





**Official Meeting Minutes:**

discussion, she said, will focus on The Bellingham Promise and the school district's performance as viewed through the lens of local business leaders.

### **Large Group Discussion with School Board:**

Facilitator Steve Clarke asked the group to briefly review The Promise. He then led a discussion based on the following guiding questions. Summary of comments:

#### 1) *What resonates in The Bellingham Promise?*

The message that all kids matter is implicit within The Promise.

Language that resonates:

- The statement about *lifelong learning* and preparing kids for continuous learning after high school graduation.
- *All students will be exceptional in their own way.*
- *All children should be loved.* This is very powerful. If we love our children, they will go into the community and love others. It's a great statement. (In response, Mr. Benjamin noted that while attending board conferences and other events throughout the state, the directors are often questioned about this phrase. People are initially skeptical, but ultimately impressed that this phrase is included in the document.)

#### 2)

Soft Skills:

- We have a responsibility to ensure that students understand that education is more than reading, writing and math; soft skills are also critically important. We cannot run our businesses, for example, if employees are not dependable and responsible.
- Kids are taking their phones into classrooms and the minute they are bored, they are looking at their phones. This is a real detriment to developing a good work ethic. Employees need to pay attention, even if they are bored.
- Question: In view of these comments, should we consider reordering the outcomes? (From *Knowledge/Character/Action* to *Character/Knowledge/Action*)

Life Skills:

- Among the general population, it is important to provide young people with practical skills for living in the real world. Consider offering a "*Living on your Own*" class. It would include lessons on how to fill out a job application and go through the interview process. Kids struggle with that.
- Home economics or basic financial literacy, such as how to balance a checkbook, are no longer being taught. We have an entire generation that has no understanding of the importance of saving money and planning for retirement. If topics such as these are not taught in high school, it may never happen. (In response, Mr. Tetrick noted that with the introduction of the 4x8 schedule, more opportunities are opening up for students. One example is the new Driver's Ed/Traffic Safety course to be offered in high schools beginning in the 2018-19 school year. That course will include some finance-related topics.)
- Civics should be re-introduced to the classroom, along with courses that teach the functions of running a business.



The kids that are going on to college are very well equipped; they are ready for it. For those taking that track, the school district does a nice job preparing them and lives up to the mission outlined in the Promise. Students seem confident that they will be