

**Board Summary: Community Linkage Meeting
Connecting with Families of Students in Special Education
September 26, 2013**

- Handicapped accessibility is needed on the playgrounds. Also, some playgrounds are too far away from the cafeteria.
- A parent was asked to sign an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with no opportunity for proper review, input, or full understanding of rights.
- My student misses out on some of the enrichment activities (extended programs).
- Budgeting needs to support cooking classes, automotive classes, wood shop, metal shop, and gardens at every school.
- More training for paraeducators.
- Strategies and The Bellingham Promise are great, but do resources match the sentiment?
- Families have a lot going on; can we make it easier to access information? For example, have electronic versions of IEPs.
- More inclusion in general education.
- Early intervention and early identification are critical.
- How are we doing on Child Find? (Required part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; requiring states to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who are in need of early intervention or special education services.)
- How can we assure we find other students with less severe disabilities, such as dyslexia?
- More support for kids who are having challenges in transitioning to regular elementary school.
- Advocacy for parents (helping educate us about our rights).
- Skills of teachers (sign language please).
- Keep listening, be open, and support staff with professional development.

Closing and Wrap Up:

Dr. Baker thanked all who participated in this linkage session, noting that the event reflected The Bellingham Promise relating to a collective effort.

Dr. Gass also expressed appreciation to all attendees. He summarized some of the evening's comments and concerns, including the acknowledgement that early screening, prior to age 3, for disabilities and developmental delays is critical; and we need to engage community partners –