





**Official Meeting Minutes: Community Linkage Special Meeting  
Columbia Elementary School  
May 17, 2017  
5:30 – 7 p.m.**

**Linkage Attendees:**

Representative parents/guardians, students, staff, alumni, and community members connected to the LGTQA+ community

Directors Kelly Bashaw, Douglas Benjamin, Camille Diaz Hackler, Quenby Peterson  
Superintendent of Schools Greg Baker

District Staff/Leadership: Bethany Barrett, Director of Teaching and Learning; Julie Batten, Principal, Columbia Elementary School; Steve Clarke, Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning; Ron Cowan, Executive Director, Capital Projects and School Facilities; Kurt Gazow, Executive Director of Technology; Fontaine Phillips, teacher and QSA Advisor, Bellingham High School; Tanya Rowe, Executive Director, Communications and Community Relations; Simone Sangster, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Operations; Ashley Welch, Teacher, Columbia Elementary School

**1. Opening Items**

**Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting began at 5:30 p.m. with a meet and greet. At 6 p.m., School Board President Douglas Benjamin thanked those in attendance, noting that feedback obtained at linkage meetings is invaluable to both the school board and the administrative team and staff. Mr. Benjamin then introduced Dr. [redacted] s welcome and opening comments, invited guests, board members and district staff introduced themselves and described their connections to the school district.

**2. Meeting Purpose Explanation of Community/Board Linkage:**

Ms. Bashaw said board linkage meeting meeting is a follow up to one held with the LGTQA+ community on [Jan. 30, 2014](#). She said linkages allow board members to gather feedback from community members and to strengthen connections with stakeholders. Additionally, through linkage meetings, the board seeks input on the goals set for students in [The Bellingham Promise](#) strategic plan, to help guide decisions related to school district policies.

**3. Large Group Discussion with School Board:**

- In school libraries, work to ensure LGTQA+ materials are integrated throughout the stacks; avoid \_\_\_\_\_ in which books and resources are confined to just a few shelves. \_\_\_\_\_ services librarians are well trained in this effort and would be a good resource.
- Consider establishing a position titled Director of Equity Inclusion, or hire a social worker who is identified as the person leading the charge districtwide.
- Consider replicating the work of other districts where a curriculum that includes family and gender diversity is mandated, so it becomes a normal subject of conversation. There are many of these types of models out there, and it would help children, staff, and families.

At the close of the meeting, Ms. Bashaw thanked participants and expressed appreciation to Tanya Rowe and Bethany Barrett for their help in planning the meeting. Dr. Baker summarized key discussion points, noting that these types of discussions help to influence policy. As an example, he said gender neutral restrooms were created throughout the district due in part to feedback received at the January 2014 linkage meeting with LGTQA+ families and community.

more work and education is needed to ensure that all of our kids feel included, respected and loved.

The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

**Approved:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Douglas Benjamin, School Board President

**Attest:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Bre(ke)-5(y)20( discussrol ecy)2eivnkQ(n, (ti)B)9(e)ussrd G06nd