

Planning School Facilities: A Timeline of Facts

By Kathy Berg including research by Doralee Booth - April 2015

1990 – Birch Bay, WA U.S. Census Designated Place (CDP) population was 2,696. City of Blaine, WA CDP population was 2,489.

2000 – Birch Bay CDP population was 4,961 with a growth rate of 87%. Coinciding with the 2000 U.S. Census, the Birch Bay community in partnership with Whatcom County Planning & Development Services (PDS) developed the Birch Bay Community Plan because the Birch Bay unincorporated urban growth area (UGA) was and continues to be the fastest growing area of Whatcom County. Blaine CDP population was 3,770 with a growth rate of 51.5%.

2010 – Birch Bay CDP grew by 69.6% from 4,961 to 8,413. Blaine CDP grew by 24.2% from 3,770 to 4,684.

1990 to 2010 - 78.25% population growth of the Birch Bay unincorporated Urban Growth Area (UGA) of from 2,656 to 8,413 permanent residents.

September 28, 2004 – The Whatcom County Council adopted the Birch Bay Community Plan as the subarea plan of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. The Birch Bay Plan was developed over 4 years in a robust public process and included among the 11 Stakeholders was Superintendent Dr. Gordon L. Dolman representing the Blaine, WA School District (BSD). The BSD serves Blaine, Birch Bay and Point Roberts, WA.

Public Education Goals - Goal ED 1: To work with the Blaine School District to locate an elementary school in Birch Bay. This is found on page 14-3 of the Birch Bay Community Plan.

The Blaine School District (BSD) operates five (5) schools. Four schools, a primary, an elementary, middle and a high school are located on a unified school campus in the City of Blaine at the northern most extremity of the district, a mile or so south of the border with Canada. A primary school with grades kindergarten through second grade is located at Point Roberts. Blaine District students are being bussed to the unified campus site in Blaine and can spend up to 1 hour on the bus each way.

December 2007 – “The BSD’s December 2007 Study and Survey indicates that the city has plans to purchase a school site in the Birch Bay area that will allow for future expansion of K-12 education facilities beyond the single 38-acre campus that the district owns in Blaine (Kenoyer pers. Comm.)” Quote from: Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan – Appendix E – Revised Feb. 2014. May be found at <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/4515>

August 5, 2009 – In a report to PDS, BSD said it “*has longer-term plans for the construction of a new elementary school in the latter part of the District’s 20 year planning horizon that would provide capacity for an additional 600 students.*” Quote taken from: Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan – Appendix E – Revised Feb.

2016 to 2036 - 58% PROJECTED Growth Management Act population growth of 7,540 to 13,040 in the Birch Bay UGA.

2004 to Present – Annually, a couple of citizens have met with the BSD superintendent to discuss the growth of the Birch Bay community and the desire to plan for and implement the creation of an educational facility in Birch Bay.

2013 - A Community Health Evaluation of Birch Bay by the Whatcom County Health Department found that Birch Bay has the highest rate of childhood obesity in Whatcom County. Contributing to this condition may well be the fact that students who must ride the school bus cannot walk or ride a bike to school. Once at school, these students must spend up to half an hour standing quietly in line outside their classroom instead of being allowed to spend that time on the playground.

August 20, 2014 – Six (6) Birch Bay citizens in a letter to the 5 Blaine School Board members and the Blaine Schools superintendent requesting their engagement to work together regarding a school facility in Birch Bay for the best benefit for all district students going into the future.

October 27, 2014 – The following was presented by Pat Jerns, representing a group of 6 Birch Bay citizens, to the Blaine School District regular School Board meeting because the continuation of elementary expansion on the Blaine campus listed in the proposed capital bond levy simply postpones by 15 to 20 years addressing the need for an elementary school in Birch Bay.

In the interest of serving all students, now and into the future, in the best possible manner, we would like to see the following:

- *A Board resolution formally committing to and in support of the development of elementary educational facilities in Birch Bay*
- *Modify the proposed capital bond measure to eliminate any and all expansion of elementary education classrooms from the current main campus.*
- *Immediately start work to develop a transitional plan towards providing elementary education facilities in Birch Bay.*

The School Board unanimously said NO by their inaction. The request was totally rejected.

October 28, 2014 – An article appeared this date in the Bellingham Herald quoting the Blaine Schools superintendent regarding the Board's refusal to act on any part of the Birch Bay request of October 27th. The Blaine School District has systematically ignored and continues to completely disregard their responsibility to the population growth and its location to date and anticipated into the future.

February 2015 – The voters passed the BSD \$45M, 20-year Capital Bond measure by 69%. Birch Bay's approximately 6,164 registered voters turned out 36%, 2,229 voters of whom 65% voted Yes. Blaine's approximately 2,891 registered voters turned out 49%, 1,440 voters of whom 77% voted Yes.

Over the 20 years of this \$45M bond, Birch Bay will pay an estimated 36%, \$16.2M; City of Blaine will pay an est. 24%, \$10.8M; Pt. Roberts will pay an est. 16%, \$7.2M; the BP Refinery and those residing in the County will pay an est. 24%, \$10.8M in property taxes to the BSD.

March 2015 - The percentage of students on **free and reduced lunch in the BSD - 45.92%.**

Almost half of the student population! The parents of those students who must ride the school bus to school are going to be the least likely to be able to transport their students back to the single campus facility located at the northern extreme edge of the school district for after school activities including athletics and academics.

November 5, 2014 – found at <http://www.blaine.wednet.edu/pdf/2014-15%20Budget.pdf>

Blaine School District No.503 FY Enrollment and Staff Counts

A. FTE Enrollment Counts	Ave. 2012-2013	Budget 2013-2014	Budget 2014-2015
1. Kindergarten	84.35	72.00	74.50
2. Grade 1	147.00	168.00	150.00
3. Grade 2	166.00	146.00	169.00
4. Grade 3	141.53	154.00	140.00
5. Grade 4	146.70	130.00	156.03
6. Grade 5	183.80	141.00	139.00
7. Grade 6	163.26	178.00	142.00
8. Grade 7	179.06	145.00	186.30
9. Grade 8	181.28	171.60	145.00
10. Grade 9	172.06	168.45	165.70
11. Grade 10	165.88	155.20	166.80
12. Grade 11*	134.68	132.80	132.00
13. Grade 12*	126.96	121.60	140.00
14. SUBTOTAL	1,992.56	1,883.65	1,906.33
15. Running Start	44.28	36.00	36.00
16. ALE Enrollment		90.00	82.50
17. TOTAL K-12	2,036.84	2,009.65	2,024.83

*Excluding Running Start

B. Staff Counts

1. Gen. Fund FTE Certified	130.846	133.800	141.500
2. Gen. Fund FTE Classified	80.015	81.347	82.555

NOTES: Enrollment should include special ed., part-time private, home-based, and summer students eligible for BEA funding...

April 2015 – A look through: **Study & Survey 2014**, Blaine School District #503 (BSD), Blaine, WA, Sept. 2014 (available from the BSD office on request), what BSD apparently considers their Capital Facilities Plan - shows that the only reference to Birch Bay in the entire 212-page document is to the residence of the Birch Bay representative to the 16-member Facilities Planning Task Force. 8 members of the Task Force have BSD email addresses and a 9th Task Force member is a member of the BSD school board. This **Study & Survey**'s demographic data is based on the ZIP Code 98230 numbers provided by the Blaine Community Web Portal @ Blaine.net while PDS data has always been based on the U.S. Census data.

The 2 different demographic data bases provide opposite and opposing conclusions about the Level of Service that BSD is providing to its educational community. PDS/CDP data concludes that BSD has a net capacity deficit in 2015 and will experience a larger capacity deficit in 2029.