



Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)
Key Communications

Lauren Bunke & Lorrie Melton (co-chairs)
Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024
District Office, Upper-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

- Dr. Baker shared photos of recent events across the district and student athletes who have had success in regional and state competitions; he also shared construction updates across our district.
- **Budget planning for 2025-26:** Dr. Baker shared an update on the district’s budget planning for next school year. He sent [a message to our community Oct. 23, 2024](#) regarding budget, which included a video and context about why we and other districts across the state are facing challenges. We are anticipating hearing from both the current governor and next governor about their budget plans, which could signal whether public education funding is a priority. State funding is critical for our district and K12 education across our state. We hope to know more when the legislative session begins in January. Until then, we are looking at a number of creative strategies to save money, including reducing the number of days in the school year via a waiver process, working with labor groups and using attrition to reduce our workforce.
- Dr. Baker also shared that we are considering putting forward a **facility maintenance capital levy** to help pay for the maintenance of our facilities, including replacement roofs, boilers, systems and other maintenance items. The district is hoping to separate maintenance projects from a future bond. Levies pass with a simple majority (50+1%) while bonds require a super majority (60%). These capital levy funds would also help the district protect the funds for classrooms and staff.

Dr. Baker answered questions.

There are three elementary schools that have been identified as next on the list to be replaced. What is the timeline? We have identified Carl Cozier, Roosevelt and Columbia elementary schools as the next three schools needing to be replaced. We have funds from the 2022 bond to help pay for the construction and relocation of Carl Cozier. Additional funds are earmarked to start the design of the other two schools with an additional bond needed to fund construction costs. We are working with the city on Carl Cozier as part of their Civic Complex master plan, and we do not have a definite timeline.

What funds are being used to build a new Community Transitions at Whatcom Community College?



Could those funds be used to solve the budget issue for next year or for maintenance issues at other schools in the district? The new CT building is funded by the 2022 bond. The general fund pays for staff, classroom costs, insurance, maintaining the building and any other expenses not related to construction.

How does the district prioritize what projects are in a bond? And what order these projects are completed? Capital projects planning is done over many decades. Typically, ahead of a bond, we'll bring together a task force or work team with representatives of different schools, parents, students, staff and community members, to review/consider the condition of our schools and buildings and other factors (including growth expectations, special needs, etc.). This process helps inform what we include in a bond, then voters consider the measure.

PACS members asked about information about the “day on the hill for education” on Jan.30. Anyone can contact PACS member Stefany Kraft: stefanybeth@hotmail.com

I want to donate to help support students and families in need. Where should I go? You can donate to [Bellingham Schools Foundation](#) or [Friends of the FRC](#) (family resource center).

Discussion on District Equity Work

Executive Director of Family Engagement Isabel Meaker and Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Dr. Janis Velasquez Farmer presented information about the district's approach to supporting immigrant students and families and our work around EDI.

Here are some resources related to their presentation:

- [Dec. 12 presentation](#)
- [Bellingham Public Schools EDI webpage](#) (includes links to EDI trainings, dehumanizing lessons and the cultural calendar)
- [Resources for families and staff](#) (includes links to resources for families related to a number of issues and/or events in the news)
- [Policy 3209, procedure: Bias Incident and Hate Speech](#)
- [Policy 4300- Limiting Immigration Enforcement in Schools](#)
- Janis said she is available to speak at parent groups, PTA meetings and does regular trainings with staff and BPS volunteers. janis.velasquezfarmer@bellingshamschools.org

Future meetings: Feb. 13, March 13, April 17, May 15