

### **BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION**

The Superintendent shall not fail to produce an annual written District/School Improvement Plans (D/SIP) that articulate the strategies, expected outcomes and responsible personnel that are being initiated and monitored for achieving the mission of the district.

### **CERTIFICATION**

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitations Policy EL-7 “District/School Improvement Plans” in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true as of September 23rd, 2014.

Dr. Mark Mansell, Superintendent

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY**

I interpret this expectation regarding district/school improvement plans to mean the board believes it is important for the district to have an overall strategy or framework for improvement so as to systemically work toward achieving of the district’s mission as stated in Board Policy Ends-1.

### **REPORT**

There are two specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area of EL-7 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 develop and disseminate a formal written plan showing the strategies that will be implemented. IN PARTIAL COMPLIANCE***

There are six broad areas of focus that we are working on as an organization to achieve the Board’s Ends-1 Policy. Most of these have been ongoing efforts that have been occurring for many years. Without a doubt we have made consistent and steady progress towards implementing these changes/improvements in deep and meaningful ways. The six broad areas of focus for organizational improvement are:

- High Cognitive Demand Learning Environments
- Personal Learning Technology
- Family Support and Engagement Services
- Safe Schools
- Flexible Learning Experiences
- Data Driven Decision-making

Below I will articulate the various current efforts that are underway for each of these six areas.

### **High Cognitive Demand Learning Environments**

This has been an ongoing objective of our collective work across the district for nearly a decade. There are ample evidences of our progress in creating learning environments for everyone in our organization (students and adults). The cornerstone of our work is the creation and implementation of our district Learning Model. The Learning Model has become deeply engrained in our work, our communications, our documents and more importantly in our daily practice as an organization.

As an example of how our team has worked diligently on their own learning to raise the cognitive demand of the learning environments they create for students would be their work with *Making Thinking Visible* (MTV). There was a ground up effort to learn and then train our staff on the various routines that assist teachers in developing lessons that help students share, discuss and recognize their own thinking.

This effort is perfectly aligned with our district learning model and has served as an opportunity to deepen our knowledge and skill set in creating the high cognitive demand learning environments students need in order to meet the Board's Ends-1 Policy expectations.

### **Personal Learning Technology**

We continue to progress towards increasing the availability and use of personal learning technologies in the learning environments. This is much more complicated than giving students a device. Critical components of a successful effort include work necessary to change the pedagogy of the teacher in the classroom, creating a robust network backbone to support connectivity needs and increasing student skill sets to use these devices.

Over the past year we have dramatically improved our digital network backbone by expanding the connection capability out to the Internet. We have also expanded our access for students by increasing the number of devices available across the district. We have also added a middle school technology instruction specialist to help students gain the necessary skills to more fully use these devices.

Without a doubt, we are reaching a tipping point with this effort where the move to a One-to-One model (one device for each student) is rapidly approaching. There are many decisions that will need to occur as this decision point approaches, but I feel we are more ready than ever to make the next leap forward.

### **Family Support and Engagement Services**

Last year we implemented our new Family Community Resource Center (FCRC) on the K-8 campus. The program is designed to provide a clearinghouse for families that need extra support or assistance to find services quickly and easily. As with all new programs, there will be growing pains but I am very pleased with the progress that was made.

Services such as mental health counseling, food and clothing, parenting support (Love & Logic), Watch Dogs and our Jump-Start Backpack program were all provided through the FCRC. I see in the future the FCRC expanding services to families in need as our community further connects to our school through the FCRC. One area I am hoping to see is an even stronger after school learning program that blends our current programs such as ASK, Community Ed., Title I/LAP offerings and our Highly Capable programs all under the umbrella of the FCRC. There is a lot of work to be done in this area, but the potential is clearly there.

One of the moves we made this year to push the ball forward with FCRC is the hiring of a regional, state and frankly a national leader in the creation of FCRCs. Jennifer Blechschmidt as our new elementary associate principal brings with her years of experience in not only elementary education and leadership, but also her expertise and connections to expand our FCRC program. Jennifer was the person responsible for the tremendous growth and effectiveness of the Vancouver Public Schools FCRC program and I am very excited to learn from her how we can make our FCRC program grow.

### **Safe Schools**

As we have consistently done, we have worked very hard to provide a safe learning environment for all our learners. This includes continued work on anti-bullying, team building, student leadership as well as traditional school safety efforts such as emergency drills and contingency plans. Our partnership with the La Center Police Department continues to thrive in our collective efforts to ensure safety of our students and staff.

Additionally, last year we completed a security and safety audit for our entire district and have focused our efforts for this year to enhance our security cameras throughout the district. This is no small task and we want to do it right. We have worked with a vendor and have tested equipment to find the best value for the money spent. It is a big job, but one that we will make continued progress towards.

### **Flexible Learning Experiences**

As you know, last year we created our Home School Academy (HSA) to connect with students and parents who have chosen an alternative pathway for their child's education. Previously, these students only had the option to enroll in a

home-school partnership outside of our district. We were able to offer that option for our students through our HSA for the first time with positive results.

This year, we expanded our flexible learning offerings by creating a program for students who struggle in the regular learning environment through an online program we call the LINX program. This alternative pathway is our form of final safety net to help those students who are unsuccessful in the traditional learning environment to have access locally to such a program. Previously, these students needed to travel outside of the district to receive these services.

### **Data Driven Decision-making**

Over the past couple of years we have worked hard to develop a data driven decision-making model that is built around what we call Learner Success Indicators (LSIs). The focus of this effort is to help make sense of the “avalanche of data” that we have at our disposal and focus in on key signs of students’ success (LSIs).

The key concept of LSIs is to find highly connected points of data that link a student’s success to a few key benchmarks throughout their educational journey. This journey I am talking about is from the time a student enters kindergarten to the time they graduate. Therefore, our current LSI’s include:

- 1) Kindergarten readiness scores;
- 2) First grade reading scores (DIBELS);
- 3) Grades 4 and 5 reading and math scores;
- 4) Middle School accountability watch list;
- 5) 9<sup>th</sup> grader earning six or more credits; and
- 6) On-time graduation rates.

Using these LSI benchmarks are driving much of our change in programs within the buildings. In the elementary this includes Kindy Cub night and Kindy Cub Camp programs as well as our changes to our ACE learning support efforts. In the middle school LSIs have change our transition plans, accountability support efforts and our program offerings. In the high school, LSIs have change the way staff look at and discuss support changes for Freshman as well as programmatic changes such as the LINX program (detailed above). Additionally, our summer school program has been dramatically revamped due to the LSI data and what it illuminated for staff in regards to student learning needs.

I am very proud of our staff and the hard work they have put into developing new strategies and programs to meet the needs of students based on the data that has been shown from the LSIs. Without question there is a lot of work to do including consistently looking at our LSIs for progress as well as program effectiveness. Unquestionably this work is not easy, but it is exciting to say the least.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The reason why I list my efforts towards this expectation being “In Partial Compliance” is that I believe a plan is in place that accurately reflects necessary work to meet the mission of the district. These are detailed above. What I believe I need to do a better job of is to disseminate this information in a much more comprehensive way.

**2. *The superintendent shall not fail to adequately monitor progress toward achievement of the district’s mission. IN COMPLIANCE***

The mission of the La Center School District can be broken down into three parts:

- **Create a supportive learning environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential.**
- **Partnership with families, the community, staff and students**
- **Develop confident and self-reliant life-long learner who thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced and diverse society.**

The six areas of focus above are all easily connected to the three parts of the district mission. Therefore, I am confident that I am meeting this expectation. For example, I see the work and progress monitoring listed above in expectation #1 could easily fit into the following three parts of the district mission:

- 1) Create a supportive learning environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential.
  - High Cognitive Demand Learning Environments
  - Family Support and Engagement Services
  - Safe Schools
  - Flexible Learning Experiences
  - Data Driven Decision-making
- 2) Work in partnership with families, the community, staff and students.
  - Family Support and Engagement Services
  - Safe Schools
  - Flexible Learning Experiences
- 3) Develop confident and self-reliant life-long learners who thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced and diverse society.
  - High Cognitive Demand Learning Environments
  - Personal Learning Technology
  - Flexible Learning Experiences
  - Data Driven Decision-making

With this in mind, I would offer all the examples detailed in the first part of this monitoring report as ample evidence that I am working to achieve the expectations to adequately monitor progress toward the district’s mission.