



# Burlington - Edison Public Schools

Laurel W. Browning  
Superintendent

927 East Fairhaven Avenue • Burlington, WA 98233 • (360) 757-3311 • FAX 755-9198

## Message to Burlington-Edison School District Community

The Burlington-Edison School Board would like to take this opportunity to communicate directly with the local community regarding the issues associated with school district properties. We want to start by stating our sincere commitment to educate each student for lifelong success – the mission of our school district and the vision and passion of this and previous boards.

All school boards have an assortment of governance responsibilities and often face considerable challenges carrying them out on behalf of the students and community. Two such challenges for our district have been to secure suitable property for future schools and to house a growing student population. To meet site needs, in 2004 we purchased 10 acres to expand the high school site, and in 2007, 29 acres near Peterson and Pulver Roads for a future elementary school site. Both purchases were made after considerable evaluation of community input and professional information, advice, and support. The Burlington City Council adopted a resolution in support of locating a school at Peterson and Pulver Roads, and the City of Burlington had included the property in its 2007 UGA proposal to Skagit County. With the benefit of hindsight, we find the decision to purchase the Peterson Pulver property regrettable due to upcoming debt repayment obligations for both properties and zoning challenges at Peterson and Pulver. The Board was convinced at that time the acquisition of that property was in the best interest of the district. The September 2009 "Report on Locating School Sites in the B-ESD" by John Fotheringham (see B-ESD website – [www.be.wednet.edu](http://www.be.wednet.edu)) and coverage by the local newspaper provide a comprehensive look back at the events and activities leading up to and since the 2007 decision.

Responding to the growing need for additional K-12 classrooms and to repay property debt obligations, several bond measures have been placed on the ballot in recent years. After the failure of bond measures in 2005 and 2007, the Board reconvened its Facilities Study Committee to review the district's needs and discuss community feedback. In March 2009, a third bond measure was placed on the ballot that was significantly scaled back in scope and financial impact to voters. The timing of the election was challenging because our nation, state, and community were experiencing very difficult economic times. The Board continues to respect its voters and understands the impact of the economy and other factors on the resulting bond failure.

Finally, while the Board still seeks answers to questions stemming from past professional information and services, we are committed to focusing on the future and working collaboratively with the community to develop successful solutions. We need to address the district's non-voted bond obligations while considering future school site options. The facility needs of the district have not diminished. Community involvement and support, good information, and decision transparency are all essential to a successful outcome. The Board appreciates the thoughtful ideas and support from many individuals to date. We are confident that together we will develop a plan that will continue the commitment to quality education and is in the best interest of the Burlington-Edison students, community, and district. Please feel free to contact us via e-mail.

Liza Bott, President  
[bott@fidalgo.net](mailto:bott@fidalgo.net)

Mike Dynes, Board Member  
[mike@dynesfarms.com](mailto:mike@dynesfarms.com)

Marty Lopez, Board Vice-President  
[lopezs@fidalgo.net](mailto:lopezs@fidalgo.net)

Bill Wallace, Board Member  
[wllwallace1@comcast.net](mailto:wllwallace1@comcast.net)

Dick Spink, Board Member  
[dspink@bmi.net](mailto:dspink@bmi.net)

*"Quality Education ... Our Commitment"*