



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

Lauren Bunke & Lorrie Melton (co-chairs)  
Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025  
District Office, Main Level Professional Learning Center (PLC)

Each school has two representatives on this committee.

**Welcome and Introductions**      Co-chairs – Lauren Bunke & Lorrie Melton

**Superintendent’s Update**

- **Snow and weather closures:** We saw delays, a closure and snow bus routes the week of Feb. 3 due to snow and poor driving conditions. Dr. Baker shared that a lot goes into making decisions related to weather and snow. He reiterated that our district is over 100 square miles and that what you are seeing outside your home may be different in another part of town. We want families to know that they can make decisions to not send children if they feel they cannot get to school safely. Overall, it felt like the community was supportive with the decisions the district made, but we know it’s hard to make a perfect decision.
- Dr. Baker also shared information about upcoming events and milestones, including registration for kindergarten and high school courses. He highlighted recent past events, including a sports readiness event at the District Office and an open house for the new Health Center at Options. He shared photos of recent basketball games.
- **National context:** Dr. Baker has shared messages ([Jan. 24](#) and [Feb. 7](#)) over the last few weeks to address concerns related to decisions being made at the federal level, including immigration, EDI, LGBTQ+, and Department of Education. We are staying engaged and on top of the news to ensure we know what is happening while also trying to focus on our work. Our district gets federal funding to support Special Education, food services (free lunch) and Title I. We will stand firm on our values and follow state laws.
- **Budget planning for 2025-26:** The state legislature is in session right now. There are various education associations across the state advocating for funding on the “Big 3” which includes Special Education, materials/supplies and transportation. One bill that is getting traction in Olympia would allow districts to increase levy lids, which helps some districts. In the meantime, our district is looking to take steps to reduce our budget, including attrition (not filling positions when people retire or leave) and strategic work with the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation and labor groups.



## **Inclusion – Ari Feeney and Analisa Ficklin**

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Ari Feeney and Director of Special Education Analisa Ficklin presented information about inclusion, inclusionary instructional practices and Special Education. Inclusion can be defined in a variety of ways. This presentation focused on Special Education.

[Here is the presentation they shared](#), which includes [a video by Shelly Moore](#).

Ari and Analisa answered questions from parents about benefits and challenges encountered in our classes and schools.

They encourage parents/guardians to talk with their principals and teachers about inclusionary practices, and they are happy to talk further with anyone who wants to learn more.

Future meetings: March 13, April 17, May 15