

### **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-8 “Student Safety, Attendance, 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 14th, 2020.

Dave Holmes, Superintendent

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY**

I interpret the board’s expectation regarding student safety, attendance, conduct and discipline to mean that the district must make intentional and consistent efforts to ensure students have a safe learning environment, provide supports and encouragement to students to attend school, as well as create and enforce student behavior standards that are conducive to a high quality learning environment for everyone. 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 will quickly refocus the student back onto their responsibility as a learner. Lastly, we must continually adapt our discipline model and successful interventions to meet changing state law and researched best practices.

### **REPORT**

There are four specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area of EL-8 as best as possible. At the time of this report, I believe that the district is in compliance with the Board’s expectations.

1. ***The superintendent shall not fail to have in place comprehensive school safety plans and hold regularly scheduled safety drills and trainings to prepare for anticipated situations. IN COMPLIANCE***

The district continues to have a long and successful record of training, preparing for and responding appropriately in emergency situations. Luckily we have not had to respond to any critical emergencies over the last year, but our ongoing preparation and training continues. Credit goes to our staff and students for taking emergency preparations seriously and working together to practice and test our readiness. As usual our schools have completed multiple fire drills, lock-down drills, an earthquake drill as well as a shelter in place drill as required by state law.

We are currently working on reviewing our reunification plans and having met multiple times with a district team already this year. We conducted our first “simulation” last month on this new plan. We will continue fine tuning the plan and will be drilling again in late spring at which time the drill will include a limited number of students and parents. Next fall, we will run the drill with the entire P-8 campus and then the HS campus. As part of this review, we have identified new staff team leaders and responsibilities and created “grab and go” backpacks for each of those team leaders. These backpacks contain all needed items to carry out a successful reunification of students with guardians in a real emergency situation. I would like to thank the elementary PTO for their donations to making these kits available.

2. ***The superintendent shall not fail to develop an age-appropriate student attendance plan and regularly monitor attendance patterns in order to maintain high student attendance rates.*** IN COMPLIANCE

Our staff continues to work hard to both monitor and address all attendance issues with students. When a student is absent, morning notifications via School Messenger go home for students in grades K-5. In grades 6-12, administrators also use School Messenger to call home to parents and inform them of an absence that school day. This way parents are kept informed of absences. Furthermore, when absences become severe (10 or more absences in a semester) or chronic (18 or more in a year), additional steps are taken to encourage better attendance. This would include developing specific written attendance plans developed by staff with parents to help encourage better attendance.

The state measures attendance by reporting what they call “regular attendance”. Students are considered to attend regularly if they average less than 2 absences per month. We have 87.6% of our students attending regularly. This is a 1.7% improvement over last year.

For comparison:

	District Wide	Elementary	Middle School	High School
La Center	87.6	90.0	90.0	82.7
State Average	82.8	87.0	83.9	75.6
Ridgefield	84.4	88.6	82.8	78.5
Vancouver	78.4	83.1	79.3	70.2
Evergreen	72.1	78.7	78.8	60.0

Students with multiple parent-excused absences are required to provide documentation from a qualified medical practitioner stating reasons for absences once they reach chronic status. (see above) We continue our efforts to seek legal actions through the courts (BECCA Law) to seek support for those students with chronic absenteeism even though we find the process to be primarily ineffective. Our expanded counseling program, especially at the elementary, has continued to see results in improved attendance by focusing on teaching better habits of attendance which yields better school attendance patterns. I believe we are a leader in this area!

3. ***The superintendent shall not fail to adopt an age-appropriate, written student conduct and discipline code that complies with state and federal laws. IN COMPLIANCE***

Our principals and myself have worked very diligently over the past four years to keep their student handbooks and board policies current and on target with changing needs and laws. A great example of this is the board update to policy 4215 “Use of Tobacco, nicotine products and delivery devices”. The update in this policy last year has led to a huge decrease in Vaping and the resulting discipline that inturn resulted in loss of instructional time last year due to this habit. The policy gave our administrators the tools they needed to address this new issue effectively. Our elementary school worked very hard over the last couple of years to design a more cohesive and effective student discipline and behavior plan that continues to yield good results even during a time when the number of students with severe behavior issues continues to rise. There has been a dramatic turn around in both student suspensions and restraints at the elementary this year! You will see the statistics on these numbers elsewhere in principal board reports.

4. ***The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that the student conduct code is enforced. IN COMPLIANCE***

I believe our record of discipline code enforcement over the years has been very good. Our staff and administrators work closely with students and parents (as well as law enforcement when needed) to focus students who make poor choices on ways to get back on track. I would note that due to administrators working with parents and students as a team, we have had no superintendent or board appeals over the last two years of any disciplinary action. In short, I believe we work hard at operating from the perspective that discipline is something you do for someone, not something you do to someone. I am confident that we do a good job of staying on top of enforcing the student conduct code and therefore we are in compliance with this expectation.