

MONITORING REPORT: Policy OE-8 (Communicating with the Board)

PHASE ONE: Interpretation and Monitoring Indicators

DATE: February 2019

Policy

The Superintendent will assure that the Board is fully and adequately informed about matters relating to Board work and significant District concern.

Interpretation

We understand the underlying value expressed by this policy is the Board's belief that a robust, thoughtful, and productive relationship is critical between the Board, in its role of setting direction and governing the District, and the Superintendent, in her role of implementing the directives of the Board and managing the day-to-day operation of the District. Furthermore, the Board recognizes that several critical conditions must be in place to ensure such a relationship flourishes. Among these are: (1) mutual trust and respect; (2) shared philosophy and values; (3) complete candor and transparency; and (4) clear and regular communication. Among these, communication is foundational.

Through the terms and phrases used to frame this policy, the Board has established standards for both the quality and quantity of communication they expect between the Board and the Superintendent and her Administrative Team.

- **Fully and adequately informed** acknowledges Board members' obligation, as trustees of the District's owners, to make informed decisions on their behalf. In turn, the Superintendent is obligated to ensure the content, timing, and manner in which Board members receive information from and about the District permits them to fulfill their responsibilities with sufficient background knowledge and within an appropriate timeframe.
- **Matters related to Board work** refers to all topics and decisions falling within the Board's purview, as defined by their governance policies. Such topics and decisions include (a) strategic-level planning, (b) impacts on student outcomes and results, and (c) operational issues monitored by the Board through its Operational Expectations (OE) policies.
- **Significant District concern** refers to operational-level issues falling under the purview of the Superintendent, whenever such issues (a) represent a significant change; (b) may prompt questions of Board members from parents, staff, and/or other stakeholders; (c) impact a significant number of employees, students, and/or stakeholders; or (d) have engendered, or are likely to engender, significant media (including social media) attention. While Board members understand that it is neither

possible nor practical for them to be informed about every matter and decision related to the operation of the District, and that predicting which of the myriad of operational issues might come to the Board's attention is an uncertain science, they expect the Superintendent to make every reasonable effort to maintain a "no surprises" contract with the Board.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

- Provided below for each part of OE-8.

The Superintendent will:

1. **Submit required monitoring data (see policy B/SR-5—Monitoring Superintendent Performance) in a thorough, accurate, and understandable fashion according to the Board's Annual Work Plan schedule and including both Superintendent interpretations and relevant data to substantiate compliance or reasonable progress.**

Interpretation

We understand this component relates specifically to the way the District communicates with the Board about the fulfillment of its governance policies, which define the values by which the Board expects the District to be operated and the end results the Board expects the Districts' students to achieve.

- **Monitoring report** refers to the format the Superintendent uses to present the Board with evidence that the District has demonstrated compliance with each of its Operational Expectations (OE) policies and has made reasonable progress toward achieving the improvement goals delineated in each of its Results (R) policies. We understand the Board expects that (a) we will produce a separate report for each of its OE and R policies, and (b) we will strive to make the reports as clear, complete, comprehensive, candid, and correct as possible.
- **Annual work plan** refers to a calendar that has been developed collaboratively by the Board and Superintendent to establish when District-created monitoring reports for each of the Board's policies will be available for the Board's review. We understand that the Board expects us to produce such a monitoring report for each OE and R policy every year.
- **Substantiate compliance or reasonable progress** refers to the performance metrics the Board will use to determine whether the District has provided sufficient data and information to prove they have met the Board's expectations and goals. The measure for Operational Expectations policies is achieving "compliance," which means operating in a manner that matches the values the Board has established for the particular domain covered by the policy. The measure for Results policies is making "reasonable progress," which refers to performance over time that represents improvement in achieving the outcomes the Board has established for the particular domain covered by the policy. We understand that the

monitoring reports, in aggregate, will become a significant portion of the Superintendent's annual evaluation.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Monitoring reports for every Operational Expectation (OE) policy that contain data and artifacts to assist the Board in verifying compliance.
- Monitoring reports for every Results (R) that contain data and artifacts to assist the Board in verifying reasonable progress.
- Evidence that the Superintendent has followed the Board's Annual Work Plan in submitting monitoring reports for all Operational Expectations and Results policies.

2. Provide for the Board in a timely manner information about trends, facts, and other information relevant to the Board's work.

Interpretation

We understand this component relates to the way the District communicates with the Board about (a) topics and decisions related to their governance responsibilities as outlined in their governance policies; and (b) issues of significant District concern. (Refer to the definitions on the first page of this report for more detailed definitions.)

- **In a timely manner** refers to the Board's expectation that the Superintendent will exercise good judgment in determining *when* to communicate with them. Whereas an emergency situation may require immediate communication, a matter of District interest will likely keep until the Superintendent's weekly update, and a report on District data will best be presented at a scheduled Board meeting. Details about day-to-day operational issues may necessitate an expedited communication timeline when they become controversial and/or begin to attract media attention. In short, the Board expects the Superintendent to base her decisions about when to inform them on the urgency and/or uniqueness of each particular situation.
- **Trends, facts, and other information** refer to the Board's expectation about the content of the communication they receive from the District. In order to fulfill their responsibilities with sufficient background knowledge, they expect the Superintendent to inform them about changes, or potential changes, in strategic issues such as demographics, instructional programs, educational practices, legislative mandates, state or federal requirements, legal matters, budget concerns, student safety, accreditation status, facility problems, and anything else that could impact their decision-making. Once again, the Board expects the Superintendent to exercise good judgment in determining *what* to communicate to them.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence the Superintendent has written weekly letters to the Board that include District news and information.

- Evidence the Superintendent has communicated major initiatives to the Board prior to their implementation.
- Evidence the Superintendent has briefed the Board on accountability changes at the State or Federal level (such as ESSA).
- Results of a Board survey showing that each Board member feels he/she has been appropriately informed by the Superintendent about issues impacting the District in general and the Board's work in particular.

3. Inform the Board of significant transfers of money within funds or other changes substantially affecting the district's financial condition.

Interpretation

We understand this component relates to the way the District communicates with the Board about the budget. Since the Board has a primary responsibility for ensuring that public funds are handled legally, responsibly, and as transparently as possible, Board members need to be assured they are provided with high-quality, up-to-date information about the District's financial status.

- **Significant transfer of money** refers to the movement of funds from one account to another within the budget. The Board expects such transfers to have a legal basis and a defensible rationale. When the transfers are sizeable and likely to impact appreciably the operation of the District, they also expect to know about them, preferably in advance of their being made.
- **Changes substantially affecting the District's financial condition** refer to budget conditions, impacts, or decisions that (a) materially alter the operation of the District; (b) notably affect District stakeholders, either internal or external, and/or (c) conflict with the Board-approved interpretations and indicators of compliance/reasonable progress for any of their governance policies. When such changes occur, especially outside the normal budget development process, the Board expects the Superintendent and her staff to inform them.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence the Superintendent has presented the Board with monthly financial statements reflecting all significant financial changes.
- Evidence that the annual audit report from the State Auditors' Office shows all significant transfers have been done legally, according to a defensible rationale, and with Board knowledge.
- Results of a Board survey showing that each Board member feels he/she has been appropriately informed by the Superintendent and her staff about issues related to the budget.

4. Assure the Board has adequate information from a variety of sources of internal and external viewpoints to assure informed Board decisions.

Interpretation

We understand this component relates to the Board's expectations about the breadth of information the District communicates to them. In particular, it reiterates the value the Board places on listening to, and carefully considering, diverse opinions and perspectives. As such, it reinforces Policy OE-3 (Treatment of Community Stakeholders) component 3.a ("maintain an organizational culture that values individual differences of opinion").

- **Adequate information** refers to the quantity of communication to the Board from the Superintendent, which the Board expects to be sufficient to ensure Board members feel appropriately informed to fulfill their responsibilities.
- **Variety of viewpoints** refers to the Board's expectation that the Superintendent will solicit, analyze, and share the thoughts and opinions of stakeholders (both internal and external) regarding significant change initiatives, whenever doing so is feasible. While the Board recognizes it is neither possible nor logistically desirable to solicit a full range of perspectives on every proposed decision, they expect the Superintendent to establish structures (like advisory committees, town hall meetings, and surveys) to encourage regular input from stakeholders. When activating such structures is not feasible, they expect the Superintendent to use her knowledge of the community to identify and articulate the variety of reactions an issue under consideration is likely to elicit within the District and the greater community. In short, they expect the Superintendent to consider and share with them a full range of the potential impacts of a particular decision.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence the Superintendent has collected and shared survey results, interviews, and anecdotal data from diverse stakeholder groups, and has shared such information with the Board.
- Evidence of the active participation of community advisory committees and task forces focused on significant District issues and initiative (like the Bond Oversight Committee charged with overseeing capital projects work).

5. Inform the Board of anticipated significant media coverage.

Interpretation

We understand this component relates to the Board's expectations about the way the District communicates on various media channels, and the way they share with Board members any media stories that have been published or that they anticipate will be published.

- **Informed** refers to the Board's expectation that they should be the most knowledgeable laypersons in the community regarding the District. When an issue is likely to make the news, Board members want to know as much as the

media knows about that issue, and ideally they want to learn about it before they are contacted by the media for comment.

- **Anticipated** refers to any reasonably predictable or probable situation that might draw greater attention. While the Board understands it is not always possible to foresee whether a particular issue will pique the interest of the media, they expect the Superintendent to err on the side of over-informing them rather than the opposite.
- **Significant media coverage** refers to reports, stories, or commentary that appear on any local, state, or national news channel, or on any social media site. Although not technically “media coverage,” we understand the Board also expects the Superintendent, whenever possible, to inform them in advance about any individual stakeholder or group of stakeholders who plan to attend a Board meeting for the purpose of making public comment.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence the Superintendent communicated with the Board in a timely fashion regarding any incident or situation that drew wide-scale public coverage (including on social media channels) or resulted in public comment at a Board meeting.
- Evidence the Superintendent has debriefed with the Board any situation where the Board could say in hindsight that they needed more information.
- Results of a Board survey showing that each Board member feels he/she has been appropriately informed by the Superintendent about District issues that have drawn media attention or resulted in comment(s) at Board meetings.

6. **Inform the Board, the Board President, or individual Board members if, in the Superintendent’s opinion, the Board or individual members have encroached into areas of responsibility assigned to the Superintendent, or if the Board or its members are non-compliant with any *Governance Culture or Board/Superintendent Relations* policies.**

Interpretation

We understand this component relates to (a) the way the Superintendent and the Board communicate with one another about their respective areas of responsibility, and (b) the way they work together according to the standards outlined in their Social Contract. Specifically, this component conveys the Board’s expectation that the Superintendent, whose job it is to oversee all parts of the organization, will serve as sentinel to ensure the governance system the Board has put in place works as it is intended to work, particularly in relation to their agreed upon division of duties.

- **Inform the Board** refers to the Superintendent’s duty to (a) assist in monitoring Governance Culture (GC) and Board/Superintendent Relations (B/SR) policies, and (b) provide input when she perceives significant non-compliance. In some

instances, the Superintendent will share her concern with the Board President, who will, in turn, address the concern with the Board or individual Board member(s). In other instances, the Superintendent may see fit to talk about a concern directly with an individual Board member.

- **Encroached into areas of responsibility assigned to the Superintendent:** refers to a Board member's taking action; making requests of, or promises to, staff; or otherwise inserting himself or herself into the day-to-day management and operation of the District.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence of an agenda item showing the Superintendent and School Board have reviewed, discussed, and recommitted to all of the GC and B/SR policies, including their Social Contract, at least once annually.
- Evidence that the Superintendent has discussed any infractions of the Board's Social Contract or other GC or B/SR policies with either the Board President or the appropriate Board member.

7. **Present information in simple and concise form, indicating clearly whether the information is incidental, intended for decision preparation, or intended for formal monitoring.**

Interpretation

We understand this component relates to the Board member's expectation about the quality of the information they receive from the District.

- **Simple and concise** refers to the Board's desire to have information presented to them in a manner that is both comprehensive and clear, and that simplifies rather than complicates their jobs. Board members, who serve in their governance capacities as volunteers, rely on the Superintendent to review all of the vast amount of information and data about the District that is generated each month and summarize it for them in accessible briefing(s).
- **Incidental, intended for decision preparation, or intended for formal monitoring** refers to the Board's desire to have the purpose of the information they receive from the Superintendent clearly identified. "Incidental" refers to information that is provided to keep Board members "in the loop" and ensure they are prepared to answer questions from stakeholders. "Intended for decision preparation" refers to information that is provided to assist Board members in taking action on items that appears on a Board meeting agenda. This kind of information usually comes in the form of memos, reports, or recommendations. "Intended for formal monitoring" refers to the data and artifacts that are included in the monitoring reports the Board expects the Superintendent to prepare annually to show compliance with each of their Operational Expectations policies and reasonable progress toward meeting each of their Results policies.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence that Board agendas are organized so that the purpose of each agenda item is clearly delineated as (a) communication, information, and/or discussion; (b) monitoring compliance; (c) monitoring results; or (e) other action.
- Results of a Board survey showing that each Board member feels the purpose of information provided them by the Superintendent and her staff has been (a) clear, (b) appropriately comprehensive; (c) appropriately concise; and (d) well-defined as per its intent.

8. Treat all members impartially and assure that all members have equal access to information.

Interpretation

We understand this component expresses the high value the Board places on equity in all aspects of the District's operation, including the Superintendent's treatment of individual Board members. The Board expects such treatment to be *equitable* – which means providing each member with what he/she needs to be successful – not necessarily *equal* – which means treating all Board members exactly the same.

- **Impartially** refers to the Board's expectation that the Superintendent will interact with all Board members professionally and respectfully and will not "play favorites."
- **Equal access to information** refers to the Board's expectation that no individual member will be placed at an advantage or disadvantage relative to the information he/she has received from the Superintendent. Each Board member expects to receive the same communication, data, and artifacts concerning all matters the Board will discuss in open meeting(s) or upon which the Board will make decision(s). Whenever possible, the Board expects the Superintendent to regard them as a body and communicate with the whole. However, they also recognize there are times when incidental interactions with individual Board members are both necessary and appropriate, as when an individual member has a question, has received a request for information, or has been presented with some other matter that does not require Board action. Even in these cases, when the Superintendent deems the individual Board member's issue is likely to be of interest to the majority of the Board, they expect her to share it with all of them.

Communication with the President of the Board may, at times, constitute an exception to this rule. The Superintendent may communicate in a preliminary fashion with the President about topics the whole Board will learn about at a later date in either a study session or business meeting.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence that all information for Board meetings and study sessions has been distributed to all Board members equally; at the same time; and, whenever possible, in a format suited to their unique needs.
- Evidence that requests for information from individual Board members have been shared with the full Board when appropriate.
- Evidence that the Superintendent has held regular meetings with the Board President to set agendas and plan meetings, and that she has issued an open invitation for one additional Board member to participate in these meetings.
- Evidence that the Superintendent has offered to hold private meetings with each of the Board members at his/her request and convenience.
- Results of a Board survey showing that each Board member feels he/she has been treated fairly and equitably with regard to access to information.

9. Inform the Board in a timely manner of any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any Board *Operational Expectations* policy or any anticipated failure to achieve reasonable progress toward any *Results* policy.

Interpretation

We understand this component expresses the Board's desire to be kept fully apprised of the District's efforts to comply with the goals and expectations they have set forth in their governance policies. At a minimum, they expect the Superintendent to adhere to the Annual Work Plan by providing them with monitoring reports on each Operational Expectation (OE) and Results (R) policy every year. Beyond these scheduled annual reports, they expect, as in every other area of communication, the Superintendent will adhere to the "no surprises" agreement that is spelled out in the Board's Social Contract.

- **A timely manner** refers to the Board's expectation that the Superintendent will not wait until a monitoring report comes due on the Annual Work Plan to let them know about (a) an issue or event that could significantly affect compliance with one of their Operational Expectation policies, or (b) information that suggests the District will fail to make adequate progress toward achieving one of their Results policies.
- **Actual noncompliance** refers to the District's documented failure to meet the indicators outlined in an Operational Expectations policy.
- **Anticipated noncompliance** refers to the likelihood that the District will fail to meet the indicators outlined in an Operational Expectations policy.
- **Failure to achieve reasonable progress** refers to the District's lack of success in meeting student achievement goals set forth in one of the Board's Results policies.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence the Superintendent has informed the Board during the monitoring process of actual or anticipated failure to make adequate progress towards the achieving their Results goals.
- Evidence the Superintendent has informed the Board during the monitoring process of actual or anticipated failure to comply with the standards set forth in their Operational Expectations policies.
- Evidence the Superintendent has kept the Board informed as appropriate of progress, or lack thereof, toward meeting all of their policy expectations throughout the year.

10. Provide for the Board adequate information about all administrative actions and decisions that are delegated to the Superintendent but required by law to be approved by the board.

Interpretation

We understand this component refers to the way the Superintendent communicates with the Board about all the aspects of running the District they have delegated to her but still retain some legal obligation formally to endorse. For instance, the Board has charged the Superintendent with keeping a legal and up-to-date set of administrative policies and procedures, which she and her Administrative Team are responsible for implementing. However, even though the Board has dispatched this area of responsibility to the Superintendent, they recognize there are some administrative policies which they are legally required to approve. In general, they expect to be appropriately informed about any actions or initiatives to which they have been asked to give their stamp of approval.

- **Adequate information** refers to the Board’s expectation that they will be provided with sufficient background information to make informed decisions about the items on the Superintendent’s consent agenda which they are required to approve.
- **Administrative actions and decisions delegated to the Superintendent** refer to everything the Board has deemed as administrative work and assigned decision-making authority and accountability to the Superintendent. The phrase echoes one of the guiding principles underlying the Board’s approach to governance: “Whoever makes the decision is accountable for the result.”

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence the Superintendent has provided the Board with information about any new or revised administrative policy requiring their approval.
- Evidence the Superintendent has presented appropriate back-up materials for other items requiring Board action, such as personnel decisions, budget approvals, and district calendar development.

- Results of a Board survey showing that each Board member feels he/she has been appropriately informed by the Superintendent about all action items on their meeting agendas.

11. Inform the Board in a timely manner of the administrative disposition of complaints referred to the Superintendent by the Board.

Interpretation

We understand this component expresses the Board's expectation that the Superintendent will be (a) responsive to complaints raised by stakeholders and (b) diligent about communicating with Board members about the resolution of such complaints.

The Board's expectations regarding complaints from external stakeholders is further defined in OE-3 (Treatment of Community Stakeholders) component 2 ("effectively handle complaints"). Their expectations regarding complaints from employees is further defined in Policy OE-4 (Personnel Administration) component 5 ("effectively handle complaints and concerns").

- **Complaints referred to the Superintendent** is a reference to an agreement between the Board and the Superintendent that, most often, complaints about the operation of the District that are shared with the Board by stakeholders will be turned over to the Superintendent, who will address them on behalf of the Board. While individual Board members may respond directly to stakeholders' complaints about (a) the actions of the Superintendent or (b) a particular decision made by the Board, he/she will make a concerted effort to keep the Superintendent and entire Board informed about both the concern and the response.
- **A timely manner** refers to the Board's expectation that the Superintendent will share information about how she has responded to community questions, concerns, and/or complaints within a month of receiving them.
- **Administrative disposition** refers to the way a complaint is addressed by the Superintendent and her staff. To address complaints effectively, the Board expects the District to (a) follow standard procedures for investigating incidents reported and information received, (b) research causes and solutions, (c) implement remedies aimed at both solving the immediate issue and also preventing recurrence, and (d) make sure person(s) sharing a complaint know that it has been registered and addressed. Effectively handling a complaint does not, on the other hand, mean that the District will always implement the remedy advocated by the complainant, nor that every complainant will be happy with the District's decision (from OE-3.2).

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence of monthly written responses to community questions and concerns.

- Evidence the District has responded to all complaints communicated via the website portal called the *Listening Post*.
- Evidence the District has appropriately weighed into conversations about District-related concerns on social media.
- Evidence the Superintendent has provided timely updates to the Board following the resolution of any significant complaint requiring investigative action.

12. Inform the Board in advance of any deletions of, additions to, or significant modifications of any instructional programs.

Interpretation

We understand this component expresses the Board's expectation that they are kept up-to-date about the core work of the District, which is the teaching and learning of students. Although decisions about the instructional program are part of the day-to-day management and operation of the District, and therefore do not typically fall under the Board's purview, we understand this is an area of high interest and concern to the Board for at least two reasons. First, the instructional program represents the engine that drives the mission of the District; and second, the overall scope and sequence of the instructional program is directly related to the District's ability to achieve the goals defined in the Board's Results policies.

- **Instructional programs** refer to the various teaching practices that occur in the District's schools. An instructional program encompasses a curriculum component (what we teach) and a teaching procedure (how we teach). Such a program can be as small as a single lesson or as large as a multi-year sequence of lessons.
- **Deletions of, additions to, or significant modifications** refer to the kind of changes in the instructional program about which the Board wishes to be informed. They recognize it is not feasible to share every decision that is made about altering curriculum or pedagogy, especially since they expect principals and teachers to be continuously adjusting their approaches to address the unique needs of every learner. However, the Board does wish to be kept informed about (a) major changes in learning standards or assessment practices; (b) new adoptions of curriculum materials; (c) additions or deletions of programs or classes; and (d) instructional modifications that require an extensive change in staffing, considerable professional development, and/or substantial resources to implement.
- **In advance** refers to the Board's desire to know about significant changes in the District's instructional program before they are implemented.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

We will know that we are compliant when we can provide:

- Evidence that the District has provided regular updates to the Board both on the District Improvement Plan and on individual School Improvement Plans.

- Board agendas showing regular reports from the District's Teaching and Learning Department.
- Evidence that the District has briefed the Board annually on the information contained in the OSPI Report Card.
- Evidence the Superintendent has briefed the Board on any significant changes to instructional programs or materials in advance of implementation.