

A School for Birch Bay

- “Neighborhood schools provide intangible benefits beyond the education of our young ones. Neighborhood schools are one of the essential elements to maintaining healthy and vibrant cities and towns and their value stretches well beyond the traditional economic measures of dollars and cents. Situated amongst residential homes, neighborhood schools bring a vibrancy that can never be matched by schools located on the periphery of a community.”
(Neighborhood Schools: The Ties That Bind A Community – Jerry Grebenc)

A changing population dynamic has occurred over the past 20 years in the Birch Bay Urban Growth Area (UGA). Currently Birch Bay is the fastest growing unincorporated urban growth area in Whatcom County. The 2010 US Census for Birch Bay (Census Designated Place-CDP) records a population of 8,413 growing 69.6% since 2000. Blaine grew 42.3% to a population of 4,684 in 2010. From 1990 to 2000 Birch Bay grew 86.9% and Blaine grew 24%. Growth means new tax revenues and Birch Bay pays the highest contribution to the funding of the Blaine School District from local tax dollars. Approximately 60% of the students in the Blaine School District come from the Birch Bay area.

Public schools are intimately linked with communities. Neighborhood schools are a “concrete civic asset” that should not be undervalued. Neighborhood schools give families a “sense of place” and connection to their community. All Blaine Schools are located on the far north periphery of the Blaine School District. All Birch Bay students live in the southern part of the district thus requiring long daily bus rides or commute by cars out of their community up to the Blaine campus. Special amenities such as: community meeting places; playgrounds; fields; gym facilities; before and after school programs; senior/ adult ed. learning center opportunities; add to schools being the center and heart of any community. Neighborhood schools provide a natural focal point for community involvement and investment.

We believe that now is the time for “neighborhood school building” in Birch Bay. It is the responsibility of the Blaine School District Board to immediately plan for and actively work toward the development of elementary classrooms in Birch Bay beginning with kindergarten. We encourage you to work with the Birch Bay community in this endeavor.

Birch Bay Concerned Citizens and School Advocates

Doralee Booth
Jeff Carrington
Kathy Berg
Pat Jerns
Billy Brown
Bill Booth
Terry Terry

Total 20-year population growth from 1990 – 2010:

Birch Bay	5,250
Blaine	2,035

Population Growth Rate from: 1990-2000 2000-2010

Birch Bay	86.9%	69.6%
Blaine	24.2%	42.3%

Projected 2016-2036 population growth numbers:

The Whatcom County Council passed Resolution 2014-013, which is on-line at: <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/council/2014/res/res2014-013.pdf> , setting forth the non-binding projected 2013-2036 growth, which is reflected in the numbers below.

Birch Bay Urban Growth Area

Estimated 2013 Population:	7,540
Projected 2013-2036 Growth:	5,500

Birch Bay Total 2036 Projected Population: 13,040

Blaine Urban Growth Area (this includes the city and the area outside the city within the UGA)

Estimated 2013 Population:	5,171
Projected 2013-2036 Growth:	4,414

Blaine Total 2036 Projected Population: 9,585

The first school in Birch Bay at Point Whitehorn opened its doors in 1909. The second Birch Bay School was built in 1917 at Harborview and Birch Bay Lynden. These schools consolidated with the Blaine School District in the late 1930's. Since then, all students from Birch Bay have been bussed to the unified campus in Blaine. This year marks the 38th year in which the Birch Bay community leaders have requested a plan for property purchase and development of an elementary school in Birch Bay. The 1977 and 2004 Birch Bay Comprehensive plans record this long-standing need and desire for our community.

The question is as always:

WHY IS THERE NO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BIRCH BAY?

Facts that support a school:

1. Birch Bay has 8,500 residents! We are the largest urban cluster of people in Whatcom County with no neighborhood educational platform.
**No School! No Library! No Computer Center! No playfields!
No after school programs!**
2. Birch Bay is the fastest growing urban growth area in Whatcom County!
3. Birch Bay currently is home for 60% of the Blaine School children!
4. The taxpayers of Birch Bay currently pay 32% of all costs associated with education in the Blaine School District! The taxpayers of Birch Bay have contributed MILLIONS of dollars in the last 30 years for school infrastructure and still have no local school!
5. The Birch Bay children ride busses up to 35 hours a month for 13 years! This is detrimental to the development of young children, their families and community.
6. Many residents consider a local school as the "heart of a community." Local schools affect property values, business prosperity, economic development and the wellbeing of a community. Without a neighborhood school there is less opportunity for, local recreation, after school activities, tutoring, public meetings space and a "sense of place."
7. We are in opposition to the February 2015 bond initiative proposal regarding the expansion of 8 new classrooms on the Blaine campus. The addition of elementary classroom and programs belong in Birch Bay.
8. We support the Blaine School District's bond issue proposal to renovate the High School.

JOIN THE CONCERNED CITIZENS OF BIRCH BAY AND QUESTION WHY?

Why doesn't the February 2015 bond initiative address the urgent need and request for the siting and development of school/ classrooms in the Birch Bay community?