

**Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)**

*February 4, 2009*

**Schools Represented:**

Elementary Schools:

Birchwood  
Carl Cozier  
Columbia  
Geneva  
Happy Valley  
Northern Heights  
Roosevelt  
Silver Beach

Middle Schools:

Fairhaven  
Kulshan  
Shuksan

High Schools:

Squalicum

**District Staff:** Dr. Kenneth D. Vedra, Superintendent

**Note Taker:** Nancy Merry, secretary to the Superintendent

**Co-Chairs:** Pam Behee

**Announcements:**

February 24, 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Kulshan Middle School: Informational evening meeting to discuss parent and student responsibilities.

Pam Behee announced that she will be representing parents on the District Budget Advisory Committee. The Committee begins meeting February 10.

There was a question about whether schools were having problems with Reflections art submissions.

**Task Force Update:**

Dana Lindquist serves on the Highly Capable Learners Task Force. She reported they have met twice and discussed what is and is not working. Dr. Vedra confirmed that the work of this task force is very important.

**Budget Update:**

As indicated by Dr. Vedra, the operating budget of the school district is fiscally dependent upon the state for the majority of the revenue it receives. Any negative change in the revenue the state receives means that the school district's revenue will be less. Currently, the state is projecting a multi-billion dollar revenue shortfall for the next two-year budget cycle. As a result, we have been informed that the state budget proposals will provide fewer funds for public school districts. This will result in fewer funds being available to support and maintain our programs for the 2009–10 and 2010-11 school years.

Dr. Vedra reported that meetings have been held with staff and the community to report on our plans and gain budget savings suggestions. Over 850 suggestions have been submitted. Many of

the items submitted were duplicates and all items will be identified after the District Budget Advisory Committee completes their rank ordering and recommendations.

Savings options available to the District include operational efficiencies; modifying the levy plan; spending down the reserves; reducing programs—including salaries, benefits and non-employee costs; and/or increasing revenue. The District Budget Advisory Committee will review the list of budget savings ideas with an outside facilitator and make recommendations to the Superintendent. Dr. Vedra will review the recommendations, hold community meetings and make recommendation to the Board. It is anticipated that the Board will receive the recommendations at the March 12 School Board meeting and make a final decision in March.

Dr. Vedra responded to questions about the status of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade programs at the conservation site. He indicated that this has been submitted as a budget savings suggestion and will be considered along with the other items submitted. The middle school principals decided to suspend the 6<sup>th</sup> grade program for the 2008–2009 school year. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade program is under consideration by the elementary principals.

Dr. Vedra clarified that, if approved, the federal stimulus package supported by President Barack Obama could mean Bellingham School District would receive as much as \$5.7 million over two years. However, under current law, federal funding for education cannot be used for activities that a school district is already doing (known as supplanting) and could only be used to enhance or supplement specific programs such as special education or existing Title programs. He encouraged writing letters to our senators to encourage their support of the federal incentive funds and to remove requirements on how the funds could be used. He is working with several educational organizations who are also working in support of the stimulus package and removal of the requirements.

Vedra is considering recommending a capacity study of District buildings. Such a study would include a review of the number and sizes of classroom, specialty classrooms, multipurpose rooms, common rooms, etc. After such a study is done, the District would be in a position to do a thorough facility study to review and recommend each building's best utilization.

### **School Reports:**

#### **Happy Valley Elementary School**

Meg Metzger, Kate Foster and Ann Seeger, Happy Valley Elementary School parents shared PTA best practices:

- A “First Day Packet” containing all school forms, a PTA welcome letter and PTA forms, volunteer forms, and a PTA events calendar. PTA works with school office staff to compile the packets, which are then handed out the first day of school.
- The PTA hosts a parent breakfast on the first day of school. They welcome new families, explain volunteer opportunities, etc. They felt this gets the school year and parents off to a great start. Parents can volunteer for ongoing committees or for a specific one-time project.

- The PTA sponsors enrichment projects for math and geography which are very well received.
- Their PTA has one major fund-raising event—a fun run—which brings in most of their revenue. Other revenue is received from selling ads in the student directory Haggen's school bucks and the book sale. They divide their projects into income-generating, self-funding, and non-revenue generating. Copies of these materials will be sent electronically to members of PACS.

Fairhaven Middle School

Rebecca O'Brine-Willson, Anne Seeger and Kerri Sloan, Fairhaven Middle School PTSA parents shared their best practices:

- The PTSA has refocused their fund-raising events on a more local level. Students have three options for raising funds with the goal of raising \$50 per student. Students can obtain pledges for community service (can be either in-school or community projects); families can make a donation (100% goes to the school); or students can sell magazines. Fairhaven PTSA eliminated many of the smaller inducements tied to the magazine sales and made fewer, but more significant inducements (participation in an inflatable carnival for those who raised \$50; lunch with the mayor for the top 20 fundraisers, pizza parties, etc.). Overall revenue is down slightly so far this year, but they received good feedback and felt next year revenue would be up. They have a wrap up social on the last day of school with a good turnout and are discussing a kickoff social next year.

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:

March 4:	1. Bellingham 2. 3.	May 6:	1. Sehome 2. 3.
April 1:	1. Silver Beach 2. Alderwood 3.	June 3:	1. Roosevelt 2. 3.

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

Future Meetings:

February 24, 2009, 6:30 p.m. at Kulshan Middle School  
March 4, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont  
April 1, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont  
May 6, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont  
June 3, 2009, 9:15 a.m. at Central Services, 1306 Dupont