

April 16, 2014

\_\_\_\_\_ Parents attended representing 15 schools – 11 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools.

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Superintendent Greg Baker  
Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland  
Assistant Superintendent Steve Clarke  
Director of Teaching and Learning Charisse Berner  
Director of Teaching and Learning Michelle Kuss-Cybula  
Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Tanya Rowe  
Executive Director of Human Relations Nora Klewiada  
Teacher on Special Assignment/Assistant Principal Jeanette Grisham  
Preschool Teacher Tammy Koch  
Executive Director of Bellingham Public School Foundation Gennie Clawson

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Sheri O'Day, Executive Secretary to the Department of Teaching and Learning

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Trisha Walton welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

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Promise Kindergarten: Staff has worked hard to find qualifying children for the Promise K program. Promise K students are next year's kindergartners who meet certain entry criteria. Four classrooms (one each at Alderwood, Carl Cozier, Happy Valley and Roosevelt) opened on April 10.

Walking in the Shoes: Dr. Baker has been walking in the shoes of students consecutively from each grade level, starting with preschool, and last week completed his day as a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Whatcom. He shares summaries of his learning with school staff at the end of those days. His experiences from a child's perspective are valuable, and he believes those experiences assist him as he makes decisions. Preschool teacher Tammy Koch is walking in the shoes of Dr. Baker today and will accompany him throughout the day. Dr. Baker has encouraged other staff



Charisse passed out standards [information](#) regarding high school mathematics, which addresses math acceleration. She noted that when a student leaps over a whole set of math standards, they end up with "soft spots" down the road. It is a better idea to compress math instruction. Charisse then passed out a document that outlines the middle school mathematics [course sequences](#) and went over what the new pathway will look like. Charisse spent some time answering questions:

How will the new course sequence affect this year's 6<sup>th</sup> graders who are taking the advanced math?

Charisse stated that the Dept. of Teaching and Learning is working with teachers, and those students will go into the Compacted Math 7/8. If 6<sup>th</sup> graders get a solid math foundation, they can then accelerate as they continue towards graduation.

Two-thirds of the country has Financial Literacy as a graduation requirement. The Bellingham School District only offers AP Stats. Will students who are not particularly interested in statistics have other options?

Financial Algebra is currently offered. (It was noted by a parent that students who take AP Stats as a junior will likely have a gap with no math instruction during their senior year prior to entering college.)

Will there be other options for those students who have advanced math skills?

Yes, but they will not be testing all 5<sup>th</sup> graders as has been done in the past. Most students will be taking 6<sup>th</sup> grade math in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We do not want to rush kids through math. Michelle Kuss-Cybula, Director of the Dept. of Teaching and Learning stated that there are very few kids who are truly capable of skipping the 6<sup>th</sup> grade math course. If a student is in the Highly Capable program, staff will be looking at what content area a student is highly capable in. Charisse stated that this year's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers will identify those students who appear to be in this category.

When a student gets to where they are able to get Geometry, will they take Algebra II and Geometry at the same time?

Yes.

What if students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade aren't advancing in math? There is a focus on students who are highly capable in math, but what about the students who aren't in that category?

On grade level math is on grade level and solidly prepares students to move on to college. Middle schools will have interventions tailored to math to help struggling students.

There was some discussion about students who are struggling at math and what supports are available for them. Charisse noted that the district is a little restricted with state funding and is required to address literacy as a priority. Charisse commented that she and others are taking their comments seriously. Charisse will welcome email questions from parents and encouraged parents to look at the [math committee's website](#). (Please see [Middle School Math Q&A](#)

Pioneer school (at the Gordon Carter Conservation site) seems to not be operating (Steve noted that the bond funds will enable the district to make some needed repairs/upgrades so we can start using that site again).

The healthy snack program has helped kids.

Some PTAs have received many requests for art supplies and music needs.

Steve noted that the district has eliminated course fees (lab fees, CTE fees, etc.).

The fees for Advanced Placement (AP)

