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 Learner Competencies so as 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 27th, 2012.

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.

   Once again this past year we have worked hard in the area of mathematics across the district utilizing a continuous improvement process. Specifically we evaluated a number of home practice workbooks that could be used to supplement our current math adoption as we had identified home practice of algorithms as a weak link. This

has resulted in finding an on-line resource that is currently being piloted by 13 teachers in the elementary. 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. In addition to the on going math focus we spent a considerable amount of time reviewing our literacy adoption. The heterogeneous group of stakeholders determined that our current reading adoption was performing very well and they subsequently focused on K-8 writing. Representatives from each grade levels worked in partnership over the summer to connect our current writing adoption to the new state Common Core Standards. We are now in the process of identifying instructional materials that will help address any deficiencies found during this process.

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. As Dave Holmes likes to say, we expect every learning environment leader to be an "educational scientist". Forming a hypothesis about the learning environment, making a change, evaluating the outcome and adopting or discarding the change. We are seeing much more of this thinking across the district.

2. ***The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that faculty know and teach the adopted curriculum.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

As stated in #1 above, staff continues to work hard at learning about their own practice, harnessing the resulting energy and adjusting as necessary our instructional materials. As a district we have offered 37 different professional learning opportunities "in district" selected by and created for our staff over the last 16 months. This kind of internal energy to learn is what drives our improvement to learning environments across the district. 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 continues to come 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 fifth 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 around math are examples of the work in this area. As pointed out in #1 above, the piloting of on-line resources identified by the collegial work of staff to address the current math curriculum shortfall is one. As a second, based on last year's work and investigation around the compass test at the high school level, we have created a "Compass class". This class is for students to take immediately before taking the Compass test. The high school math team continues 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 so that the class as an "add-on" will not be necessary.

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 on going 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.