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 23rd, 2010.

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**
   This past year saw continued work in the area of mathematics across the district to implement newly adopted curriculum. As with the prior year's review and adoption of math, this last year was spent pouring over state learning objectives for social studies and learning objectives and legal constraints around 9-12 health. Prior to consideration for adoption, all instructional materials were determined to meet minimum requirements as defined by NCLB as being scientifically research-based, even though these two areas are not covered by this act. These materials were then reviewed through the lens of what the research states as the best instructional practice to support learners.

   Researching, reviewing and selecting curriculum is a critical step in the process, but it is only a part of it. The instructional materials must then be integrated into the

learning environment through the teacher in support of students. Since both of these adoptions were upgrades or refreshers of current curriculum, traditional staff development was neither required nor would have been beneficial. The work that staff have been doing through the Lab Classroom Project to improve their practice is not only timely but is the perfect venue to fine tune the new materials and supplements that were adopted. The district leadership team continues to use the work of these teachers as they introduce new content as a focus of our own learning.

Finally, selecting the instructional materials and supporting the teacher through professional development must lead to how does it work to help students. Weaving together the professional development as an ongoing journey with collecting evidence of student success causes staff to reflect on their practice and change as necessary. 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.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**
As stated in #1 above, I have clear evidence that staff continues to work hard to learn and harness the potential of our new math instructional materials as well as last year's adjusted/newly adopted social studies and health curriculum. Built around the concept of we 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 have spent 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 report.

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**
As stated above, within the social studies and health material adoption process over the past year we applied learning from previous adoptions and made adjustments in our review, adoption and implementation processes and strategies. The two biggest changes where the relentless pursuit of parent/community involvement and student perspectives that had been previously weak. We continue this work in order to provide the best instructional materials and instructional practices for students. Our learning focus on our practice is based on the evidence provided by students. Without question, as a collective learning team of professionals we are meeting this expectation on a daily basis.

I would 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. I know I have said it previously, but it is worthy of repeating, but the board leads the way in this work and it has become more of the rule rather than the exception throughout the entire organization. As a volunteer board, you need to know the importance of your commitment to this process at the board level 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**
   Our past experience with the math instructional materials adoption and implementation process provided significant energy from stakeholders (i.e. students, staff, parents and community members), which definitely stretched our thinking and tested our processes. This last year's 9-12 health adoption was the perfect scenario to test what we learned and our commitment to parent/community and student ownership of the process. Based on our success with this process I am confident we have met the spirit of this expectation. Additionally, 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 further evidence of meeting this expectation. I am confident that when next year's K-12 language and literacy adoption begins we will have a well tested, solid process in place to evaluate, and adopt our most comprehensive curricular area that we tackle every seven years.