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 26th, 2013.

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**
   Each school has a student conduct code that is modified as needed and submitted to the board for approval prior to being printed and distributed to students, staff and parents. Our principals work hard to listen to staff, students and parents in regards to determining acceptable behaviors, effective discipline and in the development of appropriate solutions. These discussions occur in a variety of settings including building council meetings, parent meetings, board meetings and linkages with students, parents and community. These conversations, both directly and indirectly about student conduct provide opportunities for learning about how the code is working and/or how to make it better. Our principals also use periodic surveys

(internal and external) to gathering information from stakeholders on school environment and discipline concerns. Student linkage meetings and school leadership groups continue to be the best and strongest sources of feedback to our principals in their efforts to listen to students about the type of school environment that will best serve the broader student population.

***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**

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.

With the recent passage of state initiative 502 (legalization of marijuana), the district took the stand that marijuana is still an illegal substance for all students and smoking of any type is prohibited on campus by anyone of any age. Additionally, we receive federal funds and marijuana is still considered illegal in the eyes of the federal government. Failure to uphold federal law would jeopardize these funds and put the district in a financial liable situation.

***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.

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

Dress code enforcement is usually a hot topic in many of the district's I have served in. However, over the eight years that I have served here in the district, this topic has rarely been an issue. Staff, students and parents as a general rule have a common sense of what is appropriate attire for school. When we do have situations when students might push the limits, I feel our principals handle it appropriately and swiftly. With all this common effort, we continue to enjoy limited issues with dress code violations.

***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**

We continue to be 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. This effort to keep focused on solutions to support student success rather than punishment to provide external motivation to comply has resulted in many customized solutions to keep everyone on track in order to do their respective jobs in the learning process. 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 continue to work hard to find the balance between respecting student rights and ensuring that all students are safe. They consistently work closely with the La Center police department when serious issues arise. They also take appropriate and responsible steps when doing investigations. As an example of this, our administrators have two or more adults present (with at least one being of the gender of the student) during searches. With this in mind, our students consistently are very forthcoming with information when confronted, which I believe is a reflection of the relationship staff and administrators have with students and parents. In short, I continue to be very pleased with the common respect stakeholders have for each other and our school environment.

*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. When they do reach the district office level, I continue to find parents and students are solution focused and as a general rule very willing to do the right thing regardless of whether it makes their path easier or not.

*h.* ***Distribute the conduct and discipline code to each student.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**
All students receive a copy 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. For the middle school, teachers also go over the handbook with students at the start of the year. At the high school, administrators go around to each of the classes to review the handbook. 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 with students and staff 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**
   With our focus on student centered learning environments and high student engagement in addressing any school issues, a collective effort of students and staff with lots of parental engagement occurs in our schools around finding solutions to conflicts. Each building takes on this work in different ways, but the general motivation is the same. We see challenges or conflicts within our schools as learning opportunities for everyone and the best way to turn the negative energy behind many of these issues into positive requires a team effort rather than a top-down process. I continue to be very proud of our students and staff in their work to transform many issues into learning opportunities and thereby not only make the learning environment better, but more focused on learning.

   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**
   We use a RTI (Response To Intervention) process to identify and support struggling students before failure occurs. Whether it is at the elementary, middle or high school level, our staff and administrators continue to work hard to be proactive in taking action in advance of failure.

   c. ***Discipline a special education student in accordance with the student's IEP.*** **IN COMPLIANCE**
   The district is part of the ESD 112 Special Education ESA that provides services for our high needs students. We continue to focus on putting the student back into the center of our IEP (Individual Education Plan) process rather than doing the paperwork to drive compliance or protect the district. This is another example of our culture moving towards Learning instead of Compliance. Put simply, we believe that if learning is our focus and the student is central to the process, the legalistic (compliance focused) way of doing business will diminish and the energy required to achieve a level of "protection" for the district can be spent on supporting the student.

   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.