

### **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 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Dr. Mark Mansell, 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 the district’s learning model to engage the learning energy of staff in a similar way that we expect staff to use it for students. 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 is very organic in nature and is customized to the teams of learners that comprise the organization. The foundation of our plans, whether they are at the classroom, building or district level, has at its foundation the Board’s Ends and Limitations policies. But the fiber that runs through them all is the District’s Learning Model that shapes our ongoing learning culture. Six broad areas of focus are as follows:

- A) High Cognitive Demand Learning Environments;
- B) Personal Learning Technologies;
- C) Family Support and Engagement Services;
- D) Safe Schools;
- E) Flexible Learning Experiences; and

F) Data Driven Decision-making.

For examples of our work over the years in support of these broader goals, you can find them in our Making Thinking Visible learning effort, One-to-One initiative, FCRC start-up, Emergency Drills, the creation of the Home School Academy as well as the development of the district's Learner Success Indicators (LSIs).

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. Therefore, I am very confident that stakeholders have had countless opportunities to provide input to the direction of the district.

**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).

A terrific example of this over the past year would be the effort to empower teachers to develop and lead an all staff learning experience called *Making Thinking Visible*. This full day experience was the culmination of a year-long project with author Mark Church (of the book *Making Thinking Visible*) where he worked with and supported a core group of teachers to explore and study how to improve the cognitive demand condition of their classrooms. They in-turn developed the all day experience for the entire staff that was very impactful.

The ownership of this learning experience was deep and broad with the staff as a result. In the end, I believe the Making Thinking Visible Project serves as a wonderful example of how our teachers (as life-long learners themselves) became more confident and self-reliant in their own learning.

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

This is a fairly broad expectation and any number of examples could be used to demonstrate my respect and support of our staff. Examples could be clearly visible in my motivation to maintain/provide quality learning spaces for teachers and support staff in which to work (e.g. carpet in the HS, portable renovations, etc.). Other examples that as a Board you know about which could include how I have worked to provide significant, yet sustainable compensation improvements for staff. With all that said, it is the daily interactions and encouragement I believe I bring to our team in my role as superintendent that represents my heart

for supporting our staff. All combined, I personally believe my actions and words are well aligned with my understanding of this expectation.

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

Having served as your superintendent for the past nine years, there have been a fair number of staff issues, collective bargaining agreement negotiations, organizational challenges and numerous changes that have created countless personnel matters that needed to be handled/managed. I am proud to report that we have very strong relationships with our staff and believe the Board has ample direct evidence to support this. This is a result of fair, honest, dependable and proactive steps to be fair, appropriate and impartial with personnel matters.

**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***

The district learning model serves to guide our actions in meeting the Ends policies of the Board. A key focus of our model is to help learners (students or adults) to become increasingly confident and independent in their ability to navigate a dynamic world. This is a key requirement for successful implementation of a decision delegation expectation. Grounding our decisions in the Ends policies and guided by the Executive and Administrative limitations helps build this collective confidence to make decisions yet at the same time remain a cohesive team. I feel very confident that this expectation is being met everyday with our administrators, teachers, support staff and especially with students.

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

Recognition of staff can occur in many ways. Some individuals are comfortable with a range of statements of appreciation for special achievements, while others are more private and find certain recognition too uncomfortable. Striking a balance is a challenge at times and unquestionably this work can be tricky to navigate at times. One of the greatest attributes of having a very stable staff over time is we really get to know them pretty well. So we work hard at trying to adjust our district appreciation efforts to the specific desires of the recipients. For examples of recognition efforts we have done I would point to 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 our staff and community, I feel we are meeting this expectation well.

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

I am very pleased with our results at recruiting staff to the district. The pool of applicants for most of our teaching jobs are fairly slim these days, but that is representative of what I am hearing from most of our neighboring districts. To increase the quality of our applicant pools, we have worked hard to personally

recruit people who we have experience with from surrounding areas. The result is that we have been able to attract many high quality applicants to step forward. From this point, we have followed the CBA and used staff participation on interview teams to sort through the applicants and find the types of educators we feel are capable of meeting the Board's Ends policies.

In addition to the above work, we have implemented a strategy to "grow our own" leaders within the district. Since our learning model requires a shift of mind to implement, we have begun a process that trains and 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. Overall, as a small school district connected to a larger urban area, I believe we are doing quite well attracting and retaining high-quality instructional and support staff to the district.

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

This year we have worked hard to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement with our teachers (LCEA). This effort has taken a tremendous amount of time, both in research and in conversations/discussions with the LCEA negotiations team. This effort has been very constructive and in many ways has allowed us to focus even more on the achievement of the Board's Ends and the type of learning environments necessary to create them. Throughout the entire process, no direct or indirect impacts to district services occurred.

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

We have followed a very similar 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.