Monitoring Report - Executive Limitations Policy
EL-14, Academic Program

BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION

The Superintendent shall not fail to adopt and develop an academic program for the district to enable students to meet content standards and to achieve the Board's Ends policies.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitations Policy EL-14 "Academic Program" 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 22nd, 2011.

Mark Mansell, Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

I interpret the board's expectation regarding the academic program of the district that it needs to be challenging, appropriate, and supportive to a wide-variety of learners. The academic programs must also be regularly evaluated for effectiveness. This policy also expects that I ensure the approved curriculum of the district is what the faculty teaches. I further interpret this policy to expect appropriate and timely notification of pending significant changes and/or alterations to programs or course offerings to the board and stakeholders as required.

REPORT

There are four specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each area of EL-14 as best as possible. At the time of this report, I believe that the district is in compliance with each of these Board expectations.

1. ***The superintendent shall not fail to develop and implement an academic program that is research-based, provides access and challenge for all, is complete, is culturally responsive, comprehensively uses resources, encourages innovation, and considers class size and organization.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**
   Researching, reviewing and selecting curriculum is a critically important part of the process, whether it is part of the pre-adoption or post-adoption process… but it is only a part of a larger effort. All instructional materials must be integrated into the learning environment through the teacher in support of students and then continually reviewed to determine if these materials and our awareness of how to use them are supporting students effectively.

   This past year, we have continued our work in the area of mathematics across the district utilizing a continuous improvement process. Rather than simply rely on outside agencies to tell us what are effective, research based instructional materials (which we do verify before initial adoption), we are getting stronger as an organization at focusing more on our own post-adoption research. We do this by listening to our

students and parents, reviewing what we expected from the materials adopted and comparing what the results were relative to student success and then making the necessary adjustments needed to support our students in future learning efforts. I am pleased to note that much of the "adopt materials, we teach it and if they don't learn it too bad" mindset is long gone in our district. We now see our post-adoption work as some of the most important steps in the process.

As part of this effort we are beginning to do our own "action" research on what is needed for students, what changes are necessary to make to our curriculum and instructional materials and then go about filling these needs or making the necessary adjustments called for in support of student learning. One example of this type of action research involved the feedback that some of our students failed to pass the Compass test at Clark College even though they were successful in our math program. This feedback motivated our high school math team (along with Dave Holmes) to decide they would all go down to Clark College and take the community college's Compass test for themselves so they could learn first hand what math abilities were needed for this test. Furthermore, they wanted to learn the kind of learning confidence math students need to have in order to be ready to successfully take this math entrance exam. To me, this is a great example of how our teachers are being learners for themselves first before they ask their students to learn.

Finally, selecting the instructional materials and supporting teachers through professional learning efforts utilizing information on how do our adopted materials and our professional practices support students more than ever is central to our thinking. Weaving together the professional learning structures (i.e. Lab Classroom Projects, Old Dogs, LCMGs, etc.) as an ongoing journey with the collection of evidence on student success has helped the staff reflect even more on their practice. This continues to be the centerpiece of our learning to learn model.

If we can't learn to improve our own practice as staff, then doesn't it seem odd that we would expect students to learn when we fight it ourselves? I continue to be pleased with how staff have really taken a hold of this concept and are extremely willing to change their practice and adjust in how they create learning environments when student evidence shows things are not working. In short, we assume learners want to learn and if they don't, then something with the learning environment needs to change.

2. ***The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that faculty know and teach the adopted curriculum.*** **<u>IN COMPLIANCE</u>**
As stated in #1 above, staff continues to work hard to learn, harness the potential and adjust as necessary our math instructional materials as well as other newly adopted instructional materials. Built around the concept of we as professional educators need to make sure we are learning about our own practice if we expect to maximize the opportunity for students to learn, my greatest opportunity for learning is from the district leadership team. We continue to spend the bulk of our meeting times focused on improving our own instructional practice and ability to learn. This effort has allowed us to become better as instructionally focused leaders rather than simply

managers. This shift in our focus creates a learning drive that motivates us to own the curriculum along side of staff rather than simply provide quality control. Evidence of this focus can clearly be seen each month in the principals' board reports.

3. ***The superintendent shall not fail to ensure the regular monitoring and evaluation of the academic program and make appropriate modifications in practice and content.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

   With this being our fourth year of the current math instructional materials adoption cycle, we have continued to challenge ourselves to review the effectiveness of these materials as part of working towards helping students achieve the Ends. The chronological order for this effort is communicated within the updated district "Curriculum Review Sequence" which was presented to the board previously and is linked publically on our website.

   Two current processes support the work in this area just since the recent community linkage meeting where math was a topic of discussion. Dave Holmes has met with the K-2 math teachers and developed a plan to move forward grade level by grade level to evaluate our curriculum and has a meeting set for the same review with the grade 3-5 team. As stated in #2 above, the high school math team has taken the community college's "Compass" test to help them evaluate our instructional materials and curriculum based on this test as a real life application for our students. The high school math team is now in the process of working to enhance our scope and sequence to address their findings from them personally taking this test and to then provide support for students preparing to take the Compass test as part of an outside the classroom experience.

   I would once again like to seize this opportunity to point out the fact that this idea of regular monitoring and evaluation process is actually built upon the work of the Board within the Policy Governance model. Even though I have consistently shared this point with the Board, it is worthy of repeating. The Board leading the way in the work of learning for staff has now become more of the rule rather than the exception throughout the entire organization. As a volunteer Board, please remember the importance of your commitment to this process at the Board level and how it creates powerful motivation throughout the entire organization.

4. ***The superintendent shall not fail to report to the Board (and provide sufficient advance notice to the public on) significant changes, deletions or addition of programs and courses of study.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

   I would point to board reports by our principals as well as Dave Holmes and myself, along with presentations and conversations indirectly and directly to the board as evidence of meeting this expectation.