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2015-16

Bellingham
Public Schools
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A Message from Dr. Greg Baker *Superintendent of Schools*

The Bellingham Promise is our district strategic plan developed in 2012 with input from staff, family, student and community stakeholders. Within this document you will find our work priorities organized by our key strategies. We are excited to share our important initiatives from all corners of Bellingham Public Schools.

We, as a community,

**Innovation
and
Flexibility**

**Early
Childhood
Education**

**Great Teaching
with Strong
Support**

We invest in a strong early childhood (prenatal to third grade) program because of its powerful long-term return for our students and community.

**Student,
Family,
and
Community
Engagement**

High quality instruction occurs in every classroom, every day, resulting in high levels of learning. This is supported by purposeful and ongoing professional development of all staff and effective leadership throughout the organization.

We provide an equitable distribution of resources and services to ensure excellence for all.

Authentic partnerships are essential in order to deliver upon our promise. We actively seek input from and work together with all stakeholders to cultivate both existing and new partnerships.

Great Teaching with Strong Support

Across our school system, we focus on ensuring high quality instruction for all our students by purposefully supporting teachers to advance their learning. We're committed to offering meaningful professional development for all our staff and leadership development in our Aspiring Administrator program. We are taking significant strides to support the team teaching model at the middle school level by adding more teachers and reducing class sizes. We are also continuing to lower class size at the elementary level with strong focus on primary grades. This year, key initiatives include the recent adoption of a new math curriculum, as well as committee recommendations for our world language and visual and performing arts programs.

Great Teaching with Strong Support

- Continue implementation of a **standards-based reporting system** at elementary and middle schools. Staff are focusing on progress reports to families to provide clear, direct, routine feedback to parents and students on progress toward standards in key content areas.
- Open the **Bellingham Multilingual Academy** to support secondary English language learner students who have little or no formal education.
- Continue the district's **preK-8 literacy adoption**. To support balanced literacy in our elementary schools, we are focusing on implementing the **writing** portion of the literacy curriculum.
- Continue to support staff in teaching diverse learners, including **highly capable learners** and implementing committee recommendations.
- Support **outstanding leadership** in every school and develop future leaders through the **Aspiring Administrators Program**, deans, assistant principals and teacher

Early Childhood Education

Investment in a strong early childhood program is a top priority. Through voter support, Bellingham has been providing full-time kindergarten for all students since 2010. In 2015, we expanded our Promise K program that grants educational opportunities to students who don't have access to high quality early learning. We also expanded our

Early Childhood Education

OTHER **IMPORTANT** PRIORITIES

- Continue our work as a state leader in early learning by supporting kindergarten and physical education teachers instruction with WaKIDS data collection, providing professional development for specialists and administrators.
- Develop effective support models for students entering kindergarten to meet higher standards. For example, smaller class sizes and more adults in classrooms at the beginning of the school year.
- Offer parent education opportunities through partnerships with WELA, Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College.

Student, Family and Community Engagement

Bellingham Public Schools is always growing partnerships and expanding communications with our families, stakeholders and community members. Our many committees and advisory groups give recommendations for program enhancements. Our school board meets with community groups to gain their insight on The Bellingham Promise in our schools. We launched our Family Partnership

Student, Family and Community Engagement

- Grow the newly established **Family Partnership Program** with the goal of enriching the learning of children whose families are their primary educators through homeschooling.
- Open a second **Family Resource Center** to connect families with **social and health services** and behavioral and emotional support through our strong partnerships with community organizations.
- Build a coordinated **volunteer program** to support our schools

Student, Family and Community Engagement

- Share The Bellingham Promise in action through the new Promise website to tell stories of how we are measuring the successes and challenges of implementing our strategic plan.
- Enrich communications with families to meet a variety of informational needs about their child's learning and the school system, using personal outreach and effective use of technology.
- Expand support for interpretation and translation services.
- Support all students and families in feeling welcome, comfortable and valued, including our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) community.
- Increase elementary and middle school parent understanding of standards-based reporting and implementation of learning standards at all levels.
- Continue to communicate with

One Schoolhouse

- Take next steps to ensure an excellent education for all students **without charging families**. Staff are working to fund all costs of education with a focus on reducing school supply fees and other costs for students and families.
- Engage students, families and community in **facilities planning** related to approved bond projects:
 - Open the new addition at **Lowell Elementary School**, which includes a new gym, cafeteria, kitchen and classrooms;
 - Finish planning for **Options High School** (construction begins summer 2016);
 - Complete construction of the new



- Refine and build **Project Connect**, a program that provides students in need with home computers and Internet access for research and school work free of charge.
- Continue implementation of **Playworks** at elementary schools to develop health and positive social skills.
- Build and adopt a sustainable budget in support of our Priorities for Progress.
- Build fair and equitable compensation models for all staff.
- Build a comprehensive preK-12 counseling program.
- Develop a system of equity and opportunity for all with before- and after-school activities and athletics.
- Build partnerships, financial support and grant funding through the **Bellingham Public Schools Foundation** to help all students.
- Partner with Western Washington University's Woodring College of Education, Vista, Washington Reading Corps, Community in Schools and Futures Northwest, to use grant funding for AmeriCorps college access coordinators. They will support Alderwood, Cordata, Carl Cozier, Shuksan and Squalicum to develop, expand and enhance in-school and after-school academies. /GS1 g(a)4(n(o)-1y(l)-19(01 T3(v)(n)

Innovation and Flexibility

Our collective commitment is that each child will be exceptional in his or her own way, with an array of educational and vocational options to support a diversity of life choices. A child's post-secondary pathway may involve study at a four-year university, a two-year community college, a technical certification, or a start-up venture, among a myriad of others. To prepare our students for post-secondary options, we have implemented a technology replacement schedule to ensure students and staff have access to effective learning tools. We continue to support and integrate effective programs, such as International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

Innovation and Flexibility

- Continue to pursue an improved schedule and expanded school day that will allow middle and high school students to take more courses and electives.
- Plan for one-to-one student access to technology program and engage our community in planning for a renewed technology levy to go to

Innovation and Flexibility

- Increase opportunities for middle and high school students to earn course credit based on competency rather than seat time, such as world language credits for English Language Learners.
- Improve Career and Technical Education (CTE) options and coordination for students, and expand partnership with Northwest Career and Technical Academy.
- Continue innovative practices for resource conservation by working with students, staff and utility providers to reduce our use of electricity, natural gas, water and other resources.
- Enhance custodial and utility/grounds support to schools especially related to heating and ventilation controls to reduce energy use and increase savings.
- Expand Bellingham Virtual Learning (BVL) for online learning and continue partnerships with the Graduation Alliance and Bellingham Technical College engagement programs.
- Provide a SafeSchools online training system for staff and add registration for staff

