

Monitoring Report - Executive Limitations Policy  
EL-3, Staff Relationships

## **BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION**

With respect to interactions with district staff, the Superintendent shall not fail to ensure an organized, mission focused and empowering culture exists for all employees in the service of students.

## **CERTIFICATION**

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitations Policy EL-3 “Staff Relationships” in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true as of August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

Dave Holmes, Superintendent

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY**

I interpret this expectation regarding staff relationships to mean the board believes the district must interact, support and communicate with the staff of the district in a positive and supportive manner. In general, using a flat leadership model that creates ownership of initiatives, through collegial work, input and implementation and evaluation or review. In addition, the district will behave in a manner that reflects the culture and environment of the community within which we serve. The district will always carry out its work in both a professional and ethical manner. Operating in this way will increase the likelihood that a positive and supportive learning culture will be developed for students and therefore maximize the opportunity for students to accomplish the expectations set forth in the Board’s Ends Policies.

## **REPORT**

There are nine specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area of EL-3 as best as possible. At the time of this report, I believe that the district is in compliance with the Board’s expectations.

1. *The superintendent shall not fail in having a long-term plan for the district that has gained the support of all stakeholders and is approved by the Board.* **IN COMPLIANCE**

Our planning has been very organic in nature and customized to the teams of learners that comprise the organization. This would include the professional development of our entire staff. The foundation of our plans, whether they are at the classroom, building or district level, with students, staff or community, has at its foundation the Board’s Ends and Limitations policies. It is my belief that the board sees these policies as creating an ongoing long-term plan. In the future it is my hope that the board, via a board retreat or other process, will help create a more detailed strategic improvement plan. In

consultation with the superintendent, that plan will both support the Ends and Limitations policies but will also help communicate the board's more specific goals. Under the current Ends and Limitations policies, there are six broad areas of focus that are as follows:

- A) Learning Environments created under the umbrella of the LC learning model;
- B) Personal Learning Technologies;
- C) Family Support and Engagement Services;
- D) Safe Schools;
- E) Flexible Learning Experiences; and
- F) Data Driven Decision-making.

Examples of our efforts in each of these areas are numerous, but the following are a few highlights:

- LC learning model – Over the past decade of developing and implementing this model, it has been incorporated into virtually everything we do. From lesson design, to student activities; from professional practices to principal and teacher evaluations, high cognitive demand learning is the foundation of our work and professional practices within the district. Creating a culture among teachers that see themselves as educational scientists will become a focus for this coming year.
- Personal Learning Technologies – We continue to move forward in our efforts to provide a learning environment that supports the increased use of personal learning technologies. Each year we have expanded our use of portable electronic devices (district owned as well as learner owned) within the classroom. This last year, we were granted a fairly large federal e-grant that will enable us to upgrade our technology infrastructure including our wireless system and its capacity this year. We have fully implemented our state Smarter Balanced Testing via digital devices this last year.
- Family Support and Engagement Services – We continue to expand support for students and families through our Family-Community Resource Center (FCRC) across the district. This past year we expanded the FCRC program from the K-8 campus to now include the high school. Part of this effort included the addition of the Wildcat Care Closet, which provides food, school supplies and other essential items for students in need. Beyond all this, our Jump-start Backpack program, counseling supports, resource connections, partnership expansions and food assistance programs continued to grow this past year to support student learning.
- Safe Schools – Our staff continues to work hard to prepare for emergency situations at school. We are currently installing expanded HD security camera systems. Our entire leadership team attended the county safe schools workshop in early August. We supported our local police department in their active shooter drills this last month by providing them our high school facility for training. The police were able to involve most of the high school drama class in the training as actors. We will be debriefing with LCPD early this fall over what they learned during the drills so that we might implement at all buildings. In addition, we will be working with LCPD to convert our safety plan for active shooter situations to the new best practice of “Run, Hide, Fight” over the school year.

- Flexible Learning Experiences – We started the Home School Academy three years ago and added the LINX program last year. Both programs have provided expanded opportunities for students but will be a focus of change and enhancement over this next year. We have continued to add additional online credit recovery programs to help students succeed regardless of their circumstances. We will continue adding new after school extended learning options for students on all three campuses this coming year. We will include extra transportation supports to assist students with their participation in all after school activities.
- Data Driven Decision-making – We continued last year to enhance our data based decision-making by adding new tools such as HOMEROOM to obtain the most accurate information regarding student success. This year, we are replacing HOMEROOM with a similar program that is part of SKYWARD. There are multiple benefits to this change, one of which is the zero cost. These data points are linked to the district's Learner Success Indicators (LSIs), which highlight critical markers of student success. These data points have guided us to implement our new after school extended learning program, enhanced our summer school options as well as many other flexible learning options that we intend to continue and expand.

All of these efforts were generated through a process of continually analyzing the needs of learners over time. Whether this was through Linkage meetings or our on-the-ground conversations with stakeholders – we are continually learning what our stakeholders need in support of their efforts to achieve the Board's Ends. Even though, I am very confident that stakeholders have had countless opportunities to provide input to the direction of the district, I intend to find new ways to gather more input and create ownership over time.

**2. *The superintendent shall not fail to provide positive, mission focused professional development opportunities for all staff. IN COMPLIANCE***

It simply doesn't make any sense to expect our teachers to create learning environments for students that are internally motivating, yet at the same time treat them in a top-down professional learning environment. Therefore, over the years we have worked very diligently to create, support and develop a learning culture that is aligned with the district's mission for all learners (students and adults).

When I became Assistant Superintendent six years ago, one of my primary goals was to create more meaningful and lasting professional development opportunities for all staff. Amy Neiman has continued that work in my absence and one of our primary goals this year is to take another step forward in this area. We will be revisiting the focus on national board certification, developing leadership opportunities for teachers across the district that don't involve obtaining an administrative certificate and improving the connection between staff need and offerings in the area of professional development.

We have already developed a district wide shared calendar that Amy monitors that includes all offerings and opportunities district wide. We are in the process of surveying staff to develop new offerings based on their input.

3. ***The superintendent shall not fail to treat staff with respect, dignity and concern for their well-being. IN COMPLIANCE***

This is a very broad expectation and simply goes to the root of how the district and the administrative leadership treats, interacts with and supports various staff across the district. Any number of examples could be used to demonstrate my and the leadership team's respect and support of our staff. Those examples would almost always be rooted in "clearing the way" for staff to perform their duties for students in a more impactful way. Having only been on duty for seven weeks I have not had a number of opportunities to exhibit this leadership trait but have had numerous conversations with leadership team members concerning this expectation.

4. ***The superintendent shall not fail to handle personnel matters in a fair, appropriate and impartial manner. IN COMPLIANCE***

I am currently handling a concern brought to me from the classified association that is being handled in a manner that is fair and appropriate even when it is outside of the district's responsibility to do so per the contract. In addition, I am participating in a conversation with our certified union outside of normal negotiation parameters per the contract to help our special education staff feel more appreciated and treated fairly. I would offer these two examples as evidence of intent and follow through on this expectation.

5. ***The superintendent shall not fail to appropriately and effectively delegate decision making to the appropriate level in a manner that empowers distributed decision-making. IN COMPLIANCE***

It is my philosophy and past practice to encourage staff to resolve issues and make decisions at the lowest level possible. By doing so we can increase capacity of all stakeholders within the roles they serve or participate. It is my philosophy to create a "flat" leadership model where staff is encouraged to have the capability to assume responsibility and exercise judgment at their level of responsibility. This model encourages and empowers staff while building ownership not just "buy-in" on different district initiatives and decisions.

6. ***The superintendent shall not fail to recognize the good work that staff achieves on behalf of students. IN COMPLIANCE***

Recognition of staff can and does occur in many ways. Some examples of recognition efforts that have been done in the past that I would point to are a personal thank you (either in notes or directly), certificates, stories/photos on our website, recognitions at meetings, presentation of awards/plaques, etc. Therefore, based on the staff and community input I've received in this area, I feel we are meeting this expectation well. That said, I believe in and will promote the importance of the simple individualized personal "Thank you", "Atta boy" and "Good job"!

7. ***The superintendent shall not fail to recruit the best staff possible to achieve the mission of the district. IN COMPLIANCE***

Our district has always enjoyed a great reputation as a place to work, live and be a part of a great educational community. With that advantage, we know that if we continue past practice of advertising and promoting positions with a wide net, we will succeed in attracting the most qualified individuals for our position. We always promote our district as a great place to work and the exit interviews I've had over the years with various employees confirms this view. It will remain important to be in the market early for all positions to have the deepest pool possible and we will remain vigilant over our working environments for all staff.

We continue to implement a strategy to "grow our own" leaders within the district. We continue a process that identifies, trains and then promotes people from within the district who have shown exceptional skills in leadership and are committed to creating the types of learning environments that are essential to meeting the Board's End policies. Dan Bentson would be the latest example of this.

8. ***The superintendent shall not fail to effectively manage employee union negotiations with minimal impact on district services to students. IN COMPLIANCE***

As mentioned in expectation #4 above, I am currently working with both associations in good faith to address issues that could have a common benefit for both the district and our students. I know that this work will continue to build trust and allow for better relationships moving forward as we look to negotiate a new contract with our certified association beginning this next spring.

9. ***The superintendent shall not fail to implement a process for calendar development that allows stakeholder input. IN COMPLIANCE***

We have and will continue to follow a process over the years to develop an effective and appropriate calendar that supports the mission of the district and works most effectively for the broadest group of stakeholders. Additionally, we have continued our practice of implementing a two-year calendar process that supports long-term planning. I am confident this process continues to meet the requirements of this expectation.