

Monitoring Report - Executive Limitations Policy
EL - 8, Student Safety, Attendance, 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-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 18, 2020.

Peter Rosenkranz, Superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT’S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

I interpret the board’s expectations regarding student safety, attendance, conduct, and discipline to mean that the district collaborates and innovates ways to integrate new ideas into established practices to meet the needs of more students so they are able to feel safe and continue learning. Additionally, I interpret this expectation to provide a healthy environment physically and emotionally. COVID has provided many challenges, most of which are out of our control as a school district. I continue to provide options that balance what is required by law and what makes sense for the students of La Center. Lastly, we continue to build systems that incorporate new ideas, create learning experiences from disciplinary events, and support students who can learn from a variety of situations and challenges.

REPORT

There are four specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area in 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 training to prepare for anticipated situations. IN COMPLIANCE

The schools within the district continue to hold monthly safety drills such as fire, earthquake, lockdown, and shelter in place. To supplement the drills, we conduct tabletop safety scenarios with the district administrative team during our leadership team meetings. Various scenarios provide real-life examples to practice potential situations. This builds trust among our administrative staff in times of calm before the crisis hits.

Currently, schools have the “grab and go” backpacks to support team leaders in preparation for a large-scale emergency event. Prior executive limitations called on conducting a student reunification drill, however, the continuation of COVID mandates has prevented follow through as much of our energy has been focused on making up the gap created by the mandated shut down and masking requirements. We will look to the future for planning this event or some facsimile or smaller version of a large-scale practice.

Finally, we have monitored, followed, and managed state mandates throughout the COVID pandemic. We have been stellar in providing environments that are in line with the recommendation from the state Department of Health. Additionally, we have pushed the envelope within the parameters to return students to in-person classrooms before anyone in the county. We established test to stay protocols to take advantage of the ability to keep kids in school in the face of detrimental contact tracing protocols. We have reviewed peer-reviewed articles and data to support advocacy for students and families to end onerous mandates at the state level.

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

We have been in person for this entire school year. Students and staff were both excited to get back to some sense of normalcy with in-person learning. Clearly, remote learning is not an option that works well for student learning. We faced a two-fold challenge this year, even though we were in person. Primarily, contact tracing placed many students out of school due to state regulations on contact tracing and at times sent students home who were perfectly healthy. We became one of a few districts in the region to move to Test to Stay which

mitigated to some degree the absences around contact tracing. The second impact on attendance was in actual positive cases of COVID and the Omicron mutation of the COVID-19 virus. Our staff worked diligently through a variety of strategies to support kids' make-up work that was missed. We continue to make use of Google Classroom to keep parents informed and we had many staff members choose to zoom and room, although that was not required. The challenges to zoom and room (keep students engaged in-person and on zoom) are not sustainable long term fixes for the mandated absences.

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

The principals have worked to ensure the handbooks match the needs of students and staff to reinforce appropriate student conduct that promotes a quality learning environment. The rules and laws around student discipline have changed and our policy reflects those changes. We will continue to interpret and adapt as necessary with current research to reinforce quality student behavior. COVID social distancing (which should have been called physical distancing) has proved to be challenging as students needed to relearn expectations and continue to do so PK-12. Lauri Landerholm, who is working on her superintendent credentials, has done some amazing work in the middle school reducing the number of disciplinary incidents or “red cards” prior to the move to the new middle school and prior to COVID. Specifically, she has been working on restorative practices using a learning approach to behavior as opposed to one that is punitive in nature. As this year has progressed, Lauri has continued that work within the new building adjusting for the impacts of COVID. The addition of Dave MacIntosh, paid for with ESSER funds, has been very helpful with the increased demands on our administrative teams within the parameters of COVID. Most recently, Lauri has met with the high school teachers to provide alternative options for students and staff, sharing the learning from the middle school. Our elementary school continues to use Purposeful People to promote character traits such as kindness and personal responsibility. Mike and Greg have done amazing work incorporating the paraeducators from our Title I program in supporting behavior at recess, connecting student behavior back to the classroom, and thereby reducing student discipline incidents. Finally, Dan Ruiz has been a great addition to the high school and is making an impact within the first seven months of his administrative career. I appreciate his focus on relationships with students as that will pay off throughout the school year.

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

As we work to create independent lifelong learners who can thrive, the key is building strong relationships with students and families. We need to partner with parents and students to reinforce quality behavior regardless of who is watching or supervising. Restorative practice is a process that really supports the idea of fixing what was broken from the misbehavior by focusing on building strong relationships so we can encourage and support students. An example of this would be cleaning up a mess that was made or physically fixing something that was broken by the misbehavior. We expect students will take risks and make mistakes. I would rather have students make mistakes here and have the opportunity to learn from those mistakes before the consequences have life-altering impacts. We have strong standards for behavior and yet we support students and work to maintain relationships. In conversation with Dave MacIntosh regarding his transition to La Center, he speaks of the differences between behaviors he had seen in his prior district and what discipline looks like in La Center. He is very impressed with the students and families of the La Center School District.