

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

Summary of Strengths	Specific bullet points	
Physical attributes/built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curriculum ● Reflections & assessment ● Academic freedom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fresh food available and students participate in food prep ● Flexibility in teaching approaches ● Focus on core classes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phenomenon based learning part of daily schedule ● Hands on experiential learning ● Ability for students to present work ● Academic growth among marginalized communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest-based learning ● Improved student writing ● Growth from students in academics and relationships
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Summary of Weaknesses	Specific bullet points	
Curriculum and pedagogy	<p>Phenomenon Based Learning (PhBL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 	<p>Others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<p>Power-sharing with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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) 	<p>Power-sharing among staff and leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning—not all students are doing the work (expectations) ● Students in the commons—issues of equity for students accessing education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building community activities ● Limited electives for some kids ● Limited in community opportunities ● Only one after-school activity/session is available 	
Leadership issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of diversity in leadership ● Communication from 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Typical day staff are frazzled (mental health, social emotional needs for staff) ● Getting spread too thin ● Internal staff not asking for support
School culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gossip about students and staff ● Focusing on problem not solutions ● Us vs. them mentality ● Not having personal/professional boundaries
Mental Health and trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with Finnish teachers—Fulbright exchange • Traveling to Finland to learn PhBL together

Summary of Threats	Specific bullet points
WIHS Board threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School board is responsible to Commission • School board (personally) finances on-line • Proceed with mission or struck by Commission if we fail audits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commission restrictions may prohibit us from realizing our mission and vision (because we're doing things very differently)
External Reputation and Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scarcity mindset ● Sense of competition in Bellingham and surrounding school districts ● Deficit thinking about students
Staff and student understanding about Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Charter needs to address founding principles ● Not understanding laws about Charter
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●

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