

BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION

The Superintendent shall not fail to provide educational leadership for district staff required to achieve the Board's Ends Policies.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitations Policy EL-5 "Educational Leadership" in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true as of November 25th, 2014.

Dr. Mark Mansell, Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

I interpret this expectation regarding educational leadership to mean the board believes it is important for the superintendent to serve as both a district and community leader in a positive and proactive way so as to advocate on behalf of our students the value of public education.

REPORT

There are nine specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area of EL-5 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 to project a strong image of instructional leadership to all stakeholders. IN COMPLIANCE

There are many opportunities for growth and change these days in public education. Whether we are talking about TPEP, Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards, Smarter-Balanced testing, or the old standby... school funding, change is the norm in education. Over the years our district has been consistently ahead of the curve on being ready for and ahead of change. A few examples that show this pattern of action could be our move to Core-24 (24 credit state requirement) back in 2008 that districts just now are trying to wrestle with, as they now need to move to the new standard. Another example would be in the area of technology where personal learning devices are now the "big thing" in schools. In La Center, we have been working to integrate personal devices for going on four years and more importantly changing teacher pedagogy to prepare for using these devices for nearly a decade. Yet another example is our work relative to teacher evaluation processes. Our team has been working on this effort since 2006, which is the reason why our move to TPEP has been a relatively easy transition and why we really are so far ahead of the pack on this effort.

The list of innovative and powerful efforts to support students could go on and on. It should be abundantly clear that as a team we are consistently ahead of the curve on a wide range of improvement efforts. That said I am sure that five years from now we will look back and see that the work we are doing currently on multiple fronts (e.g. FCRC, our learning model, professional development strategies, etc.) will be shown to be once again ahead of its time. These creative strategies to improve the learning environments for our students could have only occurred at the hands of a team that embraces challenges and is willing to think differently compared to other districts. The result, I believe, has produced an overall positive image of our district with stakeholders on multiple levels. Therefore, as a member of this team, I am confident we are meeting this expectation of the Board.

2. *The superintendent shall not fail to communicate an optimistic vision for the mission and the work of the district and public education. IN COMPLIANCE*

I have many opportunities to represent the district in a variety of settings. Whether that is inside our community (e.g. Lions Club, city council meetings, community celebrations, linkage meetings, etc.) or outside La Center (e.g. other districts, Clark County Superintendents' Group, ESD, WASA, working with legislators, etc.), it is always a joy to share and respond to questions as a champion for the La Center team. Being optimistic about what's before us and helping to set in place action steps to shape future successes is something that comes naturally to me and so many others here in La Center. It is an integral part of the spirit we have. Whether as students, staff, families or community members, we have great hope in facing the challenges that head our way and we consistently do so with optimism and confidence. More so than any other place I have served, our can-do attitude is the "secret ingredient" to our recipe for success. They don't call it "The La Center Way" for nothing 😊

3. *The superintendent shall not fail to possess and use up-to-date educational knowledge in the course of their work. IN COMPLIANCE*

Due to our size of school, being connected in a variety of settings with stakeholders is a tremendous opportunity that is afforded to me as superintendent. It allows me the opportunity to listen to so many stakeholders, which provides me multiple perspectives on a wide range of topics on a continuous basis. That said, we are also at a size of district where there is enough people power to allow me to stay connected outside of the district as well. This multiple source flow of information provides me with so much information so as to allow me to be consistently up-to-date on a wide range of topics. Without question, my ability to stay current is bolstered so much by the special circumstances that our district enjoys. Therefore, I am very thankful for the reasons why I am in full compliance with this expectation.

4. *The superintendent shall not fail to maintain and enhance his/her own educational knowledge through continuous learning. IN COMPLIANCE*

One of the many, many wonderful parts of being part of the La Center team that I enjoy is the tremendous collective thirst for learning stakeholders have here in our

community. Our entire culture as a team of professionals is built on this drive to learn as a way to improve our practice as educators in the service of our students. I am truly blessed to be part of so many teams of learners. Whether that team includes students (my Navigation team), teachers/support staff (Old Dog, safety committee, lunch room chats), administrators (leadership team), the Board (workshops, linkage and Board meetings), parents/community members (formal and informal meetings/conversations, Lions Club, city council), I am afforded an endless list of opportunities to learn from and with stakeholders.

Outside of the district I enjoy being part of so many other teams that adds even more to my opportunity to learn (county/regional superintendents, ESD, WASA, community groups). Additionally, I personally work on expanding my learning that started with my doctoral studies relative to creating and growing learning teams/organizations. I am confident that there is ample evidence of my drive to continually work on enhancing my own educational knowledge and drive to learn.

5. *The superintendent shall not fail to maintain and consistently communicate that student achievement is the focus of district staff efforts.* IN

COMPLIANCE

One of the keys to our success as a learning organization is the clear focus the Board provides us in their Ends Policies. Particularly with Ends-1, the mission of our district is abundantly clear. Therefore, our effort to communicate this focus and strive daily to meet its expectation is at the core of our work. In particular, the key statement of this expectation is to "...develop confident, self-reliant life-long learners...". This has become a powerful lens that shapes our daily efforts and decisions. Ends-1 is so much more than a mission statement in our district because it has become a way of being for us as a learning team. I am very confident that we are in compliance with this Board expectation.

6. *The superintendent shall not fail to research and utilize the best and most effective instructional practices as the foundation of their work as the top educational leader.* IN COMPLIANCE

Our collective work around the district's learning model has become the core of our practice as educators. This learning model is designed to engage the innate need and desire to learn that is part of our DNA as human beings. This includes our students as well as for ourselves as adults. That is why all of our practices across the district are geared towards creating learning environments that ask learners to think, supports learners in doing the work and finally trusts them to become active learners in the process.

As a few examples of this, I visited two example professional development opportunities on the K-8 after school this past week that are truly representative of what occurs almost daily across the district. The first was a group of nine teachers who were working as a book study team (based on the book *Causes and Cures*) on how to support struggling students. Their conversations were amazingly powerful and very proactive. Throughout their conversations, their

works were filled with hope and optimism for these students. Their passion and high levels of thinking tremendously impressed me as they collectively worked to create strategies for supporting student learning. The second example was a group twelve teachers learning together to explore how to use Google Educational tools to support student achievement of Ends-1 and Ends-3. They too were very internally motivated and self-directed in their work to enhance the learning experiences they create for students.

Neither of the above two groups required oversight by any district administrators or program directors in order for them to function. There was no need for a rigid accountability process to ensure effective use of time was occurring. They were accountable to themselves and to their students. These two groups of educators were unquestionably internally motivated to enhance their practice as a way to provide even stronger learning environments for their students. So it is clear to see that if teachers are creating for themselves high cognitively demanding that are learner centric professional learning experiences, they will be more driven to create similar learning environments for their student. Therefore, I am very confident that we are in compliance with this Board expectation.

7. *The superintendent shall not fail to respond to the changing needs of students/parents in a positive and proactive manner.* IN COMPLIANCE

The systemic shift of mind our professional team has made over the years to not only responding to changing needs of students and parents, but to seek feedback as a critical part of the equation to create powerful learning teams has been one of the greatest joys of my professional experience. Our staff's growing need to seek the thinking of students as a course of their own learning on how to modify their strategies for their classroom has been an important part of our instructional practice. This is why I believe our work is perfectly aligned with the Board's expectation in this area.

8. *The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that a high quality curriculum is in place at all levels and that staff effectively use approved instructional materials to meet district, state and national standards that are approved by the Board.* IN COMPLIANCE

As a team we have worked very hard to improve our instructional materials over the years. The most obvious example of this effort has been our work in recent years to review, study, pilot, adopt and implement new math instructional materials. Our new Director for Teaching and Learning (Amy Nieman) has done a terrific job of picking up where Dave Holmes left off in this effort. Both Dave and now Amy have worked tirelessly to support stakeholders in a deep review of the needed resources to support students in their learning efforts in mathematics. I believe fully that collectively we have done our very best to openly and honestly look at the best instructional materials that were available to meeting the local, state and federal expectations in this content area. Other content areas moving forward in time will also use similar processes to study, review, adopt and

implement appropriate materials in a transparent and open manner that I believe is called for in this expectations.

9. *The superintendent shall not fail to provide appropriate professional development necessary for staff to use the approved instructional materials.* IN COMPLIANCE

Professional learning with the implementation of newly adopted instructional materials is an ongoing process. This effort is one that is especially powerful when we do so using our district's learning model. Our teachers (as learners) dive into the process of learning these materials they do so in a manner that will help them create the types of learning environments necessary to meet Ends-1 and Ends-2. What we are finding is that not all publishers provided professional development opportunities that align well with our learning model. This is why we need to provide additional opportunities for teachers so as to go deeper into the materials. This is kind of frustrating, but this effort shows that we are meeting the expectation that our collective effort to support teachers beyond traditional publisher professional development is ample and appropriate.