Monitoring Report - Ends Policy
E-1, District Mission

BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION

The mission of the La Center School District is to create a supportive learning environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential. We will do this in partnership with families, the community, employees and students to develop life-long learners who can thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced and diverse society.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby present my monitoring report on Ends Policy E-1 "District Mission" in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true as of July 19th, 2011.

Mark Mansell, Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

I interpret the district mission to serve as a written description of the overarching purpose of the organization as well as the manner in which district personnel will operate in the process of accomplishing this stated purpose. The results are to be derived from the creation and/or maintenance of a supportive learning environment for students, which connects and harnesses the energy of the adults around the students (staff, parents and community members) in a way that garners a broad based effort to prepare students for a future where their ability to learn will be more valued than their accumulated knowledge.

REPORT – IN COMPLIANCE

There are no specific delineated requirements with this Ends policy as there are with all the others. However, to fully give a report on this expectation I would like to discuss the three major sections that are clearly written into this policy. Broadly stated, these sections relate to a *supportive learning environment*, *partnership with stakeholders* and the creation of *life-long learners*.

I believe that a *supportive learning environment* is the cornerstone of the La Center School District. Examples of this would be our continued small class sizes as a general rule even though we continue to face steep budget cuts from the state. Our move to all-day kindergarten also shows our commitment to our students and the successful start we strive to provide them. Further examples include continued expansion of AP courses, consistent support for Outdoor School, our Challenge Course, Project Study program at the high school and on-line credit recovery courses. Finally one more significant commitment the district makes based on strong community support is with our counseling program. We have tripled the counselors (one to three) over the past five years in support of both the social/emotional as well as the academic needs of our students. These are just a few

of the many efforts our staff and community provide our students so they can have a high quality, student centered learning environment.

The second portion of the requirements within this policy is to have a strong *partnership with stakeholders* of the district. If the supportive learning environment is the cornerstone, then our partnership with stakeholders is the foundation. With this in mind, I would say that this partnership is as strong as ever. A few great examples of this strength over the past year would be the initiation of the Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students) Program within our elementary school. This is an effort to connect dads with elementary students for a day by bringing them into the school to help with everything from announcements, to playground supervision, to having lunch with students. This has been a very positive addition to our team and we have all benefited from their efforts. The feedback I have received from many of these dads, students and staff has been very positive. Another great example of this partnership focus was with what I call our team of eight moms who worked with our kindergarten team and elementary administrators to review and help us sort through the decision to move to all-day kindergarten. This wonderful group of moms (all who will have students in kindergarten this fall) really grilled us about this concept and ultimately recommended that the move to all-day kindergarten was really the best move for students. This feedback was critical to us moving forward with this endeavor. Finally, as with every year, so many of our parents and community members were involved in school and our students' lives at just about every turn. From student led conferences to special projects such as science fair or bird fair, from fundraisers to parent training events such as Drug/alcohol Awareness, Volunteer Training or Love & Logic classes; we enjoy great community support and connections that help create a strong foundation for our schools and the students we serve.

The third and final section of this policy is around developing *life-long learners*. Spring-boarding off of the first two expectations of this policy articulated above, our district has made great strides in helping our students truly move towards building the skills necessary to become life-long learners. Our district learning model is now built on this goal to help students develop the skills necessary to become independent thinkers and learners for a lifetime. Our work on Core Competencies for a Life-long Learner (See draft below) is a prime example of this shift in our thinking. These competencies will soon be the key targets for every learning environment across the district. The energy around this concept has been building for many years now and it feels as though we are on the cusp of a major breakthrough in our collective thinking as a system. Whether in kindergarten or AP physics, I am confident that the focus of our staff is on creating learning environments where students are expected and challenged to think rather than simply to know.

La Center School District – Core Competencies of a Life-long Learner

1. Students will develop thinking abilities (Cognitive Demand):

A. Higher thinking (analyze, evaluate, classify, predict, decide, estimate, generalize, solve, compare, simplify, design, cause/effect, etc.).

B. Communications (present, persuade, collaborate, publish, recommend, demonstrate, describe, debate, explain, elaborate, etc.).

C. Goal setting/attainment (brainstorm, envision, research, plan, organize, persist, etc.).

D. Use a quality process (plan, draft, analyze, and revise) when producing products.

2. Students will become an effective navigator (consumer and producer) of information within the collective body of knowledge (Flow of Information):

A. Be able to use a five-step problem-solving process (identify variables, locate facts, evaluate information, create solutions/opinions and test concepts).

B. Be able to conduct, produce and present research (locate and organize information, write, support, present thinking in a variety of mediums).

C. Be able to utilize charts, graphs, tables, manipulatives, equipment, models and other resources within the problem-solving process.

D. Possess technical skills to:

- Read/write with skill and present with confidence: instructions, charts, thank you letters, letters of request, letters of response, proposals, lab reports, research reports, technical documents, summaries, graphs, etc.

- Utilize technology: word processing, database, Internet, AV production, etc.