

Monitoring Report - Executive Limitations Policy
EL-7, District/School Improvement Plans

BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION

The Superintendent shall not fail to produce an annual written District/School Improvement Plan (D/SIP) that articulates the strategies, expected outcomes and responsible personnel that are being initiated and monitored for achieving the mission of the district.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitations Policy EL-7 “District/School Improvement Plans” 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 this expectation regarding district/school improvement plans to mean the board believes it is important for the district to have an overall strategy or framework for improvement so as to systematically work toward achieving the district’s mission as stated in Board Policy Ends 1 through 4. In addition, the district has a philosophy and leadership model that is adhered to in the implementation of the framework and strategy.

REPORT

There are two specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area of EL-7 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 develop, disseminate, share and implement strategies that will achieve the Board’s Ends policies. IN COMPLIANCE***

There are six broad areas of focus that we are working on as an organization to achieve the Board’s Ends Policies. Most of these have been ongoing efforts that have been occurring for many years. Without a doubt, we have made consistent and steady progress towards implementing these changes/improvements in deep and meaningful ways. The five broad areas of focus for organizational improvement are:

- High Cognitive Demand Learning Environments
- Personal Learning Technology
- Safe Schools
- Support for Struggling Learners (SEL has become a focus of this area)
- Data Driven Decision-making

High Cognitive Demand Learning Environments

This continues to be an ongoing objective of our collective work across the district as it has for over a decade. This has led to the adoption of a three year STEM strategic implementation plan. We believe that the “new” STEM pedagogy will build on the vision of the La Center learning model and the base for classroom instruction the learning model has created across the district. Although the pandemic and the transition stopped our plan part way through the first year, we are poised to continue once we have some normality to our system.

I continue to meet with every new hire to the district, both classified and certified, before they begin employment. At that meeting I review our district mission and our Ends policies. I have a primary focus on the three legs of the learning model “stool,” increasing cognitive demand, student to student information and being an “educational scientist!” This conversation always resonates with our new hires and sets the stage for them to begin serving students with the same vision as the rest of our staff.

Personal Learning Technology and Skills

This is the one area that the pandemic and distance learning has been a benefit to our entire district. The distance learning model was the impetus to finally take the deep dive in the “one-to-one” initiative for all students. We spent most of the summer gearing up for the distribution of over 1000 chromebooks to our students across the K-12 grades. The distribution went really well and we are now in a great position when we return to in person instruction. In addition our staff has put in an incredible amount of effort to get up to speed on the distance learning model. This model relies heavily on the “Core 4” of Google classroom, Zoom, Flipgrid and Google drive. Our staff has worked diligently to become experts in these platforms. All of this will be a huge asset to our entire district once we return in person.

Safe Schools

Clark County Safe Schools day in August was cancelled this year, but we continue to focus on a “safety scenario” every week at our leadership meetings. We discuss various situations that are common and sometimes uncommon in schools and learn from each other how to best respond to these various scenarios. We continue to stay abreast of the latest research and response to bullying in our schools and Lauri Landerholm continues to be our resident expert in this area attending the best professional training offered in our region. In addition, we have expanded our Character Strong program to the high school as part of a renewed commitment to SEL (social emotional learning) as we try to combat the impact distance learning is having on our students emotionally.

Support For Struggling Learners

We were well on our way to implementing and seeing good results from our plan in this area before school was closed down and we will continue to implement once we are back in person. As of October 29th the Clark County DOH is supportive of bringing back our kindergarten students in groups of 10 or less. This will allow us to bring them back every other day for a full day in person. Additionally, we have created “internet cafes” in each of our schools for families and students who do not have connectivity. The rest of the plan looks like this:

Students who struggle in their learning in Grades P-12 will be analyzed and provided support through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Student Intervention Teams.

- Building teams collaborate with formative assessment data on potential Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports that can occur in the general education classroom.
- Title 1 building wide program for LCES
- Work with students to mitigate barriers to student learning through a tiered system of support. Assist with students becoming self-sufficient in their efforts to support themselves in their own learning.

Measurement:

- Special Education Referral Rates (Movement to Tier 3)
- Movement between Tier 1 & Tier 2
- Survey / Perception Data
- ES Panorama

This goal continues to be supported by the change from a focused Title/LAP program to the schoolwide plan two years ago in the elementary. This was a huge success last year in student recovery and achievement borne out of the data. The SIT (student intervention team) and the MTSS (multi-tiered system of support) teams continue to focus weekly on students at all grade levels that are struggling with academic success.

Data Driven Decision-making

We continue to implement a data driven decision-making model that is built around Learner Success Indicators (LSIs).

The key concept of LSIs is to find highly connected points of data that link a student’s success to a few key benchmarks throughout their educational journey.

- 1) First grade reading scores (DIBELS);
- 2) Reading at grade level in grade 3
- 3) Performing in math at grade level in grade 5
- 4) Middle school accountability watch list; (previously referred to as the promotion standards)
- 5) Ninth graders earning six or more credits; and
- 6) On-time graduation rates.

All of these data points were thrown into chaos due to the closure of school so for the most part they are not being used as intended. We are looking a little deeper under the surface and anecdotally to find information or examples that will help us adjust during the distance learning model as we move forward until this all ends.

Mr. DiStefano continues to offer a zero hour class three days a week during the first semester for college bound juniors and seniors to prepare scholarship materials and college admissions paperwork even during this distance learning situation.

Overall as an administrative team, we continue to ask the question, “What does the data say?” As mentioned above, the data collected from the first part of last year is incomplete and the close down has left us with looking for new and different data that can guide us during distance learning. Once we return in person this plan remains positive and well positioned to move us forward.

2. ***The superintendent shall not fail to adequately monitor progress toward achievement of the district’s mission. IN COMPLIANCE***

The mission of the La Center School District can be broken down into three parts:

- **Create a supportive learning environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential.**
- **Partnership with families, the community, staff and students.**
- **Develop confident and self-reliant lifelong learners who thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced and diverse society.**

The five areas of focus above in section 1 are all easily connected to the three parts of the district mission. Therefore, I am confident that we are meeting this expectation. For example, I see the work and progress monitoring listed above in expectation #1 could easily fit into the following three parts of the district mission:

- 1) Create a supportive learning environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential.
 - High cognitive demand learning environments
 - Personal learning technology and skills
 - Safe Schools through continued focus on the latest research and implementation through practice
 - Support for struggling learners
 - Data driven decision-making that demands we have clear and defensible reasoning behind our pathway to change. This helps avoid those “seat of the pants” or “it feels right” decisions.

- 2) Work in partnership with families, the community, staff and students.
 - Family Support and Engagement Services through increased counseling services. This has been much more successful than the very costly “family resource model” previously used.
 - Safe Schools through professional development and good, consistent communication with students and parents.
 - Flexible Learning Experiences designed to make sure that unique learners don’t “fall between the cracks.” Examples could be special education, highly capable learning opportunities, Running Start, Cascadia Technical, etc. The expansion of our home school academy and in some cases the distance learning model has been an improved experience for some students.

- 3) Develop confident and self-reliant lifelong learners who thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced and diverse society.
 - High cognitive demand learning environments across grade bands and curricular departments, shifting focus to STEM again once back in school.
 - Personal learning technology that exposes students to “real world technology and applications”, improved by the “one-to-one” initiative.
 - Support for struggling learners, through internet cafes and small groups of students, five or less, across the district where appropriate and the ability to bring back kindergarten ASAP.
 - Data driven decision-making so that we get it right the first time. In our rapidly changing society, we can’t afford “do-overs.”

With this in mind, I would offer all the examples detailed in the first part of this monitoring report as ample evidence that we are working to achieve the expectations to adequately monitor progress toward the district’s mission.

The monthly EL reports in all areas, even though some are not directly connected back to EL-7, are all connected back to the district’s mission. These EL reports provide an ongoing review of the district’s work, successes and illuminate needs for change on a regular and cyclical basis.

Finally, I am very proud of our entire staff that began looking at data and student needs in the spring of 2018 to create the first district wide improvement plan in over a decade. This year, our third, now establishes an expectation and a calendaring of this work annually. Had we not been upended by the school closure we were poised to report huge progress on all of our goals. That said, we did make significant progress and are ready to “re-implement” upon return.