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Bellevue Community Dialogues with School Board

Students, families, community members and staff illuminate areas of growth & opportunity during second community forum

BELLEVUE, Wash. – Nearly 40 students, staff, families and community members attended and shared their ideas at Bellevue School Board’s second community forum on the evening of Jan. 16. The forum was intended to be a dialogue between Board Directors, parents, students, staff, and community members on how to work together to create a school district that ensures each and every Bellevue student is prepared to succeed in college, career, and life.

“This is a good opportunity to listen to other peoples’ experiences and to share a little bit about mine,” said Interlake junior Jesus Antonio Gutierrez-Paniagua, who does a lot of advocacy work at his school. “I came to get questions answered and to get insight as to what the process is for getting things done.”

Each board director facilitated a discussion with participants who were randomly assigned to one of four small groups. Each group discussed what is working well in the district and areas for further growth. Each participant was given an opportunity to share their stories and concerns with board directors, district staff, and other community members. Key themes shared by each of the groups included the desire for a district pool, the need for more diversity among school staff, suggestions on how the board and district could communicate more effectively, and ideas on how to improve school climate by creating a safe space for all students.

“I think it was very good overall,” said Newport senior Trisha Dey. “I’ve come to a community forum in the past and I did not feel like my concerns were heard. This time around it was so amazing. Everyone at the table was responsive and respectful. People were willing to get engaged with topics they did not come here to discuss, which I thought was really special.”

A third community forum will be held by the school board in the coming months. The district is also launching six issue based community advisory groups where discussions can continue about topics of interest from the forum including Finance, Safe Schools-Safe Students, Growth & Planning, Wellness, Equity, and Activities & Athletics. The next Safe Schools – Safe Students Community Advisory Group session will be held on Jan. 31 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Tyee Middle School. Other Community Advisory Group meetings will be scheduled in the coming months.

To conclude the evening, Board President My-Linh Thai addressed the group saying, “This is what advocacy looks like. I’m asking you to keep us accountable...and I’m asking you to continue this partnership.”

Editors: Please contact the Communications Office at communityrelations@bsd405.org or (425) 456-4000 if you would like additional information or photos.

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