

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)

March 4, 2009

Schools Represented:

Elementary Schools:

Alderwood
Birchwood
Columbia
Geneva
Happy Valley
Northern Heights
Roosevelt

Middle Schools:

Fairhaven
Kulshan
Shuksan
Whatcom

High Schools:

Bellingham
Squalicum

District Staff: Dr. Kenneth D. Vedra, Superintendent
Tanya Rowe, director of Communications and Community Relations

Note Taker: Nancy Merry, secretary to the Superintendent

Co-Chairs: Pam Behee and Mary LeDonne

Announcements:

- Dr. Ken Vedra announced that Mary LeDonne had been selected Central Services Volunteer of the Year. He presented her with an engraved vase, certificate and bouquet of flowers.
- Pam Behee announced that host families are needed for 15 year old girls from Japan. Contact Peggy Carr, at 676-6470 ext. 4424 if you would like more information.
- Mary LeDonne gave an update on the Board meetings. The Board has approved three policy changes dealing with animals in the classrooms; instructional professional development; and middle school and high school co-curricular/extra curricular activities. They also approved emergency boiler repairs at Fairhaven Middle School.

Bellingham Bells:

Derrel Ebert and Matt H., from Bellingham Bells, a Bellingham collegiate baseball team, are interested in ways to engage the community in the Bells games. Ebert presented several fundraising ideas for schools. They have an “outstanding student program” and a battle of the bands. He also said they would attend school assemblies to explain the “Four Bases”—study hard, stay active and eat healthy, stay in school, and say no to drugs and alcohol. For more information, contact the Bells office at 527-1035. The group suggested printing their applications for outstanding student in Spanish.

Media and Communications:

Kira Millage, education reporter at the Bellingham Herald, and Tanya Rowe, director of Communications and Community Relations, reported on the various ways school news is reported.

According to Rowe, news that she receives about students, staff and schools is placed on the district Web site under News & Information. Items can be submitted through the District Web site (www.bsd501.org/go/survey/420/749). News is sent to various media, such as the Bellingham Herald, television and radio stations, depending on the news item. Rowe said some schools are translating newsletters to other languages.

Kira Millage reviewed how she receives educational news and demonstrated the online version of the Bellingham Herald. Millage covers educational news for all the schools in the county, including higher education facilities. According to Millage, there is a lot of information, including the school calendar, placed on the Herald Web site (www.bellinghamherald.com) that does not appear in the print version of the paper due to limited space. Articles are selected for the print version if they have a broader interest, a wider audience or are unique. The best way to get story ideas to Ms. Millage is through her email (kira.millage@bellinghamherald.com), but suggested it is best to work through Tanya Rowe. Rowe and Millage also work together to dispel rumors. If you have school events you would like to include on the school calendar, Kira requested receiving them 1 to 2 weeks before the event.

Ms. Rowe indicated the District has been working for some time to put together a District data base calendar covering all District events. A districtwide calendaring system, funded by technology dollars, has been purchased and staff training will begin in the next few months. This will be active for the 2009–10 school year and will be helpful for scheduling events and facilities.

Dr. Vedra emphasized the importance of the media in getting accurate information to the community. Tanya Rowe suggested the school parent organizations include the link to the Bellingham Herald's educational news in their newsletters.

Task Force Update:

Dr. Vedra responded to question about open enrollment. The procedures for student attendance area transfers have been changed. The new procedures are on the District Web site at www.bham.wednet.edu/district/documents/3131Procedure-Revised2-09Final.pdf.

Transfers will be approved according to these procedures based on space available and program needs in order to provide the program that will best benefit students. Some schools are working to develop specialized programs, such as Project Lead the Way, Engineering is Elementary, AVID and IB Primary Years Program. Programs at other schools are still in the planning stage. If a transfer is approved, parents will need to supply transportation. There will be two approval times—the first week of April and the third week of August. Vedra is continuing to work with middle and high school principals to provide an easier transition between levels. School newsletters will have more information about the process and timeline.

Budget:

Dr. Vedra emphasized that the core educational program must be the same for all students at all schools. However, within each school there can be ways to address special interests and needs of students. As we think about restructuring in light of budget cuts, we need to keep our focus on

providing a quality educational program for all students. Comments on the budget may be submitted on the District Web site through noon, March 5.

The Board continues to stand behind the District strategic plan, which focuses on college, career and citizenship.

School Reports:

Bellingham High School

Sandy Thomas shared PTSA best practices from Bellingham High School. The school's three collective commitments are very important to the school and are repeated often. They are:

1. All members of the Bellingham High School community will be treated with dignity and respect.
2. Bellingham High School is a great place to be. This happens by promoting a welcoming environment, celebrating accomplishments, and taking care of the school.
3. Quality work is essential to student success. This occurs when objectives are clear, standards are high, and quality is emphasized over quantity.

Thomas reviewed resources used at Bellingham High School and the benefits of belonging to the PTSA. According to Ms. Thomas, she feels one of the strengths of Bellingham High is the high visibility of the administrators. They greet students in the morning and at the end of the day and circulate during each lunch period. It sends the right message that students are the top priority.

One of the focuses of the PTSA is raising attendance at athletic and activity events. Ms. Thomas reviewed fundraising events and other ways the PTSA supports the school and uses volunteers.

Thomas will be working with the principal on NCLB to find out how people are feeling, their opinions and ideas. If you have comments to share, meet with Thomas after the meeting or email her at slthomas@comcast.net.

Members shared activities that were happening at their school or in the community.

Group Sharing

Members may sign up for group sharing time for each meeting. Group sharing will be limited to three schools per meeting and will be an opportunity to share a best practice or to bring up a concern. The following members have signed up for the following schools:

- April 1: Silver Beach
Alderwood
- May 6: Sehome
- June 3: Roosevelt

Members are asked to share information from these meetings with their principal and parent organizations.

Future Meetings:

April 1, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee

March 4, 2009

Page 4 of 4

May 6, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont

June 3, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont