

Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS)

September 9, 2009

Schools Represented:

Elementary Schools:

Alderwood
Birchwood
Columbia
Happy Valley
Lowell
Northern Heights
Roosevelt
Silver Beach
Wade King

Middle Schools:

Fairhaven
Kulshan
Shuksan
Whatcom

High Schools:

Sehome
Squalicum

District Staff: Tanya Rowe, director of Communications and Community Relations

Note Taker: Nancy Merry, secretary to the Superintendent

Chair: Pam Behee

Introductions

Chair Pam Behee asked each person to introduce themselves, the school they represent and identify if they are involved in their school's parent organization.

District Update (Tanya Rowe)

Tanya Rowe, director of Communications and Community Relations, reported the District held a back-to-school kick-off event on Sept. 4, 2009, at Squalicum High School. She confirmed that Superintendent Kenneth Vedra has accepted a position as School Director of the Emirates National Schools in Abu Dhabi. Deputy Superintendent Sherrie Brown has been named Acting Superintendent. Ms. Brown has 39 years of experience in education with 15 of those in the Bellingham School District in a variety of capacities. Dr. Vedra will act as a consultant during the school year to ensure continuity. A request was made to convey to Ms. Brown the need for consistency in school-to-home communications to parents. Members reported that communication practices vary widely among the schools. The Board has not finalized plans to fill the deputy superintendent's position or to determine a search process for a superintendent, but historically, the process has been shared with PACS.

Ms. Brown was unable to attend the PACS meeting due to a family emergency but plans to attend the Oct. 7 meeting. Rowe reported the school year got off to a very smooth start.

Ms. Rowe responded to questions:

- Members asked if there is still a Highly Capable Learners (HCL) Program. Tanya Rowe explained that the district still has a HCL program. Funding for the program was reduced as part of the adopted Budget Savings Plan.
- Several parents expressed frustration about the lack of communication from their schools regarding the accelerated math testing for 5th graders last spring. This testing was for

placement in 6th grade math class. Families were told they would be informed of the test results, but were not.

Enrollment

During the first week of school, the District closely monitors enrollment, both by grade and by school. At this time, counts are still being reported. Mary LeDonne suggested that an enrollment report be provided at the October meeting.

Board Update (Mary LeDonne)

Mary LeDonne reported that the Board is moving to a policy governance model. Policy Governance is a way of governing that applies a specific set of concepts and principles to the leadership role of boards. Ms. LeDonne also explained that there is a time at each Board meeting for the public to make comments to the Board. By state statute, this is not an opportunity for the Board to respond, but to listen. She encouraged the public to make use of this time to talk about a topic of interest. The [Listening Post](#) is another “sounding board” method to relay information to the Board via the internet. Comments are distributed to the Board weekly. LeDonne encouraged parents, especially members of PACS, to be involved in their schools and with their principal.

PACS Mission

Pam Behee reviewed the PACS mission, goals, and representative’s job description. Behee reviewed meeting times and emphasized the importance of sharing information with your school. Members should also bring to PACS meetings questions or concerns from parents.

Election

The membership voted unanimously for Gennie Clawson to serve a two-year term as co-chair along with Pam Behee, who is completing her first term as co-chair.

Site Council

Each school has a Site Council composed of parents, certificated and classified staff, the principal and, at the high school level, a student. The purpose is to provide parents with more opportunity for input on building issues. As part of its process to update all policies and procedures, the district will update Policy 6520, Site-Based Decision Making. Input from PACS is welcome and can be submitted to the co-chairs. Sherrie will continue to work with principals to make sure all schools have a site council. It was suggested the site councils meet with each other periodically.

Other

- It was requested that the minutes reflect which schools have site councils that includes membership information.
- It was requested that a list of officers in the school parent organizations be included in the minutes. Kathleen O’Grady is new PTA Region 8 representative.
- Hagen’s School Bucks have been discontinued.
- The District Family Handbook did not include a “flip” calendar this year. Ms. Rowe explained this was part of the Budget Savings Plan to reduce costs. WECU funded the magnetic calendar. State law requires the District produce a handbook. A much more

expanded, all-inclusive calendar is now available on the Website. Rowe proposed including an orientation on the calendar at the Oct. 7 meeting.

Topic Brainstorming

Members voted on topics they would like to see covered during the 2009–10 meetings. (*See Attached*)

Share Fair

If the group decides to put on a Share Fair again this year, Meg Metzger will serve as a mentor. A meeting for those interested will be held immediately following the PACS meeting on Oct. 7 with an update to be presented at the Nov. 4 general meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is Wed., Oct. 7 at 9:15 a.m. in the Board Room, 1306 Dupont St.

Enclosures

- PACS roster: name, school, email address
- School Supervision List: will be handed out at October meeting
- Site Council: list of schools that have active site councils and members (will be handed out at October meeting)
- Topics: enclosed
- Parent Organization officers: enclosed