considering](#), Shannon

From: Meaker, Isabel

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 9:03 AM

To: Lemieux, Shannon

Subject: RE: AI translation

Hi Shannon,

Thank you for reaching out. We could send two AI Translators your way and you could decide how to use them best. What do you think of that? We can send them your way via internal mail today. Thank you!

Isabel

From: Lemieux, Shannon

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 9:05 AM

To: Meaker, Isabel; Manterola, Cristina

Subject: Re: AI translation

That seems so generous! Two??? We will def take them. Are they [pretty easy](#) to use?

From: Meaker, Isabel

Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 9:09 AM

To: Lemieux, Shannon

♥ That is exactly how we want them to be used. It's so hard for our newcomers to say even the simplest thing. This is not perfect, but a big help. Very easy to use!

Parent Survey Launch

Because we are interested in knowing if we provide the right support to these families, we launched an interpretation family survey to gather feedback on these services, ensuring continuous improvement and responsiveness to family needs. We are grateful for the trust families place in us and remain committed to breaking down language barriers.

Interpretation services survey

Meeting date:

To participant: Feel free to provide feedback on the interpretation services provided. Please answer relevant prompts.

The interpreter:	Yes	No
Was present at the start of the meeting.	☐	☐
Introduced themselves to all participants and explained their role.	☐	☐
Communicated that information from the meeting would remain confidential.	☐	☐
Interpreted everything that was communicated.	☐	☐
Was the interpreter friendly/helpful.	☐	☐

Tell us about our interpretation services:	Yes	No
I know how to request an interpreter when needed.	☐	☐
Feedback (any concerns or comments):		

This helps us to improve the interpretation services we provide to families. Thank you for your time!

E) Website and Social Media

Website

During this reporting period, the district website had 2,009,817 views.

Peak website traffic occurred during possible weather events with snow falling and during the first day of school or semester. Web traffic was considerably higher compared to other days.

Highest web traffic days:

Feb. 3, 2025 – 28,077 pageviews (all schools closed due to snow)

Feb. 4, 2025 – 26,057 pageviews (all schools on 2-hour delay with snow bus routes)

Sept. 15, 2025 – 17,735 pageviews (Traffic could be due to wildfire smoke in surrounding areas during this timeframe, there was no school schedule impact)

Oct. 13, 2025 – 17,459 pageviews (This was Indigenous Peoples Day, and traffic could be due to wonders about whether or not there is school on the holiday)

Sept. 8, 2025 – 17,279 pageviews (first Monday of the school year)

The top four most visited district webpages during this reporting period (excluding the homepage; includes combination of views on old site and new site with website transition happening during the reporting period):

Calendars – 118,622 views

Human Resources – 98,690 views

Directory – 90,341 views

School Menus – 63,321 views

New websites planning and launch:

During the reporting period we worked with our new website vendor, Finalsity, on the design phase to design our district and school websites during the winter and spring of 2025. We also reviewed and migrated content from our old websites to our new sites, culminating with the launch of new website on August 21, 2025 ahead of the new school year.

The benefits of the new website include the age, accessibility and structural concerns. The communications technician specialist convened a website vendor group in spring 2024 with district stakeholders, including school staff and parents. The work group's recommendation informed the district's selection of Finalsity, a leading K-12 vendor that is used by more than a third of Washington school districts.

Our communications team and Finalsity representatives held several meetings during the design phase, in which design drafts were provided for review. Design decisions were based on work from the discovery phase in which we had identified website values, goals and vision. It included identifying a sitemap (page organization structure), branding and photos assets, stakeholder input, a current website assessment and assessment of competitor websites.

The design was completed in July 2025 and our communications team, with some help from a limited Finalsity virtual webmaster service, moved content from our WordPress sites to the new Finalsity websites.

For the migration, we used a spreadsheet to track our work in a process that was essentially a lot of copy and paste from one location to the other. In total, more than 4,000 pages were migrated.

[We provided messaging to our school district community on launch day](#) (August 21, 2025) that included a feedback form about the news sites.

We also support training for website editors before and after the launch. Most notably, a Finalsity rep visited Bellingham on August 25-26, during which many staff received group training led by the Finalsity rep and supported by the communications technical specialist.

Additionally, we held Zoom-based office hours and met with staff for one-on-one training support. The communications technician specialist has also attended monthly library media specialist meetings for dedicated website training and support time.

General web inquiries:

Our district website has a general web inquiry inbox, which visitors can access via the contact webpage. The inbox is monitored by our reception staff. When able, reception staff respond directly to the inquiry with the answer. When additional information is required, reception staff will forward the inquiry to the appropriate staff member for follow-up.

During this reporting period, we continued to receive regular inquiries (typically between two and 10 per week) from staff, families, students and community members.

Social Media

During this reporting period, the district social media presence continued to grow overall. We passed 7,000 followers on Instagram and 7,000 followers Facebook during this reporting period. We also passed 2,000 followers on LinkedIn.

X, formerly known as Twitter: Lost 74 followers, giving us 2,439 followers*.

*X is our least-followed/engaged platform. The trend follows the tool's usage as ownership/rule changes on the platform have some folks deleting accounts or moving to an alternative such as Threads or Bluesky.

LinkedIn: This reporting period was our fourth reporting period actively posting content to LinkedIn as an active social media outlet. LinkedIn has an audience of both current and prospective employees. We continue to explore ways to uniquely use this medium.

We have 2,047 followers, gaining 287 followers during the reporting period.

Facebook: Our analytics reported an increase of 322 followers during the reporting period. We have 6,817 followers. A particular interesting note about our Facebook following is that it is 84 percent female and 16 percent male.

Below are the top five most popular posts on Facebook for this reporting period (based on Reach):

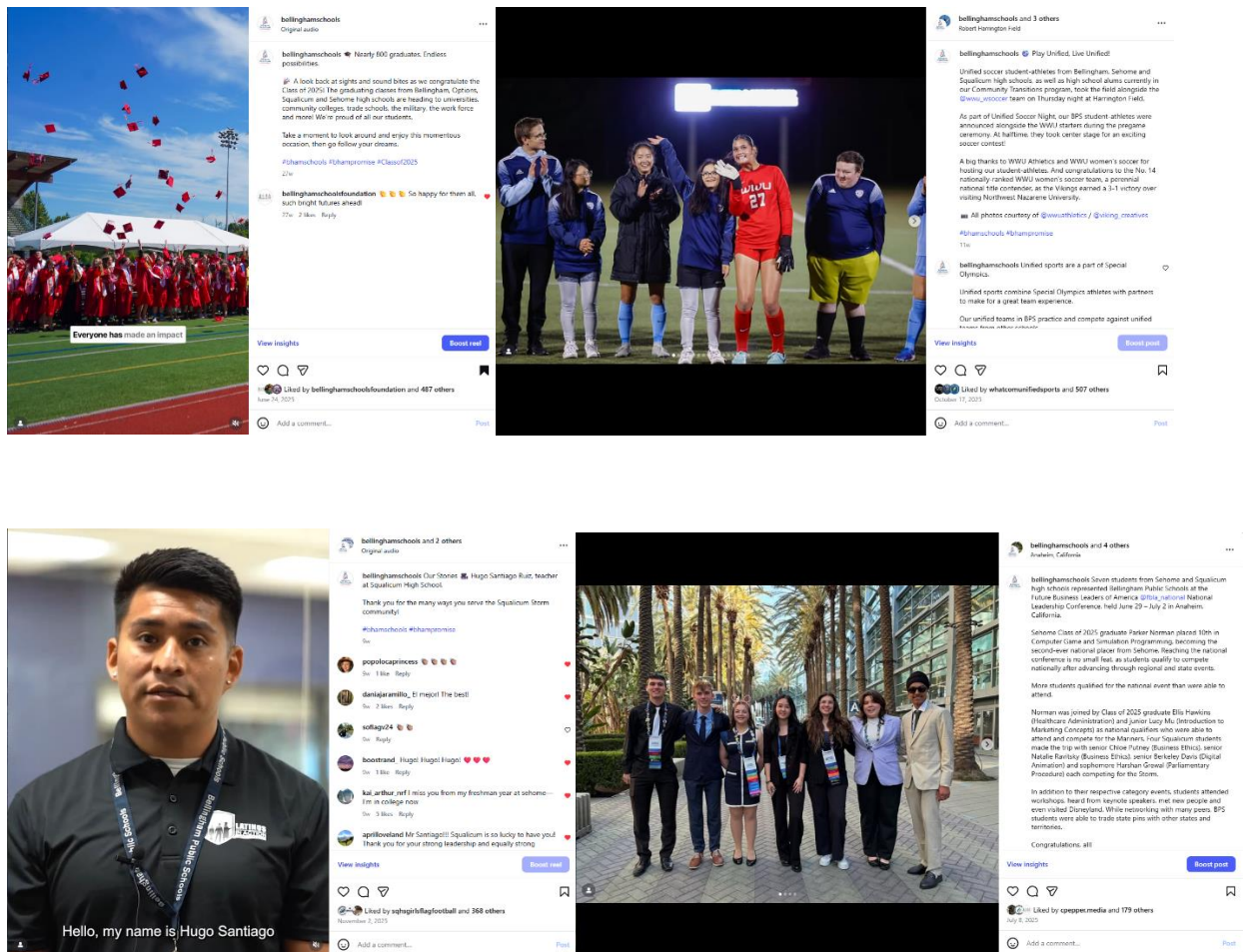
Date	Post	Interactions (reactions, shares comments)	Reach (people reached via their newsfeed)
5/2/25	Five Sehome students win film festival award	511	34,381
9/17/25	Facilities utilized by community – photos/stats highlight *this post was boosted with funds	261	16,151
9/2/25	First day back to school for grades 1-2 photos	165	12,472
1/17/25	Photo/story recap of first-ever girls flag football games	141	12,424
7/8/25	Seven students from SHS, SQHS at FBLA	137	11,082

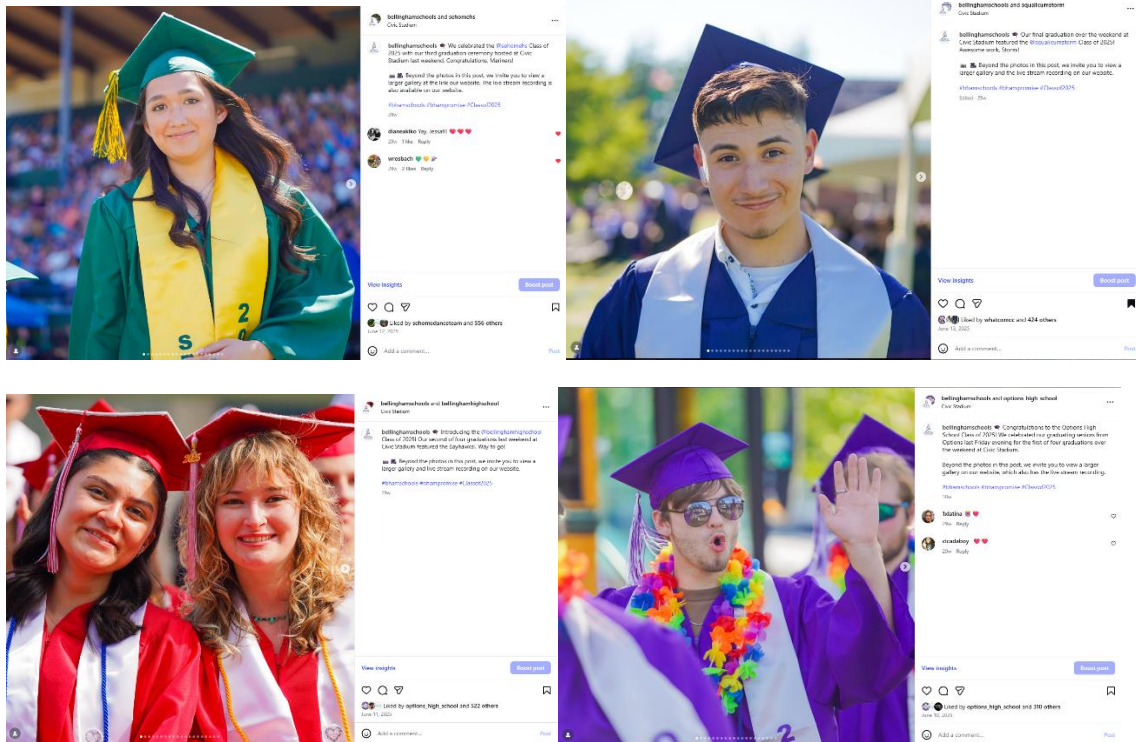
Instagram: Our Instagram following total increased by 383 followers during this reporting period. We have 7,017 followers.

Below are the top five most popular posts on Instagram for this reporting period (based on Reach):

Date	Post	Interactions (reactions, shares, comments)	Reach (people reached via their newsfeed)
6/24/25	Graduation recap reel (photos, student speech excerpts) *this reel was boosted by funds	570	25,900
10/17/25	Unified soccer highlight at WWU women's soccer game	550	7,604
6/12/25	Sehome High School graduation recap photos	165	12,472
1/17/25	Our Stories video reel: Hugo Santiago Ruiz	141	12,424
7/8/25	Seven students from SHS, SQHS at FBLA	137	11,082

Popular Instagram posts:





Social media posts highlighting staff: From Dec. 1, 2024 - Nov. 30, 2025, staff members were highlighted regularly in district social media on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn. Here is a sampling of these posts, captions and photos:



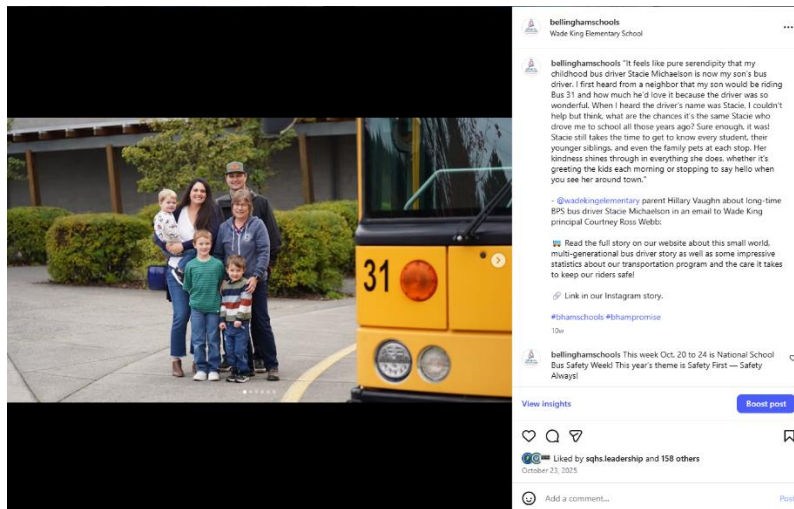
A post on Nov. 6, 2025 recognized Squalicum High School teacher Kay Reilly earning the 2025 Promise Futures Award from the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation.



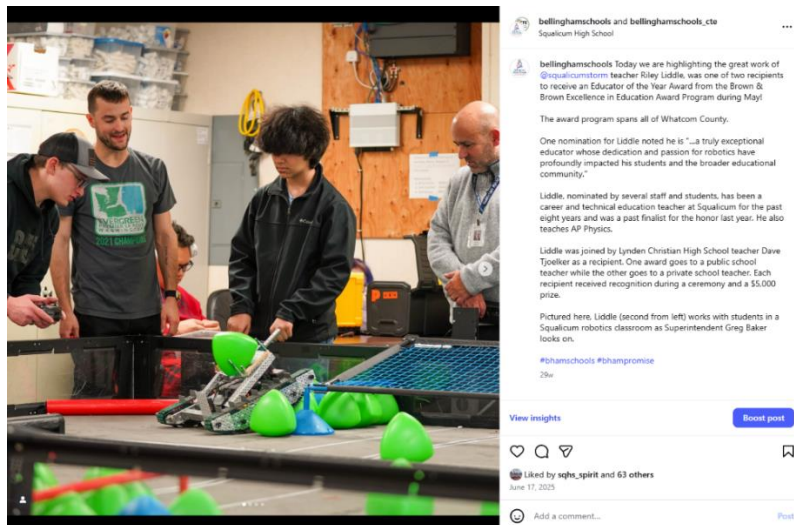
A post on Oct. 30, 2025 featured Birchwood Elementary administrative assistant Carmina Cisneros Gomez in an Our Stories series video. Several other staff were featured in this format as well during the reporting period.



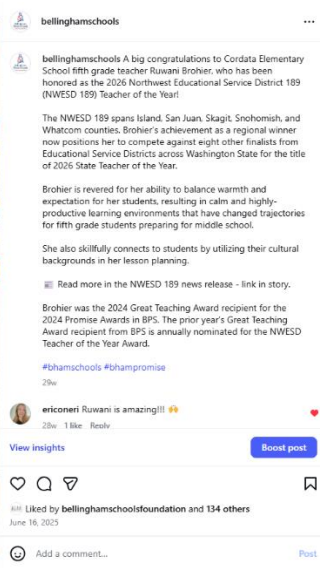
A post on Oct. 25 highlighted Sehome High School teacher Mary Hooker, who was honored with the 2025 State Language of the Year by the Washington Association for Language Teaching.



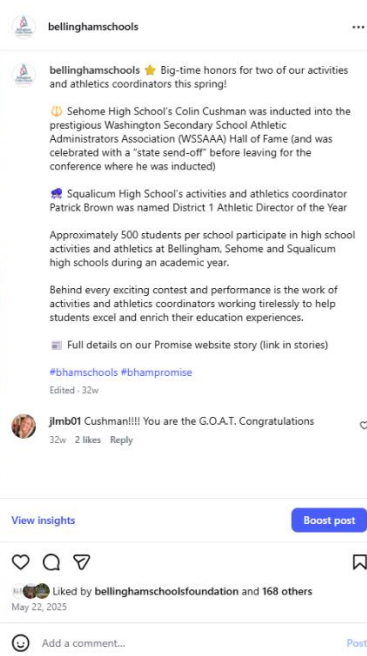
A post on Oct. 23 featured the multigenerational impact of longtime bus driver Stacie Michaelson.



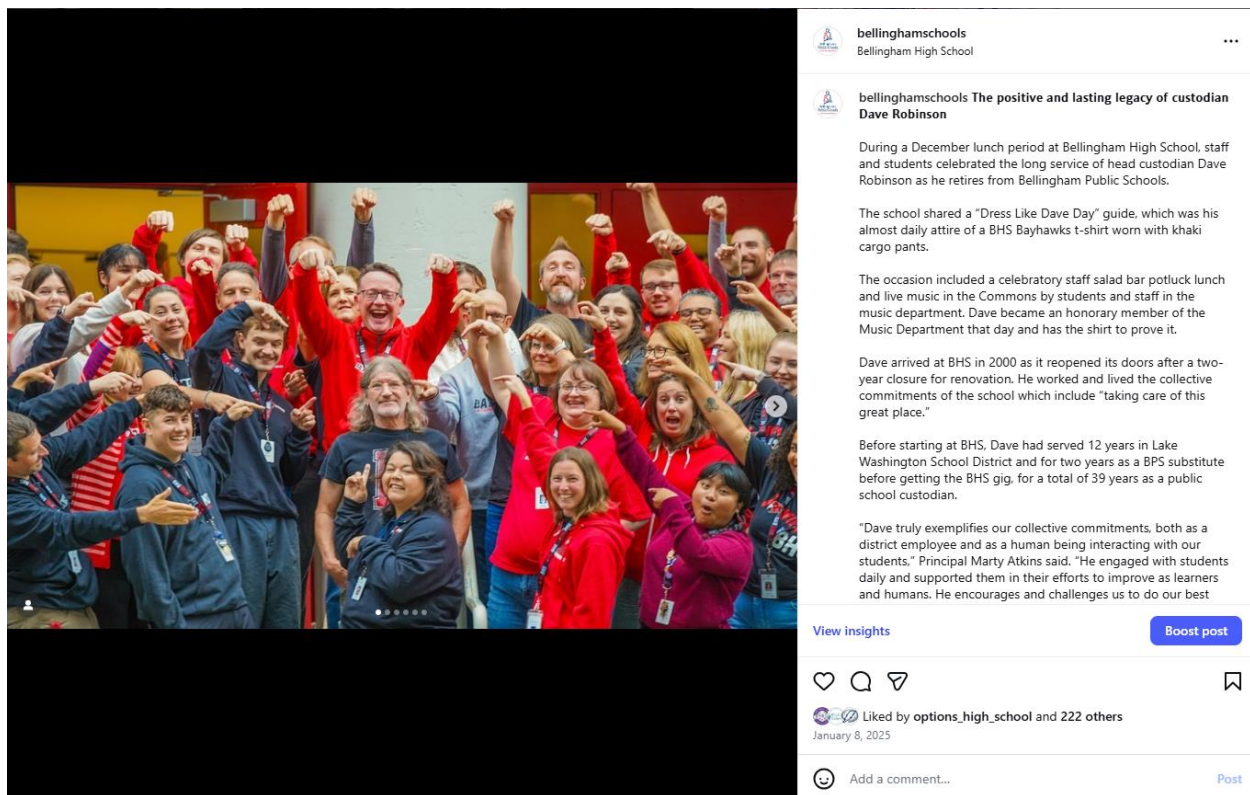
A post on June 17 highlighted Squaticum teacher Riley Liddle, who was recognized with an Educator of the Year Award from the Brown & Brown Excellence in Education Award Program.



A post on June 16 recognized former Cordata Elementary and current Roosevelt Elementary teacher Ruwani Brohier, who was named the 2026 Northwest Educational Service District 189 (NWESD 189) Teacher of the Year.

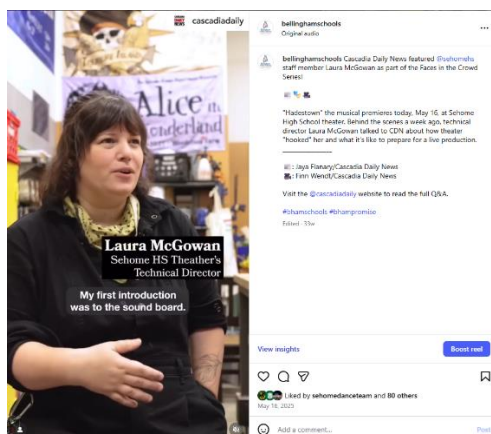


A post on May 22 featured two of our activities and athletics coordinators. Sehome's Colin Cushman was inducted into the prestigious Washington Secondary School Athletic Administrators Association Hall of Fame while Squalicum's Patrick Brown was named District 1 Athletic Director of the Year.



A post on January 8 highlighted retiring Bellingham High School custodian Dave Robinson and his lasting impact.

In this reporting period, local media stories about district staff were also amplified on district social media, including these stories by Cascadia Daily News on Sehome staff member Laura McGowan and Roosevelt Elementary (former Cordata Elementary) staff member Ruwani Brohier.





During this reporting period we promoted two Facebook/Instagram posts about our district (celebration of Class of 2025, facility rentals summary) as well as through levy information digital ads on Google Search.

For our levy information digital ads:

- Engagement rate was higher than the benchmark average; this means our ads performed better than the average ad for our placements
- Google Search: November ad run
 - 5,533 impressions
 - 543 clicks
 - Click-through-rate (CTR) finished 203% over the benchmark average
 - General ads led in overall clicks
 - Keywords related to funding and levies and branded terms (such as Bellingham Public Schools) led in keywords throughout the ad run

For Class of 2025 and facility rental summary posts boosts:

- Boosted posts on Facebook/Instagram
 - 79,142 impressions
 - Post engagements (these do not include organic engagements)
 - 713 post reactions (likes, hearts, dislikes)
 - 6 post saves
 - 29 post shares
 - 2 comments
 - 9 Facebook likes and 1 follow on IG

While it's challenging to attribute a social media impression or click-through directly to the knowledge of a voter or perception of a district related to celebratory posts, we believe the high number of impressions, clicks and above-average engagement rates helped achieve our campaign goal to share information about levy ballot measures as well as highlight our graduates and facilities usage.

F) Digital Forms

Qualtrics

Qualtrics continues to be a well-used tool within the communications department and beyond during the reporting period.

The communications technician specialist provides all initial training and troubleshooting for Qualtrics.

Our uses for Qualtrics are close to endless, and we continue to work to find operating and upkeep capacities to develop and maintain new projects in the system.

We continue to explore opportunities to empower other departments with a “train the trainer” mode, to share capacities and empower continued use of the product.

The largest and most robust annual Qualtrics project continues to be our climate survey. The project has specific audience questions for staff, families and students. All data is connected to a summary dashboard that can be viewed by district and school leadership. During the reporting period, we had 7,662 total responses to climate surveys.

Other examples of heavily used Qualtrics projects used on recurring basis include: districtwide transfer requests, student athletics, activities and clubs interest survey, post-occupancy evaluation surveys for new buildings in our district and Promise Kindergarten applications.

Qualtrics is also supported by communications and used for many one-time surveys such as advisory committees and budget planning feedback.

Forms used during this reporting period included:

- Family, student and staff climate surveys (7,662 responses during reporting period)
- Request for Student Attendance Area Transfer (1,071 responses during reporting period)
- Bellingham Virtual Learning (BVL) and Lab Registration Application (598 responses during reporting period)

- Promise K applications (299 responses during reporting period)
- High School Credit Requirements Waiver and Alternatives (167 responses during reporting period)
- FERPA Agreement Form (81 responses during reporting period)
- Promise Awards scoring form 2025 (173 responses during reporting period)

G) Digital Signage

External reader boards

The Communications team continues to coordinate the use of external school reader board signs, funded by the 2018 bond.

We host eight schools with external digital reader boards in our district: Alderwood, Cordata, Parkview, Silver Beach and Sunnyland elementary, Shuksan middle, and Bellingham and Squaticum high schools.

The signs provide a strong public presence to share messages such as school specific events and districtwide calendar reminders. Staff can add any combination of content slides (a single slide or as many as desired) that will rotate and play during sign “on” hours.

The communications technician specialist provides all training and support to school leadership and staff who update the reader boards. The communications team also provides templates and visual resources to support the content design process.

Initial training includes access and overview of the web-based sign updating software, which controls sign content.

The communication staff also provides content monitoring support of the signs. This includes adding districtwide reminders to signs (ex. early dismissal days) so that school staff can focus efforts on messaging unique to their respective schools. The communications team also works to ensure proper function signs are “on” and “off” at appropriate times to abide by city code parameters.

TruDigital internal displays

TruDigital is a digital signage software used by a portion of our schools to share content within school buildings on TV displays. Content shared through the software is typically specific to internal student audiences.

The communications technician specialist supports training and troubleshooting requests for identified school staff tasked with updating their school displays. The communications

team also supports the sharing and sizing of graphics for display, upon request, and can push content remotely to signs.

Across the district, 13 TruDigital display systems were active during the reporting period. Two new display boxes were added at schools – a second box at Squalicum, and a box at Kulshan.

Additional internal displays

The move to the new District Office has presented opportunity for additional interior signage, which operates on software systems different from our external and internal signage systems at our schools.

One is the vision board located on the main level of the District Office near the reception welcome area on the wall behind the coffee shop.

The communications technician specialist updates the vision board with a combination of videos (e.g., Promise Awards recipients, overview of The Bellingham Promise, Class of 2024), photos (recent event highlights) and graphics (e.g. human resources graphics, ParentSquare graphics). The videos run at a very low volume with closed captions for ongoing viewing and the screen is scheduled to go on and off automatically based on a set schedule each day.

Our communications team also worked with educational technology to design and set up a new system for displaying daily calendar events via a vertical-positioned screen above the reception computer. This screen is intended to be a quick stop check for arriving visitors to know meeting locations during the day. The calendar is updated daily by the reception team.

A digital history wall is located on the upper level of the District Office. A “then and now” slide deck displays photos of our schools and students from the past and present. Coming in 2026, the history wall will evolve into an interactive board with a touchscreen display with an enhanced scope to move directly to specific school and district history slides.

H) Media Coverage and Relations

The communications team continues our commitment to timely and excellent customer service with all media outlets in our community. The assistant director of communications is the media liaison and typically responds in one working day to any media request, often more quickly, depending upon the reporter’s deadline or other circumstances, and works to arrange school visits and/or interviews with district staff, families or students as appropriate.

Communications cultivates positive and responsive working relationships with our local media, the goal of which is a high level of trust, mutual respect, and accurate understanding of public education in our community. During this reporting period, the executive director and assistant director met in person with editors and reporters from the Bellingham Herald, Cascadia Daily News, and KGMI (Cascade Radio Group) to make intentional personal connections, share district initiatives, and learn more about local media trends and community interest. The assistant director also connects regularly with the education reporter from The Cascadia Daily.

On occasion, posts about our schools, sometimes containing developing or even misinformation are created by so-called “Citizen Journalists.” These outlets generally maintain an online presence and rely on tips and scanner / police reports to post to Facebook or other social media. These types of outlets do not generally reach out for comment and instead rely on reader comments or tips.

Communications also provides support and media coaching/orientations to staff members and works to connect reporters with a wide range of subject matter experts from across the district, both geographically and by level.

Our messages to families and our community serve as de facto press releases and often result in media inquiries; however, the Communications team has also increased our proactive press releases and direct pitches to local outlets, resulting in some cases with earned media coverage of topics like school funding, the November 2025 levy election, kindergarten registration, and grant-funded projects like the solar panels and electric car class.

Each local professional outlet continues to express the wish to expand coverage of education topics and local events and/or how national or state-wide initiatives affect the Bellingham community. The Cascadia Daily, in particular, covers education in the region regularly and requests the audio recordings of school board meetings or, less often, assigns a reporter to attend in person.

Direct inquiries received in this reporting period were about the same as the previous reporting period, averaging around two to four inquiries per week, with some topics/issues bringing multiple inquiries from multiple outlets or requiring multiple follow-ups.

Our top three media outlets with which we work, in order of frequency, are: The Cascadia Daily, The Bellingham Herald, and KGMI. We also worked with the Salish Current, KMRE, and a scattering of other local, state and national publications. Although requests from collegiate journalists are fewer than in years past, we do receive requests from WWU

students writing for classes and/or WWU publications, and we work with them the same way as the professional press.

Stories covered by the media during this reporting period was wide ranging, including: multiple articles on the ripple effects of changes at the federal level that affect education and families, projects resulting from a philanthropic organization's donations to our Special Education and CTE departments, budget planning, plans for the former District Office building on Dupont St., lawsuits and/or Title IX complaints, ongoing plans for the Civic Athletic Complex and the rebuild of Carl Cozier, and our work to fully comply with a 2021 state law that created more stringent requirements for lead testing and remediation in schools. For the third year, Cascadia Daily highlighted local high school graduates in the spring, and the media liaison helped coordinate BPS selections to participate in their coverage.

Public events such as plays, concerts and prep sports, are coordinated primarily through our high school coaches, directors and athletics & activities coordinators, with support from our media liaison as needed. Numerous student-athletes, coaches, and fine arts events were covered, and that media activity is not noted here, although our media liaison is available for staff support if requested for coverage of extracurriculars and/or public events.

Each month, we publish an "In the News" collection of "recent media coverage highlighting the people, programs and moments in Bellingham Public Schools."

These monthly collections are hosted on the website as Promise Stories and are often included in Promise Highlights shared with the community; they help archive and communicate about media coverage.

In the News posts, this reporting period:

- [November 2025](#)
- [October 2025](#)
- [September 2025](#)
- [July and August 2025](#)
- [June 2025](#)
- [May 2025](#)
- [April 2025](#)
- [March 2025](#)
- [February 2025](#)
- [January 2025](#)

- [December 2024](#)

2a ii) School board meetings and materials

During the reporting period, the school board met in-person for its meetings at the District Office on Barkley Boulevard. Our board meeting materials are on the website and available before each meeting. Printed materials are available for those attending in-person.

We continue to record audio from each board meeting, per state law. Recordings are available by request the day after the meeting.

2b) communicate short-term and long-term district and school strategic plans describing initiatives and programs to achieve board ends policies

We communicate and share short-term and long-term district and school strategic plans, initiatives and programs to achieve board ends policies, which are part of The Bellingham Promise, in several ways.

Here are some examples:

- Linkages, student roundtables and school visits: The school board regularly shares that they enjoy in-person events such as school visits, linkages and student roundtables. These visits allow board members and executive team the chance to hear firsthand from students and staff about experiences, reflections and special programs. Photos from these visits are often shared on social media.
- During this reporting period, the board visited several schools, including Sehome, Sunnyland, Fairhaven, Silver Beach, Parkview and Columbia.
- The board also hosted student roundtables at [Squalicum High School regarding traffic safety](#), and [at Birchwood Elementary](#). The board hosted community linkages [re: child care](#), and staff, students, parents and community partners connected to our [Re-engagement program](#).
- Promise storytelling: Our strategic plan, The Bellingham Promise, is referenced in many of our communications. During this reporting period, we have published 76 Promise stories. We continue to share these stories to staff and families via email regularly and post them on social media. Communications staff continues to use the “backpack journalist” approach to storytelling (create more content efficiently).

- Superintendent reports at board meetings: At the beginning of each board meeting, the superintendent shares a slideshow of a variety of photos, events, celebrations, initiatives and updates from across our district.
- Priorities for Progress, which is organized by The Bellingham Promise's key strategies. This annual publication includes priorities under each strategy to support the board ends.
- Committees and advisory groups: much of the work accomplished in Bellingham Public Schools is the result of committees and task forces. Membership consists of representatives from stakeholder groups. All do specific work at the direction of the superintendent. Please see section 2d) ii (below) for a comprehensive list.

2c) provide the public, parents and students relevant information on student progress toward achieving board ends policies

With continued support from our community for our tech levy, our district provides professional development to staff to support understanding and use of technology tools. Staff use a variety of communications tools and channels with families to report on student progress, including in-person strategies (in-person meetings and teacher/parent conferences) and web tools (Skyward, Zoom, SeeSaw, email, social media and ParentSquare) for family and student engagement.

Our staff consistently engage with families about student progress, including progress reports, report cards, graduation requirements and state assessments. As mentioned earlier, we continue to deliver report cards to families and guardians through the secure document feature of ParentSquare.

Our family engagement team plays a significant role in connecting families with our schools and staff not only regarding student progress but also sharing resources, news, important dates and emergency notification.

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 our website, our storytelling tool, and general communications (press releases) from the superintendent, the Department of Teaching and Learning and our schools.

Below are some of the most viewed Promise stories for this reporting period:

1. Sehome filmmakers take top honors at national film festival for talented youth
2. U.S. Navy polit and Squalicum alumnus Commander Chris "Wildcat" Pratt visits Bellingham Public Schools

3. Inaugural girls flag football games mark welcoming of sport opportunity in Bellingham Public Schools
4. Commemorating Treaty Day through collaboration, listening and learning
5. In the News - November recap

Also from EL-3:

2d) provide an affirmative (or negative) statement that the following actions have been taken:

- i. a process is in place to address student, parent, and stakeholder concerns in a timely manner;

Affirmative. The process is outlined in our Family Handbook, and there are many other avenues for stakeholders to share concerns, including our general inquiry form on our website, emails directly to the superintendent, visits or calls to the District Office or schools, and even on social media.

Members of the executive team, principals and other leaders and staff communicate and meet with parents and others who have concerns. Parents or community members who email or call the District Office with concerns or questions typically receive a phone call, email or an offer to meet with an executive team member or staff member, often within a few hours after they sent their question or concern. Staff in our schools follow a similar protocol. 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.

During this reporting period, 13 audience members spoke during the public comment period of the board meeting. 20 comments were submitted to the Listening Post. Listening Post submissions contain complaints, concerns and/or general comments for the board.

- ii. 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

- Carl Cozier Elementary Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee

- Roosevelt Elementary Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee
- Community Transitions Educational Specifications/Design Advisory Committee
- Capital Levy Planning Committee 2025
- Lowell Elementary Site Enhancements and ADA Upgrades Committee
- Safety and Security Planning Committee

Parent Advisory Committees

- Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Teaching and Learning

- CTE General Advisory Council
- Elementary Literacy Task Force – 2025-26 School Year
- High School Schedule Ad hoc Committee 2025
- MTSS Standing Committee
- Instructional Materials Committee
- Title VI Native American Family Committee

Superintendent

- Student Advisory Committee to the Superintendent

Other

- Occupational Health & Safety Committee
- Promise Awards Advisory Group
- Sustainability Standing Committee

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