



# Memorandum

**TO:** Satpal Sidhu, County Executive  
**FROM:** Erika Lautenbach, Director  
**RE:** Bellingham School District #501 – Behavioral Health Services Interlocal Agreement  
**DATE:** APRIL 25, 2024

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Attached is an interlocal agreement between Whatcom County and Bellingham School District #501 for your review and signature.

- **Background and Purpose**

This agreement provides funding for the provision of behavioral health services within the Bellingham School District #501, necessary to promote a greater ability for academic success for students who are challenged with mental health and substance use problems. School districts have been successful in reducing risk for substance use and poor mental health by providing access to critical services, as shown in the Countywide School Services Report (Exhibit C). Beyond benefits to behavioral health outcomes, cost-benefit estimates also show that effective school-based programs can save \$18 for every \$1 spent on these programs.

- **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this agreement, in an amount not to exceed \$151,800, is provided by the Behavioral Health Program Fund. These funds are included in the 2024 budget. Council authorization is required per RCW 39.34.030(2) for agreements between public agencies.

- **Differences from Previous Contracts**

This is a new agreement, however funding for these services has been provided through previous agreements since 2012. This agreement supports ongoing critical supports to youth and families. The related mental health expansion contract (WC contract #202309024) with Bellingham School District is a one-time opportunity designed to meet needs and gaps not already met by this agreement, as discussed by the Health Board. This agreement reflects a 10% increase in funding over the agreement ending on 08/31/2024 (WC Contract #202008017) but includes no additional significant changes.

Please contact Ann Beck, Community Health & Human Services Manager at 360-778-6055 ([ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us)) if you have any questions.

Encl.