

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Greg Baker, Superintendent
DATE: April 23, 2026
SUBJECT: Monitoring Report for EL-6, Academic Standards and Practices

I certify that the following is accurate as of April 23, 2026. The reporting period is from April 17, 2025, to April 23, 2026.

Policy Type: Executive Limitation
Policy: EL-6 Academic Standards and Practices
Last Updated: July 6, 2017

Background Information: This is our report on Executive Limitation 6 Academic Standards and Practices. Reports are annual, they often feature an update on work in progress, as well as an emphasis on “new” work. As with many of the reports we produce for the board, this report is intended as a representative sample of the overall work in the district, not a comprehensive accounting of everything that is happening.

- 1. The superintendent shall not fail to take all reasonable and prudent actions with respect to academic standards and practices that are typical for similar and highly effective organizations.**

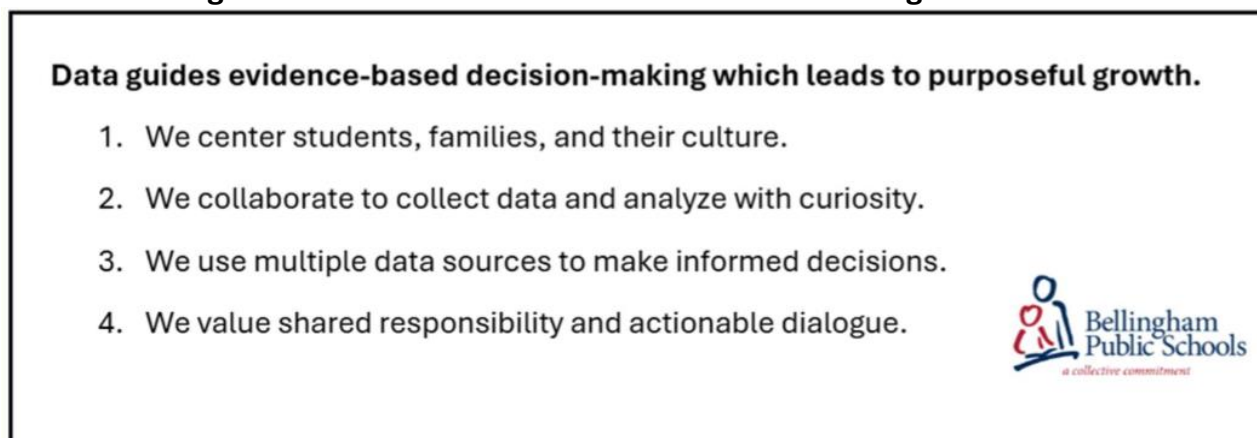
Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to implement state and content-area standards and research-based instructional practices.

Evidence of Compliance:

- New/Ongoing:* Attention to elementary curriculum and standards, particularly in the area of literacy, has been a focus in recent years. We have done a lot of work in preparation for a district-wide program of inquiry in elementary schools that will align with our International Baccalaureate (IB) work and provide a framework for all 14 schools to teach integrated units of study with Since Time Immemorial (STI) standards and the new English Language Arts (ELA) standards. This work also ties to the Open SciEd implementation and is ongoing.
- New/Update:* Work continued to expand the pilot of Open SciEd units of study in our elementary schools. Under the leadership of Department of Teaching and Learning (DTL) Director Bill Palmer, schools have begun to pilot units at various grade levels. The units’ Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) aligned curriculum incorporate aspects of the Since Time Immemorial curriculum. The intention of this work is to bring those units to all elementary schools, establishing common curriculum units of focus at each grade level.

- *New:* Curriculum and instruction needs exist in the secondary schools that also merit attention. As such, we are establishing a new secondary curriculum committee that will develop a comprehensive review process for standards and curriculum across our secondary content areas. The committee will support ongoing course design as defined in Policy and Procedure 2020 Course Design, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials.¹ The committee will oversee the alignment of instructional resources with state learning standards and ensure equitable access to the curriculum.
- *Update/Ongoing:* The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Standing Committee continued to meet and develop our work in multi-tiered systems of support. As noted last year, this group is charged with investigating, reviewing and recommending professional learning experiences, as well as instructional strategies and techniques, to support our work in increasing inclusive educational opportunities across PK-12. The committee has produced a common set of data beliefs that are being used both districtwide and by schools to help guide the processes associated with looking at data, making decisions based on data and taking action rooted in data. Figure 1 lists the four data beliefs established by the committee.

Figure 1. Data Beliefs for BPS Professional Learning 2025-26



- *Update:* Work coming out of the MTSS committee also includes menus of tiered intervention supports organized on the staff hub in various content areas ([social emotional learning](#), [literacy foundation skills](#), [attendance](#), [hearing and vision supports](#), etc.) that can be used by school teams in their collaboration time, in Child Study Team meetings, in Attendance Team meetings and other planning settings that are part of the regular work to support student learning needs in schools. As this group continues to work, we expect similarly organized menus to be created in other areas of math, reading comprehension and writing that will add value for teachers and other staff in planning and delivering high quality instruction across Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3.
- *Update/New:* School-based professional development teams continued to meet for the purpose of planning professional learning experiences in the schools again this year. In June of 2025, school leadership teams came together to establish their initial drafts of School Improvement Plans (SIPs). These plans are intended to address both the compliance aspects of new rules for reporting established by the state of Washington as well our connect to our ongoing work of instructional improvement. School based leadership teams met again in a one-

¹ https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2026-03/washington-learning-standards-review-timeline_0.pdf

day retreat in late August of 2025 to finalize professional learning plans for the upcoming year. School plans are connected to the district’s firm goals (see Figure 2) which were originally written in 2022 and have continued, with small edits each year, as our school district’s focus for ongoing work into the 2025-26 school year.

Figure 2. Firm Goals for BPS Professional Learning 2025-26



A subset of four specific goals (identified with a star in Figure 2) form our focus for the work in 2025-26:

- (1) *Knowledge*: Understanding of strategies to ensure all students feel safe, cared for and respected.
 - (2) *Skills and Practices*: Providing access to grade level content for all students through a strong MTSS framework.
 - (3) *Implementation*: Teaching district adopted curricular resources; and,
 - (4) *Feedback*: Using data beliefs to guide evidence based decision making.
- *New/Ongoing*: The Department of Teaching and Learning runs robust professional learning opportunities for staff during the course of the school year. These opportunities are run either after school for clock hour credit or during the workday and supported with substitutes to free up participants. These professional learning opportunities are directly tied to the firm goals established above. Classes offered this year included:
 - Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) strategies (multiple offerings)
 - Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies (multiple offerings), including sessions in GLAD for early learners.
 - Thinking Maps training
 - Interactive Writing professional development
 - Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) Day 1 and multiple day trainings
 - Right Response re-certification
 - General AI Training modules
 - Interactive Read Alouds (elementary literacy strategy)
 - Morpheme Magic (elementary literacy program)

- *New/Update:* We first reported on efforts to deliver professional development in artificial intelligence (AI) last year, and that focus continued along with a focus on the Healthy Tech Promise. For example, DTL Director Bill Palmer has been leading work with instructional coaches to plan and deliver a series of three (3) asynchronous modules that cover the basics of artificial intelligence (AI) in education, emphasizing critical AI literacy and how AI tools can support differentiated instruction through Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This series of modules was designed specifically to meet Washington State STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) clock hour requirements.

2a. The superintendent shall not fail to implement best practices for aligned and rigorous: (i) academic content and standards; (ii) curriculum and materials; (iii) world-class instruction; and (iv) appropriately differentiated curriculum, materials and instruction for all students.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff will provide ongoing professional development in support of the development and implementation of clearly defined standards, aligned assessments, high quality research-based instructional materials and innovative instructional strategies.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New:* The district convened an elementary Literacy Task Force to focus on PK-5 literacy instruction this year, co-chaired by DTL Directors Pam Pottle and Tom Gresham, with the goal of updating the district's 2014 Elementary Literacy Guide to include current research-based best practices, rooted in a culturally responsive approach to literacy instruction. The group began a series of meetings in October 2025 and continues to meet this spring of 2026.
- *New/Update:* The district has invested in new resources for staff training in behavioral response through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). Training is delivered through a train-the-trainer model by Bellingham Public School (BPS) special education instructors. Multiple levels of training are offered including introductory training in behavior de-escalation strategies as well as additional trainings that focus more specifically on safety and proper restraint techniques for staff responding to student behavioral escalations.
- *New:* The district has partnered with the Seattle-based Holocaust Center for Humanity to offer a new course entitled *Considerations for Teaching about the Holocaust* (course #13444). This course is designed for secondary educators, Grades 6-12, seeking to navigate the historical complexities and pedagogical challenges of Holocaust education. Organized by BPS teacher Jen Reidel, the course helps teachers to evaluate and implement instructional frameworks that ensure the Holocaust is taught with historical accuracy and emotional safety, avoiding oversimplification or traumatizing simulations. Participants focus on learning how to utilize diverse forms of evidence, including survivor testimony, artifacts and bureaucratic documents to humanize history and counter Holocaust denial and distortion.
- *Update:* Implementation of *iReady* math and literacy assessments and instructional support continued this year. School teams and staff from DTL have been engaged with trainers from Curriculum Associates to help us go deeper into the use of these materials and to understand the data on student progress.

- *Update:* Our effort to continue training staff in issues of diversity, equity and inclusion includes *Teaching Black History All Year* (course #13401), a course organized and led by BPS instructional coach Kirsten Jensen that provides participants with a framework for studying Black history, strategies and coaching tips for teaching and recommended resources including books and digital texts.
- *Update:* District work to support learning and implementation of Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) through the professional development efforts in district experts like TOSA Andrea Quigley. A recent example of this ongoing effort is a course for early childhood teachers focusing on the development of GLAD strategies in Grades PK-2.

2b. The superintendent shall not fail to periodically report on: (i) systemic instructional training and development activities that are expected to lead to increases in efficiency and effectiveness; and (ii) programs and other school-related activities implemented to develop and promote the well-being of the whole child consistent with Board Ends.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff will facilitate the use of multiple strategies to periodically communicate training and development activities that increase efficiency and effectiveness and promote whole-child initiatives.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New/Update:* The school district supports a myriad of instructional training and support activities each year; many of these are run for clock hour credit through the districts ProDev system to assist employees with maintenance of credentialing. Some of these fulfill required training expectations associated with keeping the district and its employees in compliance with state or federal law. Other activities are optional choice options that focus on school related activities or programs and associated instructional strategies. What follows is a listing of just a small diverse handful of examples of required and optional trainings held during the 2025-26 school year.
 - *CPR and First Aid for School Staff* (course #12943). Taught by lead BPS nurse, Matt Neisinger, this course ensures participants will learn the basic skills and confidence to perform CPR on adults, children and infants and to recognize and respond during medical emergencies.
 - *Introduction to Cultural Identity and Diversity* (course #13326). Taught by Director Janis Velasquez-Farmer, this course ensures participants will be able to describe ways to identify and respond to racism, discrimination and stereotypes in the classroom.
 - *Ideas for Elementary Math Interventions* (course #13450). Taught by Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) Rey Ramos, participants in this course learn the resources available to work with students on developing math skills in the context of an instructional cycle.
 - *Co-planning: Essential Practices* (course #13379). Taught by TOSA Andrea Quigley, this is an introductory course on effective collaborative planning based on the

Honigsfeld & Dove text entitled, “Co-planning: Five Essential Practices to Integrate Curriculum and Instruction for English Learners.”

- *The Safe System Approach and How it Fits into Driver Education* (course #13455). Taught by traffic safety/driving instructor Brianne Ammerman, this course trains those who are working to support students who are learning to drive a vehicle through our traffic safety program.
- *Update:* In reporting on our identified district outcomes, we continue to seek evidence that sheds light on our work in new and more informative ways. Ends reports were shared at school board meetings this year. Dates and times for the 2025-26 school year follow:
 - Ends 2.1, part 1: February 19, 2026.
 - Ends 2.1, part 2: March 19, 2026.
 - Ends 1, 2 and 3 combined report: To be presented May 14, 2026.
- *Update:* In addition, we have included the following opportunities for the board to hear from schools and community groups:
 - Monthly visits by school board members to schools to learn about the work in our schools consistent with the Ends outlined in The Bellingham Promise. Schools visited since we last reported included:

▪ Silver Beach Elementary School	June 3, 2025
▪ Parkview Elementary School	October 7, 2025
▪ Whatcom Middle School	December 2, 2025
▪ Carl Cozier Elementary School	February 3, 2026
▪ Cordata Elementary School	March 3, 2026
▪ Options High School	May 5, 2026 (scheduled)
 - Periodic opportunities for the school board’s deeper study of topics, linkages with specific groups in the community and student roundtables included:
 - Study Session: Artificial Intelligence (4/17/25)
 - Student Roundtable at Birchwood Elementary School (10/22/25)
 - Study Session: Critical Thinking (11/13/25)
 - Linkage: Mental Health Providers (1/21/26)
 - Student Roundtable at Bellingham High School (2/25/26)
 - Study Session: Future Enrollment (3/19/26)
- *Update:* The superintendent offers a report at regular public school board meetings on topics directly about the instructional program to keep the school board apprised of initiatives underway in the district that serve to promote the improvement of teaching and learning. Examples of reports since the last writing of this executive limitation include:
 - Reminder/overview of the two measures on the ballot, a supplemental operations levy and a facilities maintenance levy (October 16, 2025).
 - Update on continued engagement with the state legislature about budget issues, along with collaboration with our labor leaders and engagement of our staff and the community (November 13, 2025).
 - Update on school safety strategies that are currently in place. A new strategy that will be implemented is wearable safety technology for each staff member. Staff will be

issued a device to be worn on their lanyard from Raptor Technology that will assist with internal safety needs as well as alerting emergency responders when outside assistance is needed (December 11, 2025).

- Update on the work of the high school schedule committee (January 13, 2026).
- Update on birth rate declines and the formation of a Facilities Planning Task Force to focus on facilities planning recommendations (February 19, 2026).
- Update on construction of the new Community Transitions building (March 19, 2026).

2c. The superintendent shall not fail to encourage reasoned instructional innovation.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff will design and implement educational programs that respond to the diverse and ever-changing needs of our students.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New/Update:* Our district has partnered with Colleague.ai from the University of Washington to provide staff and students in Grades 6-12 with an opportunity to use a generative AI tool developed specifically for education. School staff have partnered with Colleague.ai to develop training modules on using the tool to support comprehensible input strategies for multilingual students.
- *New/Ongoing:* The special education team, under the leadership of DTL Director Analisa Ficklin, continues to provide a great deal of training to respond to the diverse and ever-changing needs of our students. This includes Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) training, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) trainings, attendance module trainings and a host of classes for paraeducators who are working in special education, taught by lead paraeducator Rebecca Sauter.
- *Update:* Electric Vehicle (EV) course launched in fall of 2025. Remember this course was made possible through a generous grant from *Foundry 10*, which also provided essential teacher training. This innovative program, taught by Bellingham High School (BHS) teacher Paul Clement with support from Career and Technical Education (CTE) TOSA Jenny Styer, had a successful first launch and focused on issues of sustainability, energy, engineering, technology and auto shop, allowing students to engage hands-on in building and taking apart (for reuse) a real EV designed to seat three people and be licensed for the road. Because this course will not be offered every year in Bellingham, we have worked out an arrangement to rent the kit to a neighboring district (Lynden) for 2026-27 so the course can impact other students in the region.
- *Update:* School-based health center work continues. The school-based health center housed at Options High School opened last year and the effort is serving students' learning in multiple important ways. Hosting this center at Options broadens and deepens our approach to serving the whole child that we continue to develop in our district.

2d. The superintendent shall not fail to provide an affirmative (or negative) statement the following actions have been taken: (i) involve stakeholder groups in substantive academic standards and practice decisions; (ii) provide access and utilization of electronically delivered curriculum, materials and instruction; and a periodic systematic review of

academic content, standards, curriculum, materials, and (iii) instruction, involving stakeholders, has taken place to ensure continuous improvement and adherence to best practices.

Interpretation: None in question.

Evidence of Compliance: (Affirmative Statements)

- *Update:* The district's Instructional Materials Committee (IMC) continues to meet regularly, typically quarterly, and review core and supplemental curricular resources. The committee includes administrators, teachers and community members. Meeting dates for 2025-26: February 4 and May 6. At the February 4 meeting the committee heard from English teachers at Sehome High School and Squalicum High School regarding novels for 9th grade English 101. More information can be seen on the [IMC webpage](#).
- *Update:* Efforts to continue to seek advice from our community members in the various stakeholder groups are well-established. These include formal (ongoing) structures for stakeholder feedback and informal structures that invite feedback from our community members. Formal structures include:
 - The Bellingham Public Schools Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS) focused on engaging parent representatives from each of the district's schools in review of curricular and programmatic directions underway in the district has continued to meet regularly under the leadership of parent co-chairs. At each meeting, the superintendent's report focuses on providing information and asking for feedback on various aspects of the ongoing work of the district. Meeting dates and topics this year included:
 - April 17, 2025, at District Office: Safety, student discipline and communicating about student behaviors (panel discussion).
 - May 15, 2025, at Options High School: Overview of Options High School (OHS)/tour of school and health center, Q&A about OHS
 - October 16, 2025, at District Office: Small group discussions to brainstorm agenda topics for 2025-26 PACS meetings.
 - January 15, 2026, at Central Kitchen: Tour of Central Kitchen
 - February 19, 2026, at District Office: Allocation and distribution of resources for all schools and supporting vulnerable students and families (panel discussion)
 - The superintendent's Student Advisory Committee (SACS) continued this year. For 2024-25 the student advisory format changed; we did not have a consistent group of student reps, instead the principal's selected groups of students and a meeting was scheduled for each high school. However, those were discontinued for second semester. For 2025-26, we returned to the old format of a junior and senior representative from each high school. Here are the topics that were covered during 2025-26:
 - October 10, 2025, at District Office: Get acquainted, overview of committee.

- December 8, 2025, at Sehome High School: Highlights of what is happening at each HS; legislative priorities; conversation about proposed change to high school schedule.
 - January 12, 2026, at Squalicum High School: Highlights of what is happening at each high school; school safety discussions.
 - March 18, 2026, at Options High School: School/district updates, discussion regarding how we get/share feedback, tour of Options HS
- *New:* The district's public facing website was completely redone this past summer (2025) and the rollout of the new website features more easily accessible information for families, staff and community members.
- *Update:* Frequent communications about the instructional program to families also occur through various means including the publication of *Inside Schools*. Below are links to three recent editions:
 - Winter 2025: <https://www.flipsnack.com/bellinghamschools/insideschools-winter-2026>
 - Fall 2025: <https://www.flipsnack.com/bellinghamschools/insideschools-fall-2025/full-view.html>
 - Spring 2025: <https://www.flipsnack.com/bellinghamschools/insideschools-spring-2025/full-view.html>
- *Update:* The annual publication of the district's *Priorities for Progress* highlights aspects of our instructional program work in progress, addresses work in all strategic areas of *The Bellingham Promise* and invites community input on our work. The 2025-26 edition is linked below:
 - Priorities for Progress 2025-26: <https://www.flipsnack.com/bellinghamschools/priorities-for-progress-2025-26/full-view.html>

Statement of Compliance: The superintendent is **in compliance** with EL-6 Academic Standards and Practices.