

# MONITORING REPORT: Policy OE-4 (Personnel Administration)

**PHASE ONE: Interpretation and Monitoring Indicators**

**DATE: September 2018**

## Policy

The Superintendent will assure the recruitment, employment, development, evaluation, and compensation of District employees in a manner necessary to enable the District to achieve its *Results* policies.

## Interpretation

In general, we understand this policy expresses the Board’s reminder that we are a “people business” and therefore we need to invest in people in a way that (a) makes the Ferndale School District a place people choose to work; (b) ensures a talented, healthy, and committed staff in every part of our school system; and (c) creates a sufficiently diverse workforce to reflect all aspects of our community. In other words, we understand the Board expects us to put together the best team possible to fulfill our commitments to the District’s owners and realize the goals of our organization. To do this, our Human Resources Department will intentionally work to achieve the following six-part people-focused mission:

- Providing a Quality Workforce (Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention)
- Ensuring Effective Contracts (Negotiated Agreements)
- Offering Staff Support and Assistance (Employee Services)
- Partnering for Additional Resources (Parents, Universities, and Volunteers)
- Leading Lifelong Learning (Certification and Professional Development)
- Evaluating for Continuous Improvement (Accountability)

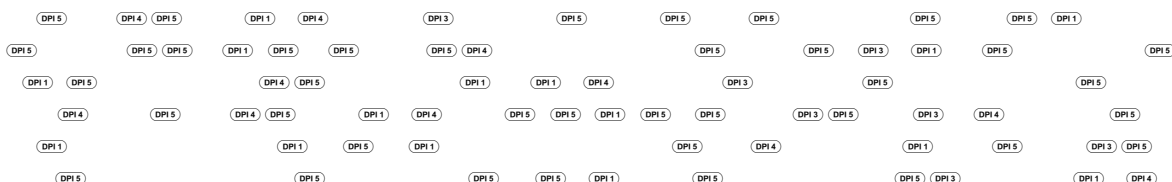
## Monitoring Indicator(s)

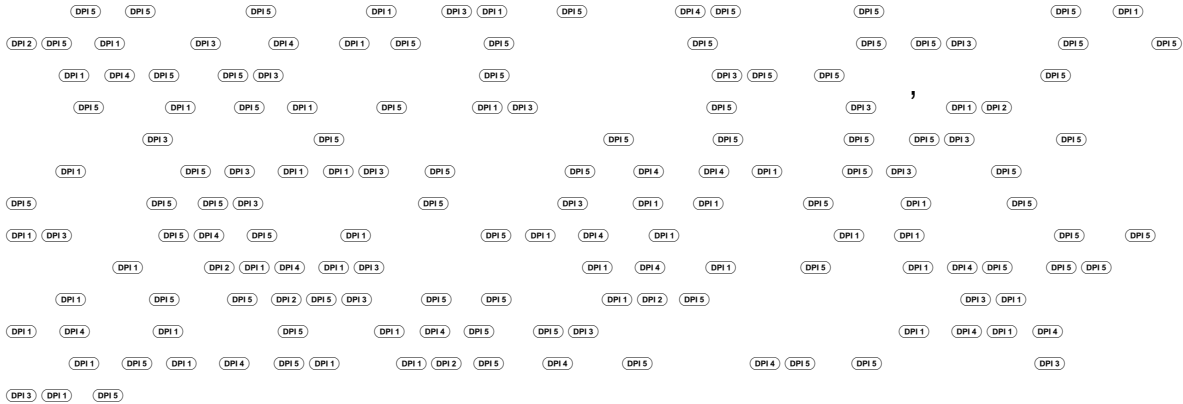
Provided below for each component part of OE-4.

**The Superintendent will:**

- 1. Assure that no person is employed by the District without first clearing thorough background inquiries and checks.**

## Interpretation





### Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Written procedures all employees are required to follow when conducting background checks on candidates under consideration for employment;
- Evidence that appropriate background checks have been completed on all new hires, including reference calls to former employers; and
- Documentation showing the number of background checks with findings and the District’s response to each.

## 2. Assure that no volunteer has unsupervised contact with students without first clearing reasonable background inquiries and checks.

### Interpretation

We understand the Board places the well-being and safety of all students at the top of its list of priorities. As such, this component requires us to ensure all adults (including parents) who volunteer in schools or at school events in a manner that allows them to be alone with students (other than their own children) must be thoroughly vetted and cleared in advance.

At the same time that the Board expects us to take all reasonable measures to protect children, we believe they also expect us to avoid potentially harmful consequences of this component such as scaring away parents whose presence in our schools would be very valuable. The Board understands the critical importance of parental involvement to student success; and they acknowledge the potential burden background checks can impose on some already fragile home-school connections. Therefore, the Board expects us to fulfill this component in a sensitive manner that strikes an appropriate balance between our dual goals of safety and parent/community involvement.

### Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Written procedures all employees are required to follow when conducting background checks on potential parent and community volunteers;

- Evidence that appropriate background checks have been completed on all volunteers; and
- Evidence of steps the District has taken to mitigate potentially harmful consequences of background check requirements, especially on parents whose involvement in our schools would assist us in achieving our goals.

**3. Select only highly qualified and the best-suited candidates for all positions.**

**Interpretation**

We understand this component acknowledges the Board’s belief that the people employed by our organization are its most valuable resources, and therefore the Board expects us to recruit and retain the best workforce possible for achieving our mission.

We further understand the Board’s belief that “the best workforce possible” will reflect the richness of diversity in the world, in our community, and in our classrooms. By promoting and achieving a diverse workplace -- in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, talents, perspectives, and characteristics -- we will increase our ability to deliver essential services to our students.

In other words, the Board expects that we will not interpret “highly-qualified” and “best-suited” to mean “the people who are most like the people who already work here.” Rather, the Board expects us to expand our outlook and use creative strategies to draw on all the varied skills of our community and attract a wide variety of employees to our District workforce. They recognize a diverse workforce is integral to achieving our District goals and also essential to promoting a civil society.

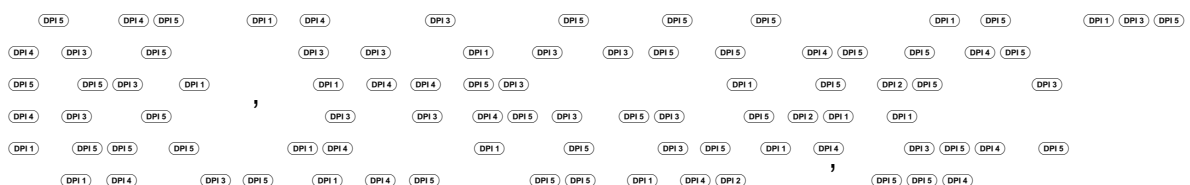
**Monitoring Indicator(s)**

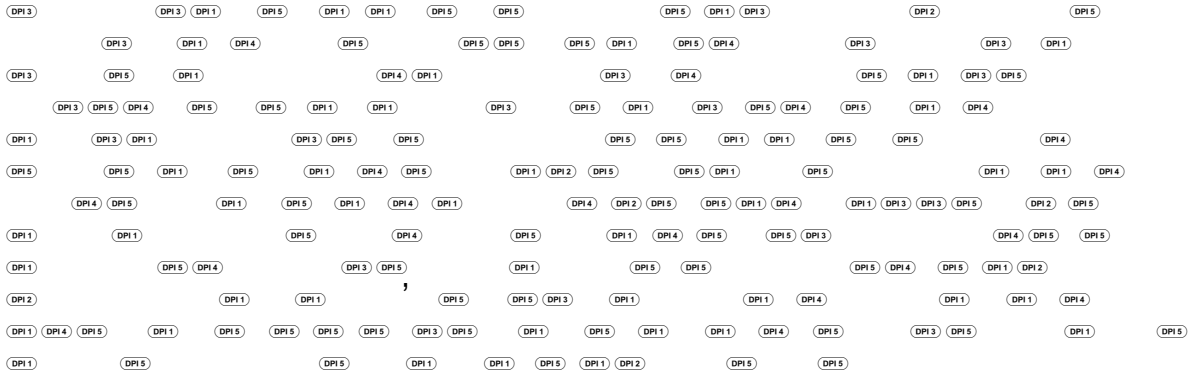
We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Evidence that all our employees meet legal requirements with regards to certifications, endorsements, and other credentials;
- A profile of the overall qualifications of our employees in terms of education and experience;
- A summary of awards and honors earned by our employees during the preceding year in recognition of their high quality; and
- A report on the diversity of our employees containing (a) our specific goals for diversifying our workforce, (b) the strategies we employed to meet those goals, and (c) the results we have achieved.

**4. Administer clear personnel rules and procedures for employees.**

**Interpretation**





**Monitoring Indicator(s)**

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Evidence that we 
- Evidence of the various ways we have made the information contained in these documents accessible to our employees.

**5. Effectively handle complaints and concerns.**

**Interpretation**

We understand this component requires us actively to collect and pursue information that is both critical and helpful for the improvement of our organization. To these ends, the Board expects us to establish multiple avenues for staff, students, and citizens to provide such information to us, thereby allowing us to address perceived and actual shortcomings. To do so appropriately, the Board expects us to (a) investigate incidents reported and information received, (b) research causes and solutions, and (c) implement remedies aimed at both solving the immediate issue and also preventing recurrence. And they expect us to do all of this in a manner that is respectful, timely, transparent to the extent possible, and clearly documented.

**Monitoring Indicator(s)**

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Documentation of our responses to community questions and/or comments made on our website portal entitled “The Listening Post.”
- Written responses to community questions and concerns published on BoardDocs and the District website each month;
- Zero reports to the School Board that District officials have failed to respond to legitimate questions or concerns from stakeholders, when those questions or concerns have been communicated through an appropriate venue (notwithstanding that the stakeholders may not agree with or like the response they received).

## **6. Maintain adequate job descriptions for all staff positions.**

### **Interpretation**

We understand this component expresses the Board's expectation that we develop, maintain and update regularly clear, written expectations in the form of "job descriptions" for each of our employees. Such documents should communicate the values and priorities of the District and also help identify the right employee(s) for particular job(s) by providing the foundation for such personnel processes as recruitment, selection, compensation, and evaluation. We further understand the Board expects our job descriptions not only to provide an overview of the role, necessary qualifications, and essential duties, but also to explain how the position relates to the vision, values, and goals of the organization.

We believe the Board also wants us to maintain job descriptions for the following reasons:

- A job description can serve as a starting point for an interactive dialogue about essential job duties with qualified applicants with disabilities who may need reasonable accommodations to perform those duties in a manner that does not create an undue hardship on the District or a direct threat to the individual or others.
- A job description can be helpful in soliciting the advice of professionals such as physicians, chiropractors, counselors or rehabilitation therapists about whether an individual can/should perform a particular job.
- A job description that includes minimum certification and/or qualifications for a position can provide the District with objective, nondiscriminatory rationale for not placing a prospective employee (applicant) into a job or for removing a current employee from a job.

### **Monitoring Indicator(s)**

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- a. Written job descriptions for all of our employees; and
- b. A written schedule for reviewing and updating job descriptions; and
- c. Evidence that our job descriptions not only provide an overview of the role, necessary qualifications, and essential duties, but also to explain how the position relates to the vision, values, and goals of the organization.

## **7. Protect confidential information.**

### **Interpretation**

We understand this component requires us to respect the privacy rights of staff to the greatest extent possible and to hold confidential information in a safe and secure place that cannot be accessed by anyone other than those with a legitimate need to know. We also understand that some of the data we keep about staff is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and must be released in the event of a public disclosure request. To assist staff in navigating the territory between personal privacy and the requirements of public transparency, we believe the School Board expects the District to make its stance on confidentiality as it relates to its employees

– both in terms of guarantees and limitations – open and accessible, so that all staff understand and are able to trust the boundaries of privacy operating across the system.

### Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- The existence of a Confidentiality Statement that outlines both the District’s commitment to confidentiality and the limits to confidentiality that can be offered employees.
- Clear procedures for handling employee-related confidential information and evidence that appropriate staff have been trained in following these procedures; and
- No breaches in confidentiality practices as outlined in District policy and/or federal regulation.

- 8. Assure that compensation and benefit plans attract and retain the highest quality employees by compensating employees, within available resources, in a manner consistent with the applicable marketplace, including but not limited to organizations of comparable size and type.**

### Interpretation

We understand this component requires us to provide competitive tangible compensation to employees, including money, insurance, worker’s protection, and other benefits. The Board acknowledges that compensation is an important factor in employees’ decisions to relocate to our District, and that disparity between compensation packages offered by our District and other potential employers may have a negative impact on our ability to attract and retain employees. We further recognize that, in order to fulfill this component, the Board expects us to keep up-to-date on salary and benefits packages being offered by potentially competitive Districts, especially those in Whatcom and Skagit County.

At the same time that the Board wants us to provide competitive compensation packages to attract and retain the best possible workforce, they also expect us to be good stewards of available resources and to maintain balance among the various responsibilities fulfilled by those resources. In other words, they expect us to “live within our means.”

Additionally, by requiring us to ensure our expenditures are aligned with the commitments and goals of the organization, we understand that the Board has authorized us to provide those with the greatest impact on meeting the commitments and goals of the organization with the greatest compensation.

### Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Collective Bargaining Agreements with each employee group that spell out wages and other benefits; and

- Compensation studies showing our employees' total compensation packages in relationship to employee compensation packages in other Districts in the region and state, especially those Districts that are comparable to Ferndale.

**9. Consistent with the Superintendent's own evaluation, evaluate all employee performance according to their contribution toward achieving the Board's *Results* policies and their compliance with the Board's *Operational Expectations* policies.**

**Interpretation**

We understand this component requires us to begin with the end in mind. The Board recognizes that the achievement of organizational goals should be the primary purpose of the actions of all of the employees of our organization, and that meeting District benchmarks equates to collective and individual success. In other words, each person has a part to play in the success of the whole, thereby signifying an inherent connectedness between all of the organization's members, purposes, and goals.

We further understand that, through this component, the Board is setting the expectation that we identify and use clear criteria tied to the District's values and goals to evaluate both the successes and the positive growth of all our employees on a regular basis, regardless of the role they play in our organization.

**Monitoring Indicator(s)**

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Documentation that all District employees have been appropriately evaluated; and
- Summary information about how employee evaluations are related to the achievement of the Board's *Results* policies and compliance with the Board's *Operational Expectations* policies.

**10. Ensure that all staff members are qualified and trained to perform the responsibilities assigned to them.**

**Interpretation**

We understand this component requires us to provide our employees with job-related professional development, coaching, mentoring, and/or continuing education aimed at (a) promoting the collective success of the organization, and (b) increasing each individuals' overall value to the organization. In other words, the Board expects us to create conditions that encourage our employees to engage in continuous learning, systematic acquisition of new competencies, and on-going knowledge production in relation to their current and future roles within our organization and/or our profession. In short, the Board is committed to developing employees who are lifelong learners.

To accomplish this component, we understand the Board expects us regularly to assess the knowledge, skills, and interests of our employees in order to provide



professional development that appropriately responds to their needs and makes a measurable difference in their performance. The Board also expects us to maintain an in-depth understanding of the various jobs we ask employees to perform in order to ensure the professional development we provide matches the knowledge and skills required by the various roles they fill.

### Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- The District's professional development calendar for the year;
- Evidence that District employees have been given the opportunity to provide input into the kind of training and professional development they need;
- Sample agendas and participant evaluations from District-sponsored professional development programs; and
- Summary information linking professional development to (a) achievement of the Board's *Results* policies, (b) compliance with the Board's *Operational Expectations* policies, and/or (c) the employee's own performance/evaluation.

## **11. Maintain an organizational culture that positively impacts the ability of staff to responsibly perform their jobs and allows them to work in an environment of professional support and courtesy.**

### Interpretation

We understand this component requires us to create the kind of supportive environment for our employees that will contribute to their well-being at work. As a basic foundation of this component, the Board expects us to ensure each employee is treated with civility and respect by supervisors, co-workers, and clients. Further, to create a supportive environment, the Board expects us to attend to building relationships; acknowledging contributions; creating opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making and problem-solving; ensuring effective avenues of communication; furnishing the right tools for operating efficiently; and providing good work conditions in terms of benefits, health, and safety.

### Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Existence of a District Civility policy and evidence of the ways it has been communicated;
- Evidence of the District's efforts to build positive relationships with employees;
- Evidence of the ways the District has acknowledged employees' contributions;
- Evidence of the ways employees have been invited to participate in meaningful decision-making and problem-solving;
- Evidence that the District has put in place a variety of avenues for communication;
- Evidence that the District has furnished employees with the necessary tools to do their jobs; and
- Evidence of District efforts to ensure good working conditions for employees in terms of benefits, health, and safety.



## **The Superintendent may not:**

### **12. Retaliate against any employee for initiating a legitimate complaint.**

#### **Interpretation**

We understand this component requires us to allow employees to speak up about concerns, complaints, potentially harmful practices, or perceived misconduct without fear of negative repercussions from the District. The Board recognizes that our District benefits when employees feel free to communicate about any relevant issue of concern, because by doing so they allow us the opportunity to resolve concerns as quickly as possible. A culture of fear in which complaints are silenced will not produce the kind of environment where our District mission can be achieved.

We understand retaliation refers to any kind of negative action against a current or former employee that takes the form of punishment and/or creates a hostile, threatening, or uncomfortable environment as a result of his/her reported complaint.

We further understand a “legitimate complaint” to be one that has been made in good faith whether an investigation proves the complaint to be true or false. In other words, this policy refers to circumstances when an employee’s report is found to be justifiable as well as circumstances when the report is found to be baseless. We will not consider the report’s validity when it comes to no-retaliation principles.

Employees who are found guilty of retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may also apply to employees who repeatedly file false or unreasonable complaints based on intentional lies or motivated by personal benefit, thereby preventing abuse of the Board’s no-retaliation policy.

#### **Monitoring Indicator(s)**

We will know we are in compliance with this component when we can show:

- Zero reports of District employees engaging in retaliatory behaviors; and/or
- In the event that retaliation is claimed, evidence that the claim has been taken seriously, investigated fully, and addressed appropriately.