Monitoring Report - Executive Limitations Policy
EL-17, Student Conduct and Discipline

BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION

The Superintendent shall not fail to establish a school environment that is safe, civil, supportive, conducive to effective teaching and learning, and free from unnecessary disruption.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitations Policy EL-17 "Student Conduct and Discipline" in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true as of February 23rd, 2010.

Mark Mansell, Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

I interpret the board's expectation regarding student conduct and discipline to mean that the district must make intentional and consistent efforts to create and enforce student behavior standards that are conducive to a high quality learning environment and support the accomplishment of the board's Ends policies. I further interpret this expectation to mean that if the behavior of a student is inappropriate, district staff must design and implement discipline action(s) aimed at changing student behavior in a manner that quickly refocus the student back onto their responsibility as a learner.

REPORT

There are two broad expectations with a total of thirteen specific sub-areas described in this policy. The following will address each area of EL-17 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 may not fail to adopt an age-appropriate, written, student conduct and discipline code that complies with state and federal laws, nor fail to:***

   a. ***Consult with staff, students, and the community in developing the code.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**
   Within each school, commitment to having an up-to-date student conduct code continues to be strong. The principals work hard to continually listen to staff, students and parents in regard to determining acceptable behaviors, effective discipline and the development of appropriate solutions. This listening occurs within building council meetings, parent meetings, board meetings and linkages with students, parents and community which all provide opportunities for learning about how the code is working and/or how to make it better. Principals also use periodic surveys (internal and external) to gathering information from stakeholders on school environment and discipline concerns. Over the past couple of years, the student linkage meetings have

proven to provide some of the best information and perspectives about our organizational practices, including the student code of conduct.

b. ***Establish procedures to prohibit the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products on school property, at school-sponsored events, and on school buses.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

Based on the discipline reports and the few appeal hearings I must hold, I believe the current code of conduct in our student handbooks articulate the expectations that school buildings and grounds are drug-free, alcohol-free and tobacco-free zones. As per state law, all school facilities are marked with appropriate signage displaying this expectation. The district also has written policy (district policies 3240, 3240P and 4215) detailing this expectation as per state law. Going beyond our policies and procedures, I believe our commitment to keeping illegal substances out of our schools is founded on the sense of ownership of the schools our students have. The words of students at the linkage meetings are clear examples of this sense of ownership.

c. ***Establish procedures to prohibit the presence of firearms or other dangerous weapons on school property, at school-sponsored events, and on school buses*.** **IN COMPLIANCE**

The code of conduct and district policy are very clear about the expectation that the school building and grounds are gun-free and weapon-free zones. As per state law, all school facilities are marked with appropriate signage displaying this expectation. As stated above, the district also has a written policy (district policy 4210) detailing this expectation as per state law. Our zero tolerance policy has historically proven to be effective in addressing this expectation.

d. ***Establish an appropriate dress code that is enforced.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

As you can imagine, student fashion is a constantly moving target. The student handbooks for each building effectively describe appropriate school attire. Staff annually reviews the dress code for students in each building. Each building has addressed violations in their own specific way, but the message is clear that appropriate dress at school is expected.

e. ***Establish procedures to afford students, parents, and school personnel equitable treatment and due process with regard to student conduct and discipline issues.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

In many districts there has developed a strong rule/legal focus for dealing with issues of student conduct and discipline. In our district, as a general rule we are very fortunate to have a preponderance of students and parents who take seriously the concept of personal responsibility. As a result, a culture of informal processes has become the rule rather than the exception when working with students and parents on violations of the code of conduct. As a key bi-product of the informal process, there is greater encouragement to develop custom interventions that are focused on the student learning new appropriate behavior rather than simply being put into "black and white" consequences. This model still honors the student's due process rights because it is woven into an informal process in a way that works.

f. ***Establish procedures for student interrogations, searches, and arrests.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

Our principals have a long and proven track record of balancing the desire to support and be advocates for students with the need to get good information about possible violations of the student code of conduct. An example of this is to have two or more adults present (with at least one being of the gender of the student) during searches. In my experience, our students are typically very forthcoming with information, which I believe is a reflection of the relationship staff and administrators have with students and parents.

g. ***Establish procedures for written appeal to the Board from a decision to expel, suspend, or deny admission to a student.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

District policy (3241P) details the process for appealing a decision to expel, suspend, or deny admission to a student. As stated above, issues are almost always addressed at the building level in informal ways through joint efforts with the student, parents and the principal.

h. ***Distribute the conduct and discipline code to each student.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

All students receive copies of the student handbook at the start of the year (or when they enroll as a new student during the school year). For both middle school and high school students, the handbook is part of their required planners. In the elementary, our teachers go over the handbook with students in class. Any new students who arrive after the start of the school year also receive this information as part of their registration process.

i. ***Distribute to each student copies of any significant changes in the code, to include changes at the school level.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

Because our processes are well established, only minor changes are made each year, which occur when the student handbooks are published for the upcoming year. Therefore, all changes are communicated during each building's start-up processes.

2. The Superintendent may not fail to ensure that the code is enforced, nor fail to:

a. ***Take appropriate measures to eliminate student behavior that is deemed to be habitually disruptive of school operations or the learning process.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**

Each building has their unique strategies to support students to learn appropriate behaviors. For example, the elementary may enroll students in "recess school" for issues that deal with the playground. By contrast, the high school may have students pick up trash in the parking lot. Both are attempts to remind students of their responsibilities as a student and help them learn.

b. Identify students at risk of failure due to their conduct, and to provide for support services which may help them avoid such failure. **IN COMPLIANCE**

Over the course of the past year-and-a-half, we have spent energy working to improve our systemic effort to meet the needs of struggling students through what is known as the RTI (Response To Intervention) process. As a result, staff, parents, administrators and the student needing support work together to create an intervention plan to help them avoid failure.

c. Discipline a special education student in accordance with the student's IEP. **IN COMPLIANCE**

The district continues to be part of the ESD 112 Special Education Co-op to provide services for our high needs students. We continue to work closely with our ESD colleagues to take a more systemic approach to meeting the needs of our special education students. As part of this work, we initiated a learning initiative with the ESD to better understand how to better support students on IEPs in the classroom. We believe that when these students are better supported as learners, we will have fewer discipline issues in the first place. When they do occur, our partnership with the ESD, our strong student IEP teams, as well as our procedures and protocols do an effective job of helping us remain within the parameters of the IEP.

d. Ensure that appropriate disciplinary information is communicated to staff members who have direct contact with the student being disciplined. **IN COMPLIANCE**

For those staff members needing to know about discipline actions beyond student intervention teams, principals use a variety of communication options (e.g. via email, staff meetings and/or individual conferences) depending on the severity of the situation and the staff's need to know.