

E-4 Social Skills Development

BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION

The Board expects each student to develop the social skills to be a confident and self-reliant learner in a complex and rapidly changing world.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby present my monitoring report on Ends Policy E-4 "Social Skills Development" in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true as of October 20th, 2020.

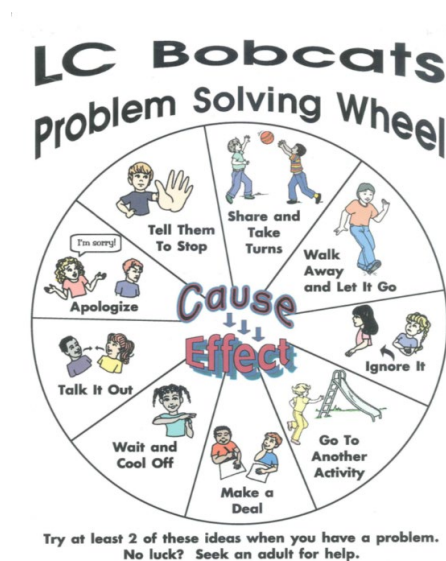
Dave Holmes, Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

I interpret Social Skills Development to mean the board expects each student to graduate with the social skills and knowledge that will support their effort for effective lifelong learning. They will have skills that allow them to be successful in the workplace, in personal relationships and various social settings. This will be met by students having access to a wide range of experiences that will provide the necessary learning opportunities for each of the following four areas.

REPORT – There are four specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area of Ends-4 as best as possible. **In Compliance**

1. Students will be able to share, negotiate solutions to problems, respect the uniqueness of others and act assertively in support of their own learning in a manner that invites positive relationships.



Students in the elementary are exposed at an early age to being able to share, negotiate solutions to problems and respect the uniqueness of others. Students who disagree at recess or in the classroom are exposed to the problem solving wheel. The wheel helps students to understand options when they might encounter a problem. Students are also taught monthly lessons in the themes of the month through the Character Strong Curriculum. This year's themes are empathy, self-awareness, patience, perseverance, respect, compassion, gratitude, courage, responsibility and curiosity.

Last year, we created a position called the Student Success Specialist. This position is being filled by Joni Hancock and focuses on student soft skills that align exactly with this end's expectation. Being only 1 year into this program we saw huge reductions in discipline referrals in K-3 last year and we attributed this reduction directly to this work. We continue this work even in distance learning mode.

The middle school students also receive lessons in “CharacterStrong.” Servant-leadership and character development are the focus of the program. These tools will move students in the direction of being more positive and caring individuals. When students develop their social and emotional skills, their grades go up and bad behavior goes down. The 8 focus areas in middle school of “CharacterStrong” are patience, kindness, honesty, respect, selflessness, forgiveness, humility and commitment.

The high school, as mentioned earlier also adopted “CharacterStrong” this year and it dovetails nicely with the student select group known as WAC (Wildcats Achieving Connections). This group is made up of a variety of students from all grades and social groups that work on the improvement of the school climate and culture.

These skills that students are learning at a young age across all three buildings are able to be built upon as they move through to adulthood.

2. Develop a deep awareness of the factors that will guide their personal actions in regards to substance use, sexuality, respect of others, compassion for others, and honesty.

Again I would cite the programs mentioned above regarding honesty, respect and compassion for others. Student awareness of substance abuse and sexuality are learned in health classes and the effectiveness to some extent can be measured through the Healthy Youth Survey. The increase in our district wide counseling staff continues to make a huge difference in our ability to help students in all of these areas. In three years ,we’ve gone from three to five full time counselors K-12. Our number of drug offenses across the district has dropped dramatically over the last three years.

3. Establish their capabilities to make decisions within and as leaders of groups.

Student-led ASB groups offer opportunities for students to be leaders from middle through high school. The elementary school utilizes their Bobcat Ambassadors as school leaders for students beginning in 4th grade. Our middle school has opportunities as our “Blue Crew” representatives. High school now has the WAC group. Our sports programs offer students leadership roles such as team captains. These opportunities offer students the opportunity to develop leadership skills necessary for personal growth. The largest and most wide reaching impact in this area is provided by the structure of our classrooms on a daily basis. Instruction and student learning is often designed with a team and leadership aspect around a project. The responsibilities within those teams are rotated sometimes by students and sometimes by staff. We try to put students in a real world setting daily to prepare them for the environment and working conditions they will see upon graduation. We have become very proficient at creating “teamwork” and not “group work”.

4. Demonstrate effective communication skills, be a flexible thinker and an effective team member within a group work/learning environment.

Students are able to demonstrate effective communication skills at their student-led conferences where they communicate what they have experienced in their own learning and possible goals with parents and teachers.

The focus on PBL (problem based learning) in our STEM initiative organizes students into groups or teams. This allows students to collaborate on assignments and challenge each other's work ethic. Students are able to share their ideas openly and develop skills in this exchange of opinions and ideas. Additionally students K-12 have the opportunity on a regular basis to work as a team member, take leadership roles when appropriate, exercise effective communication skills and be flexible in their thinking and the roles they play in these teams. This area is definitely a challenge during distance learning, but we continue to look for new ideas and ways to implement these opportunities until we return in person.