WIHS Summary of S.W.O.T. and Proposed Strategies—March 2022

Summary of Strengths	Specific bullet points	
Physical attributes/built environment	• Furniture designed for communication • Small class size (student: staff ratios) x 3 • Accessible campus x 2 • Location is marketing strength	
Social justice lens and Social, emotional, cultural learning	Social justice and social emotional cultural learning • Kindness/tolerance • Being inclusive • Students learn to accept each other's differences • Amazing students • Pride in BIPOC identity • Decrease in racism • Racial diversity x 2 • Gender diversity x 2 • Think outside of box	Staff strengths in creating a safe learning environment for students • Students seen as individuals • Students can be themselves • Staff-student connections • Trust with students; student voice • Listening to students' needs • Meet students where they are • Enthusiasm of teachers • Staff commitment & dedication
Community partners & involvement	• Community involvement & resource support • Community influence & resources • Students can go to school of origin for sports; partnership with public schools • Stories and experiences of allies incorporated into curriculum • Interspecies support (ex. Unbridled Spirit) • Relationship with other schools	
Educational program	• Curriculum • Reflections & assessment • Academic freedom	• Fresh food available and students participate in food prep • Flexibility in teaching approaches • Focus on core classes

	● Phenomenon based learning part of daily schedule ● Hands on experiential learning ● Ability for students to present work ● Academic growth among marginalized communities	● Interest-based learning ● Improved student writing ● Growth from students in academics and relationships

Summary of Weaknesses	Specific bullet points	
Curriculum and pedagogy	Phenomenon Based Learning (PhBL): ● Students don't know PhBL ● Varied understanding among staff ● Need more structure and scaffolding for PhBL ● Over-promised and under-delivered of school is PhBL—about miscommunication of that (white supremacy value—weakness is not communicated ● We should match students' PhBL projects with allies who have resources, experiences, wisdom	Others: ● Educated about social justice but not educated how to act—how do kids take it to action? ● Need less lectures and more conversations and student voice ● Nothing engaging for brilliant kids—become bored ● First Peoples Principles not clearly reflected in student feedback—this could be better leveraged ● We don't search for allies based on students' interests ● We don't involve students to recruit allies ● Intergenerational recruitment performance framework
Lack of clarity in power-sharing resulting in confusion on policy vs. reality	Power-sharing with students: ● Gaps: student-led vs. teacher-led ● Balance of agency-success (students going to class, sitting out b/c of bad day) ● Needs for expectations/guidelines for dependence ● Attendance and participation of students in academic learning ● Lack of clearly defined personal boundaries (personal space among students with each other, adults)	Power-sharing among staff and leadership: ● Teachers not feeling empowered by leadership—top-down communication ● No clear direction for staff to get tasks completed ● Nothing happens when adults harm each other—not feeling safe

	● Learning—not all students are doing the work (expectations)
	● Students in the commons—issues of equity for students accessing education
	  ○ Some students are taking advantage of being in commons when they aren't wanting to engage
	  ○ Commons are usually populated by white students that aren't willing to engage their teacher for academic purposes.
	  ○ Commons are usually populated by marginalized students for getting away from needs that aren't being met equitably by staff.
	  ○ Staying in commons without permission is penalized
	● Lack of follow-up of student voices—connected to transparency issue	

Limited Electives and Community Opportunities	● Building community activities ● Limited electives for some kids ● Limited in community opportunities ● Only one after-school activity/session is available	
Leadership issues	● Lack of diversity in leadership ● Communication form leadership is slow—slow responses ● Lack of office hours by leadership ● Analysis paralysis when it comes to making decisions ● Hierarchy system—white cisgendered male leader not attracting BIPOC families/students	
Staff experiences	● Time compliance/management (ex. staff meeting) ● Consistent sense of feeling behind among staff—linked to time management ● Disrespect of staff's personal time off clock	

	● Typical day staff are frazzled (mental health, social emotional needs for staff) ● Getting spread too thin ● Internal staff not asking for support
School culture	● Gossip about students and staff ● Focusing on problem not solutions ● Us vs. them mentality ● Not having personal/professional boundaries
Mental Health and trauma	● Mental health needs to be addressed x3 ● Teachers unprepared/under trained for student trauma and mental health needs ● Chronically absent BIPOC students ● DEI training for teachers to support students ● Not all staff/students feel safe
Communication	● Skills in interpersonal challenges ● Parents not always aware of what's going on/invited (parental communication) ● Facebook account was hacked for 2 weeks ● Social media posts aren't timely
Other	● Lack of diversity of staff and leadership (mostly white teachers and principal is cis-gendered white male) ● Board members being present at school more especially in academic spaces ● Need more toilets ● Food inequities: only a quarter of students eat fresh food. Students who can't afford to eat at food court either eat at the school, or don't eat at all. ● Transportation challenges

Summary of Opportunities	**Specific bullet points**
Equipping students	● We can ready kids for life and higher ed ● Using First Peoples Principles (FPP) and restorative circles to aid our students to mend relationships outside of school ● Leverage FPP ● Equip students with practical life skills

	● Students can explore multiple ways of life and career options ● Learn about interests through PhBL ● Cybersecurity and technology ● Internships ● We could be the first charter school to lead in restorative justice, PhBL, FPP, critical literacy—we could become a model school
Community leadership, partnerships, and engagement	● Teaching community how to lead in educating our students the "throwaway kids" ● Host hard conversations in our community ● Bellingham Public School Collaboration for resources and programs ● Higher Ed collaboration (community colleges, Running Start, WWU) ● Using community partnership to create access—leveraging community partnerships ● Guest speakers
Expanding capacity	● Integration with NWYS ● Allies for academic coaching (2:5 ratio) ● Bring in more allies ● Board member strengths ● Eager donors ● Reconfigure the building to better meet the needs of school (ex. install more toilets) ● Hired a grant writer ● Succession planning
Recruitment & expansion	● Expansion to 11th & 12th grade ● Union with outside help with external opportunities—help with staff recruitment ● 56 students who will advertise school, recruit other students
Phenomenon Based Learning	● Connecting with Finnish teachers—Fulbright exchange ● Traveling to Finland to learn PhBL together

Summary of Threats	**Specific bullet points**
WIHS Board threats	● School board is responsible to Commission ● School board (personally) finances on-line ● Proceed with mission or struck by Commission if we fail audits

	• Commission restrictions may prohibit us from realizing our mission and vision (because we're doing things very differently)
External Reputation and Perceptions	• Negative preconceived notions of charter schools • Staff unionization could be perceived that our foundation is shaky, untrustworthy • BIPOC and marginalized communities may look at us like a fraud—if we only have rich white families enrolling • Cultural appropriation • People in community who do not want us to succeed may sabotage our work
Scarcity, deficit focused	• Scarcity mindset • Sense of competition in Bellingham and surrounding school districts • Deficit thinking about students
Staff and student understanding about Charter	• ~~Charter needs to address founding principles~~ • Not understanding laws about Charter
Physical	• Security (physical) • Location restrictions—mall security and rules—can't do anything outside building • Lack of bathrooms • Owner of Bellis Fair mall defaulted on loan—is our location sustainable?
Other	•

Proposed strategies for next 3 years:

- Focus on principles school was founded on
- Plan to train EVERYONE on PhBL
- Develop communication plan between staff, students, and parents
- NWYS/WIHS merger
- IT infrastructure
- Re-organize the structure