

To: School Board, Ferndale School District (WA)

From: Linda Quinn, Superintendent

Date: December 15, 2020

Subject: 2020 Phase Two Monitoring Report
Operational Expectations Policy 8 (OE-8)
Communication with the Board

School Board's Monitoring Notes

(To be completed by each member individually prior to discussion by the whole Board)

Board Member: _____

Total Number of Monitoring Indicators = 38

Number Compliant=___ Number Partially Compliant=___ Number Non-Compliant=___

Commendations

Recommendations

Other Notes

Overall Rating: Compliant Non-Compliant

Superintendent's Introduction

Through Policy OE-8, the School Board has provided guidance about how they expect my team and me to communicate to keep them apprised of the operation of the School District. As such, it is a subset of the Board's second Strategic Commitment, which focuses on communication in general. In Commitment 2, the Board aspires to:

Communicate Openly and Effectively, because we believe that good communication is vital to the success of any organization, and it is particularly critical in our public school system. Therefore, we will work to achieve regular, transparent, inclusive, two-way communication at all levels – with students, staff, parents, and community members, as well as among ourselves as School Board members.

OE-8 is a companion to Policy OE-3 (Relationship with and Engagement of Community Stakeholders), which includes a multi-faceted component spelling out the Board's expectations about the way my staff and I will communicate with members of the community. Specifically, OE-3 calls for communication that (a) is transparent, honest, and timely; (b) ensures opportunities for appropriate input and strategic two-way communication between the District and its stakeholders; (c) builds understanding and support for District efforts; and (d) Includes an annual progress report.

In February 2019, when we wrote our first interpretation of OE-8 and identified the 38 separate monitoring indicators we would use to demonstrate compliance, life in the Ferndale School District was very different. Our Communications, Community Engagement, and School Board Support staff included two administrators in addition to the Superintendent, one professional technical person, and one administrative assistant. Our current Communications, Community Engagement, and School Board Support staff, on the other hand, consists of the Superintendent and two administrative assistants.

2019 Communications, Community Engagement, and School Board Support Staff			
Name	Position	Category	Communications Responsibilities
Linda Quinn	Superintendent	Administration	Strategic planning; facilitation of the Communications Advisory Committee; primary point of communication with the Board; publication of policy monitoring reports; monthly responses to community questions; weekly bond updates; letters to staff
Tammy Bengen	Director of Administrative Services	Administration	Management of specific Board-related communication, including meeting announcements, agendas, minutes, and governance policies; management of administrative policies; community partnerships; general support to the superintendent and Board
Erin Vincent	Director of Communications and Community Engagement	Administration	Publication of staff and community newsletters and blogs; levy information campaign; crisis communication; earned media; relationships with media

			outlets; Facebook Live programs; oversight of community engagement events; writing support for the superintendent
Andrew Forhan	Communications Specialist	Professional Technical Staff	Maintenance of District Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; assistance with the District website; management of District surveys; creation of video content; support for the Director of Communications
Kelly Warner	District Office Receptionist and Communications Specialist	Administrative Assistant	District website maintenance; school and department website assistance; support for the Director of Communications

2020 Communications, Community Engagement, and School Board Support Staff			
Name	Position	Category	Communications Responsibilities
Linda Quinn	Superintendent	Administration	Everything in my square above plus almost everything in Erin's square above plus some of the things in Tammy's square above
Kelly Warner	Administrative Assistant	Administrative Assistant	Management of the District website; management of the District Facebook page; publication of community e-newsletters; Facebook Live programs; management of policies (we are working into this); management of specific Board-related communication, including meeting announcements, agendas, and minutes; communication support to the superintendent
Lea Morris	Administrative Assistant	Administrative Assistant	General support to the superintendent

This diminished staff is one of the outcomes of having to lay off over 100 District employees when our local levy failed. The failure of the levy shifted our work significantly beginning in February 2020. However, the most dramatic changes occurred in March 2020, when Governor Inslee ordered the shutdown of all in-person learning in Washington's schools in response to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In an instant, we were charged with redesigning our entire educational model -- and also many aspects of our traditional communications and community engagement plans.

We have made the adjustments. We survived and, in some cases, we have even learned how to thrive. But we simply cannot, in our remote environment with a diminished staff, do everything we used to do. I appreciate the School Board's permission for us to modify our

goals accordingly and your willingness to modify your expectations as well. Your direction to us was to prepare a monitoring report “through the adjusted lenses of our current reality.”

I want to acknowledge that some of our responses to the indicators in this report take the form of attestations that evidence of compliance exists, rather than the recitation of the evidence itself, which, if included, we make this 30-page report several hundred pages. We stand ready to provide such evidence upon your request.

Before launching into the content of this report, I want to share a few notes about its format and organization:

First, we have included the interpretations and monitoring indicators you approved in 2019 in our Phase One Report for Policy OE-8, so that you do not have to look back and forth between two documents. The language from the Phase One Report is written in blue.

Second, Policy OE-8 contains 12 components, each with its own monitoring indicators. The components are written in bolded black. (This language is from your adopted policy.) The interpretation of each components is written in blue. (These are the interpretations we wrote and you approved last year in our Phase One Report.) The monitoring indicators are written in bolded blue. (These are the measures of compliance we wrote and you approved last year in our Phase One Report.) Our response to each indicator, which follows that indicator directly, is written in black and marked with a black arrow. (This is the new work we are presenting to you as part of this year’s Policy OE-8 Monitoring Report.)

Example:

Component 1 of Policy OE-4

Interpretation of Component 1

Monitoring Indicator for Component 1

→ Our response to the Monitoring Indicator

Finally, we have included a box next to our response to each monitoring indicator for you to score it “Compliant,” “Non-compliant,” or “Partially Compliant.” At the very beginning of this document, we have also included a place for you to tally your “scores,” make a final determination about the compliance level of our report, and record your comments and notes.

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) are provided below for each part of OE-8.

The Superintendent will:

1. **Submit required monitoring data (see policy *BSR-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 District's 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 other 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 have monitoring reports for every Operational Expectation (OE) policy that contain data and artifacts to assist the Board in verifying compliance.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ Since writing this monitoring indicator, we have revised the Board’s Annual Work Plan. Even before the levy failure and the pandemic turned our world upside down, we determined that we did not have the capacity to write comprehensive reports on every governance policy every year, which would mean preparing two or three per month. Nor did the Board have the capacity to give so many reports the attention they were due. Therefore, in collaboration with the School Board, we revised the Annual Work Plan to spread the monitoring reports out over a two-year timeframe.

That was the plan we were working until February 2020 when the bottom dropped out. When we went from in-person School Board meetings to Zoom webinars, the accompanying changes in the Open Public Meetings Act from the Governor directed us to limit our agenda items to essential business only. At the time, we determined these monitoring reports did not constitute essential business.

The short version of our response is that we do not have monitoring reports for every Operational Expectations policy. We were on schedule to achieve our two-year cycle until we put this work on pause to focus on passing a levy and reinventing our school system. The chart below shows which OE policy reports we have completed and which we have not.

Policy Number	Title	Report Written	Policy Number	Title	Report Written
OE-1	Global Operational Expectation	NO	OE-8	Communication with the Board	YES Dec 2020

OE-2	Emergency Superintendent Succession	YES Dec 2019	OE-9	Deleted (the original OE-9 was combined with OE-3)	N/A
OE-3	Relationship with and Engagement of Community Stakeholders	NO	OE-10	Learning Environment	YES Jul 2019
OE-4	Personnel Administration	YES Sep 2019	OE-11	Instructional Program	NO
OE-5	Financial Planning	YES Aug 2019	OE-12	Facilities	NO
OE-6	Financial Administration	NO	OE-13	Safety	NO
OE-7	Asset Protection	YES Aug 2019			

NOTE: To reflect the change we made in the Board's Annual Work Plan, we request permission to change the wording of our interpretation of Component 1 of OE-8, as indicated in red.

- We have Monitoring reports for every Results (R) policy that contain data and artifacts to assist the Board in verifying reasonable progress.

___ Compliant
___ Non-Compliant
___ Partially Compliant

→ Our response to this indicator is the same as to the previous one. For the reasons cited above, we have not provided the Board with monitoring reports for every one of their Results policies. The chart below shows which Results policy reports we have completed and which we have not.

Policy Number	Title	Report Written	Policy Number	Title	Report Written
R-1	Mission	YES Jan 2020	R-2.7	Health & Physical Education	YES Dec 2020
R-2.1	English Language Arts	NO	R-2.8	Electives	NO
R-2.1a	World Languages	NO	R-3	Civic Engagement	YES Jul 2019
R-2.2	Mathematics	NO	R-4	Deleted (the original R-4 was)	N/A
R-2.3	Science	NO	R-5	Character	NO
R-2.4	Technology	NO	R-6	Early Childhood Readiness	NO
R-2.5	Social Studies	YES Sep 2019	R-7	Career Readiness	NO
R-2.6	Arts	YES Nov 2019			

- We can show evidence that the Superintendent has followed the Board's Annual Work Plan in submitting monitoring reports for all Operational Expectations and Results policies.

Compliant
 Non-Compliant
 Partially Compliant

→ All completed reports were submitted to the School Board. However, several months after we began the process of writing and presenting Phase Two Monitoring Reports, we realized everyone needed more lead time to give the reports the attention they required. Therefore, we revised Annual Work Plan so that it now spells out more clearly the cycle for delivering, reviewing, and approving each report. For example, below is the cycle for this particular report, according to the new plan.

Policy Number and Title	Executive responsible for writing first draft	First draft due to the Superintendent	First draft provided to the School Board	Board discussion and suggested edits	Board approval of final draft on the consent agenda
OE-8 Communication with the Board	Linda	December 15, 2020	December 2020 Board Meeting	January 2021 Board Meeting	February 2021 Board Meeting

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 detail.)

- **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 may best be presented at a scheduled Board meeting. Details about day-to-day operational issues could 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.**

Compliant
 Non-Compliant
 Partially Compliant

→ For over a decade, I have written a letter to the Board every Monday except on Mondays which are holidays or Mondays when I have taken vacation. Approximately once per year, I have asked the Board if they would prefer a revised or completely difference format for my regular communications with them. The Board has always affirmed that the current format meets their needs.

All back issues of the Superintendent’s weekly updates are available upon request.

- **We can provide evidence the Superintendent has communicated major initiatives to the Board prior to their implementation.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Compliant

→ I communicate major initiatives to the Board through reports at School Board meetings and study sessions, as well as through my weekly letters. Examples from the past 18 months include regular updates at Board meetings about bond projects and plans to reopen schools during the pandemic. In addition, I made sure the Board was fully apprised of program and employee cuts necessitated by the failure of the levy in February 2020 and also about priorities for adding back certain positions. I informed the Board in advance about plans to unveil a new FerndaleCARES initiative in the fall of 2019 and invited them to attend the launch. I informed them in the fall of 2020 of plans to hire an Equity & Inclusion advisor. In short, I have made a concerted effort to keep the Board informed and involved in all major initiatives.

- **We can provide evidence the Superintendent has briefed the Board on accountability changes at the State or Federal level (such as ESSA).**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Compliant

→ Reports on State and Federal accountability measures have been essentially suspended during the pandemic. Prior to his leaving, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Scott Brittain provided the Board with periodic reports on the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), including standardized testing, changes in graduation pathways, and work with our targeted schools. Two years ago, when our District underwent a Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) by the State, we kept the Board informed of the process and outcomes. This past year, we provided the Board with information about the Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) plan, which we were required to write and submit because of a pattern in our District of over-qualifying Native Americans for special education services and which gave rise to our new Equity & Inclusion Team.

- **We have 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Compliant

→ On November 20, 2020, I administered a six-question survey to the five elected Board members and two student Board members to gather data for this Monitoring Report. The results of that survey are included as an Appendix.

In response to the statement “I feel I have been appropriately informed by the Superintendent about issues impacting the District in general and the Board’s work in particular,” 4 Board members indicated they “strongly agree,” 2 Board members said they “agree,” and 1 Board member said they “neither agree nor disagree.” None of the

comments provided suggestions for growth, other than perhaps a description of the my communication as “long and dense.”

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 or 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 show evidence the Superintendent has presented the Board with monthly financial statements reflecting all significant financial changes.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ Financial statements reflecting all significant financial changes have been presented to the Board as part of the support documents they receive each month in the meeting agendas posted on BoardDocs. In addition, my team and I team have responded to all questions related to these financial statements.

- **We can show evidence that the annual audit report from the State Auditors’ Office indicates all significant transfers have been done legally, according to a defensible rationale, and with Board knowledge.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ We have made no significant budget transfers during the past two years.

We can show 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.

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ On the November 20, 2020 survey, which is included as an Appendix to this report, Board members responded to the statement, “I feel I have been appropriately informed by the Superintendent and her staff about issues related to the budget” as follows: 3 Board members indicated they “strongly agree,” 2 Board members said they “agree,” and 2 Board members said they “neither agree nor disagree.”

The comments provided suggestions for improvement in (a) the depth of the conversations with the Board about the budget and (b) the usability of the format in which budget information is presented to the Board.

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 show evidence the Superintendent has collected survey results, interviews, and anecdotal data from diverse stakeholder groups, and has shared such information with the Board.**

___ Compliant
___ Non-Compliant
___ Partially Compliant

→ Early in 2019, the District acquired a new “survey” tool called Thoughtexchange that has allowed us to gather more open-ended feedback and provide our community with opportunities to read and rank comments from others during the course of the survey event. We have implemented large-scale Thoughtexchange events to learn our community’s priorities related to fulfilling the promises of the 2019 bond and to learn our staff’s response to the new District brand we call FerndaleCARES, which we rolled out in September 2019. We have also used Thoughtexchange to get feedback from staff on a

wide variety of internal questions and issues, although we have not generally shared the results of these internal surveys with the Board.

We hosted more than a half dozen community forums to get community and staff feedback about next steps after the failure of the levy in February 2019.

As part of our pandemic-inspired reopening process, we administered two different surveys to parents in order to gauge their needs and preferences. We also invited questions in response to our Facebook Live programs related to the pandemic. The information gleaned from these surveys and questions were widely shared and helped shape our reopening plan.

- **We can show evidence of the active participation of community advisory committees and task forces focused on significant District issues and initiatives (like the Bond Oversight Committee charged with overseeing capital projects work).**

___ Compliant
___ Non-Compliant
___ Partially Compliant

→ We have a long history of using advisory committees (ongoing groups that serve as a continuous source of input and feedback) and task forces (groups that come together for the amount of time it takes to complete a particular task) to inform the School Board, Superintendent, and Executive Team on issues critical to the implementation of the Board's Strategic Commitments. Prior to the pandemic, our active advisory committees included: (1) the Communications Advisory Committee; (2) the Safety Advisory Committee; (2) the PTO Leaders Advisory Committee; (4) the Equity Advisory Committee; and (5) the Bond Oversight Committee. The first three (Communications, Safety, and PTO Leaders) have been paused during this period of minimal in-person gatherings. The last two (Equity and Bond) have remained active.

During the past 18 months, we also ran a large Design Task Force for the new Ferndale High School, which met for approximately four months. (Although it was called the Design Advisory Committee by our architects, it was, by our definition, a task force.) During the summer of 2020, we facilitated an even larger Reopening Task Force to help shape our educational model and safety plans for fall of 2020.

We are committed to continually improving the way we involve people in decisions that affect them. In addition to our work with community advisories and task forces, we have also initiated new elementary and secondary staff leadership teams that have been meeting regularly during the pandemic, and we have increased our meeting time with all of our labor groups.

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 show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ While Erin Vincent served as our Director of Communications and Community Engagement, we devoted considerable time, with the help of the Communications Advisory Committee, to developing a Crisis Communication Pyramid to help guide our messaging about incidents that could draw significant public and/or media attention. The basic question answered by the Pyramid is “Who needs to know what by when?” The District administration and School Board are at the base of the pyramid. That means the School Board has been notified at the same time as the Ad Team. We have used the pyramid to guide us in dealing with incidents involving threats of violence, racial slurs, allegations of sexual misconduct against a staff member, and deaths of staff members and students.

Most recently, we have worked to ensure the School Board has been notified in a timely fashion about any changes in Health Department guidance related to the pandemic and has generally been kept up-to-date on all issues related to reopening or closing schools.

Regarding public comment at a Board meeting, we cannot recall an instance where we had knowledge ahead of time about comments we would be receiving that we did not share with the Board.

- **We can show evidence the Superintendent debriefed with the Board any situation where the Board could say in hindsight that they needed more information.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ Once again, we are unable to recall many instances when the Board let us know they needed more information than we had provided them. The only occasion that stands out for the Executive Team occurred at the March 31, 2020 School Board business meeting. We were 15 calendar days into a remote learning model mandated by the Governor in response to the pandemic; and we were still working out how to support staff, manage

operations, and serve students. One member of the Board expressed significant frustration about our lack of progress in developing and implementing a plan, the community's criticism of the District, and our failure to keep the Board adequately informed of our progress. While we did not formally debrief that situation, we did follow up by working harder to put in place an accountability system for staff and provide the Board and community with more information about our plans and processes.

- **We can show 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.**

___	Compliant
___	Non-Compliant
___	Partially Compliant

→ On the November 20, 2020 survey, which is included as an Appendix to this report, Board members responded to the statement, "I feel I have been appropriately informed by the Superintendent about issues that have drawn media attention or resulted in comment(s) at Board meetings" as follows: 4 Board members indicated they "strongly agree" and 3 Board members said they "neither agree nor disagree."

The comments did not provide suggestions for improvement. One Board member did acknowledge the difficulty in predicting what issues will ignite a conversation on social media and getting information out ahead of those conversations.

- 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 into 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 (BSR) 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 show evidence of an agenda item showing the Superintendent and School Board have reviewed, discussed, and recommitted to all of the GC and BSR policies, including their Social Contract, at least once annually.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ The last time the School Board and I reviewed, discussed, and recommitted to all of the GC and BSR policies was in June of 2019.

We can show evidence that the Superintendent has discussed any infractions of the Board’s Social Contract or other GC or BSR policies with either the Board President or the appropriate Board member.

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ Although we have two new Board members this year, who have had to learn their roles amidst one of the most challenging periods any of us can ever remember, I have not experienced any notable infractions of the Board’s Social Contract or other Governing Culture (CG) or Board Superintendent Relations (BSR) policies.

However, I also want to acknowledge that any failure to live up to our established norms is my failure and the result of our current situation, not a shortcoming on the part of the Board. We did not provide our two newest Board members the same level of orientation and onboarding as we have in the past, we did not have a summer School Board retreat as we have in the past, we did not get to spend time together at the WSSDA fall conference as we done in the past, and we have not reviewed our GC and BSR policies since our two new directors have been part of the group. One of the things I always tell our administrators is that whenever one member of a team changes, we have a new team. We have a new School Board team, but I have not taken all of the steps I know are important in the process of developing that team.

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** expresses 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 show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ Currently, our Board meeting agenda items are divided into broad categories: public comment, focus on students, focus on district operations, matters reserved for Board action, sharing, and consent agendas. We have indicated the purpose of each item under these broad categories by the verb used to introduce it, such as approve, receive, or discuss.

We are always amenable to suggestions for modifying the format of our Board agendas in ways that will improve them as communication tools for both the Board and the community. For example, when the pandemic began and we started including regular reports on our responses at every Board meeting, we placed those reports under “Focus on District Operations” on the Board agenda. At the suggestion of one Board member, we changed the placement of our reports to the section of the agenda entitled “Focus on Students” to more aptly reflect their purpose and our mission.

- **We can show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ On the November 20, 2020 survey, which is included as an Appendix to this report, Board members responded to the statement, “I feel 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” as follows: 1 Board member indicated they “strongly agree,” 4 Board members said they “agree,” and 2 Board members said they “neither agree nor disagree.”

One comment suggested that my communications could be more concise, at the same time acknowledging that brevity has its trade-offs in terms of both thoroughness and voice. I am open to suggestions and direction in this area.

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 show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ To the best of our ability, we publish information for Board meetings on BoardDocs one week in advance of meetings. Although sometimes we are unable to provide all of the supporting documents and resources for each agenda item a week in advance, when they are ready, we provide them to all Board members at the same time.

The only differentiation I have done to meet Board members’ unique communication preferences is to use a telephone call or text to remind a Board member to check his or her email, especially if I have sent a communication outside my regular schedule.

- **We can show evidence that requests for information from individual Board members have been shared with the full Board when appropriate.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ The Executive Team and I welcome questions from individual Board members, and we do our best to respond to them in a timely fashion. Generally, we subsequently share our responses to individual questions with the entire Board through (1) a report at a Board meeting, (2) an explanation in the Superintendent’s Monday update letter, (3) an item in the Superintendent’s monthly publication of written answers to community questions, or (4) some other means.

Examples include:

- One Board member asked why the District’s fund balance is currently higher than normal. We responded with a presentation at the next School Board meeting and an item in the Superintendent’s next edition of answers to community questions.
- One Board member asked about a designated space for Lummi language and leadership classes in the new Ferndale High School facility. We responded by making sure the architect included a specific reference to this area in our recent Virtual Town Hall on the high school design.
- During the levy campaign, one Board member asked several questions related to who pays for various aspects of campaigning so they could respond accurately to Facebook posts. In addition to providing the requested information, I included the information in in the next edition of my answers to community questions.
- Two Board members each asked questions about the Indian Policies and Procedures (IPPs) included in federal law and our locally-developed Joint Policies and Procedures (JPPs). I responded with an explanation in my next Monday update letter to the Board.

- **We can show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ Prior to the pandemic, I met with the Board President Dr. Erickson prior to every business meeting. In order to facilitate collaborative planning of the agendas, we made the decision to change the cadence of these sessions from 2-3 days before the Board meeting to 10 days or two weeks before the Board meeting. I regularly shared the dates of these sessions in my Monday update letters, along with an invitation for one other Board member to join us. Occasionally, one of the other members took me up on the offer.

With the advent of the pandemic, which coincided closely with Mr. McLaurin’s assuming the position of Board president the format of our planning meetings changed from in person to on the phone. The Board President and I talk and text regularly, and we often include one other Board member in our text communication. In addition, we both come to the District Office for all Board meetings, even though they are held remotely, thereby affording us a greater opportunity to support one another with written notes, technical assistance, and/or any last-minute changes in the agenda.

- **We can show evidence that the Superintendent has offered to hold private meetings with each of the Board members at his/her request and convenience.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ Invitations to talk or meet are regular features of the weekly letters I send to the School Board. Here are examples from the past year:

- 02.10.20 -- Next Monday (February 17) is Presidents’ Day, so I will not be back in your emailboxes with another update until February 24, the day before your next School Board Business Meeting. As always, feel free to contact me between now and then if you have a question or just want to get together to talk.
- 03.02.20 -- I think that’s all for tonight -- except to remind you that we are NOT having a School Board Study Session tomorrow evening (March 3), as we had planned several months ago. So this is just to confirm that I will not be seeing you

tomorrow -- unless you want to drop by or meet for coffee (only one or two at a time, of course, not a quorum!). Please do reach out if you have questions or suggestions or just want to chat.

- 03.23.20 -- Thank you, School Board, for your continued guidance and support. Give me a call if you want to talk about any of this. Or anything else.
- 03.30.20 -- I miss being able to see you, Please give me a call anytime you feel like talking. Above all, take care and stay healthy.
- 04.13.20 -- I hope you have been finding ways at home to enjoy this beautiful Whatcom County April and that you are all staying healthy. Call any time if you want to chat. If I am zooming at the time, I will call you back as soon as I can.
- 06.08.20 -- That's everything for tonight. Please reach out to me if there is any of this you want to discuss. It feels like a lot.
- 10.12.20 -- I hope you are all doing well. I definitely miss the opportunities we used to have to get together in person. Maybe that can happen at our November School Board meeting. In the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out if you want to schedule an appropriately distanced face-to-face or phone call. I would welcome the connection.
- 11.30.20 -- Please let me know if you want to schedule a time to get together to talk about any of the topics I've included in my letters -- or anything else. I would be happy to set up meetings with you individually or in pairs.
- **We can show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Compliant

➔ On the November 20, 2020 survey, which is included as an Appendix to this report, Board members responded to the statement, "I feel I have been treated fairly and equitably with regard to access to information" as follows: 2 Board member indicated they "strongly agree," 4 Board members said they "agree," and 1 Board member said they "neither agree nor disagree."

One comment suggested the Board, the Executive Team, and I might benefit from professional development focused on holding Courageous Conversations.

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 (see OE-8.1 above). 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 show evidence the Superintendent has informed the Board during the monitoring process of actual or anticipated failure to make adequate progress toward-achieving their Results goals.**

➔ We have aimed for complete candor and transparency in writing our monitoring reports on the Board’s Results policies. Our theory of action is that the path to improvement requires identification of current deficiencies. To illustrate our efforts to inform the Board of actual or anticipated failure to comply or make adequate progress, we have audited one Results monitoring report and pulled out an example.

From our report on R-2.6 (Academic Achievement, Arts)

Goal: Catalogue all of the Arts experiences the District provides students beyond the school day – such as Missoula Children’s Theater, high school plays, musicals, marching band, art-related guest speakers, assemblies, field trips, and clubs. By the end of the year, we need to be able to list all of the extracurricular opportunities available in the Arts, along with the number of students participating in these opportunities.

Our Response: As this catalogue suggests, we provide a large number of opportunities in the Arts. However, our data still has gaps we need to fill. We have not, for instance, captured:

- Art activities that occur in our classrooms at the elementary level.
- Art activities that are integrated into other curricular areas at the secondary level.
- All of the cultural arts that are occurring as part of our Mecha and Oksale clubs.
- All of Visual Arts contests our students are participating in.
- Community-based Arts education programs available to our students.

Expanding our catalogue will be part of the work we do during the year ahead. More significantly, our current data about Arts programs -- especially those occurring outside

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<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

the school day -- does not tell us who is participating. Or who is not. We need to figure out a mechanism for determining whether all of our students have equitable access to all of our Arts programs. Until we answer the access question, we cannot remove any barriers that may currently exist.

- **We can show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ Like our monitoring reports on the Results policies, we have aimed for complete candor and transparency in writing our monitoring reports on the Board's Operational Expectations policies. To illustrate our efforts to inform the Board of actual or anticipated failure to comply or make adequate progress, we have audited one of our completed monitoring reports and pulled out examples.

From our report on OE-4 (Personnel Management):

Indicator: We maintain a summary of awards and honors earned by our employees during the preceding year in recognition of their high quality.

Our Response: We do not currently have a central repository for maintaining information about honors and awards earned by our employees, and our call out to members of the Administrative Team this fall requesting such information did not yield any responses. In short, our current practice for tracking information about honors and awards is more informal than systematic.

Indicator: There have been no breaches in confidentiality practices as outlined in District policy and/or federal regulation.

Our Response: We know of one breach in confidentiality during the past year. In spring 2019, a District computer and set of hard copy student health files were stolen from the car of one of our employees. The employee immediately reported the breach, and our Executive Administration immediately thereafter began the process of notifying the parents and families whose information may have been compromised...

Indicator: We can produce sample agendas and participant evaluations from District-sponsored professional development programs.

Our Response: We are not currently collecting this information in any kind of systematic fashion. As a regional clock hour provider, the District does maintain an electronic record (including agendas) of the courses and activities for which we have awarded clock hours. However, we are not sure these records fully meet either the letter or the intent of this indicator.

- **We can show evidence the Superintendent has kept the Board informed as appropriate of progress, or lack thereof, toward meeting about issues and/or events that could negatively impact the Superintendent's ability to meet all of their policy expectations throughout the year.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ Although we created this measure when we developed our Phase One Report with interpretations and monitoring indicators for Policy OE-8, we are not sure what it means and how it differs from the previous two indicators. We think we might have been referring to the need for the Superintendent to keep the Board apprised of issues or events that could negatively impact our future ability to meet all of their policy

expectations. (We are suggesting a revision of the indicator to this effect., as indicated in red print.)

Our response to the rewritten indicator is affirmative. We can show evidence that we have helped keep the Board informed about such impediments to our fulfilling their policy expectations as (a) the levy failure in February 2020; (b) the subsequent lay off of over 100 employees, including 7 of 29 administrators; (c) the passage of levy in February at only 60% of our original ask; (d) the suspension of state testing; (e) the requirement that we reinvent our school system to transition from in-person to remote learning; (f) the significant decline in our enrollment in fall 2020 and the accompanying decrease in our budget; (g) the Governor’s OPMA proclamation that encouraged School Boards to devote their meeting time to essential work only; and (h) the decision to put a pause on the Board’s Annual Work Plan.

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 for which they have 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 show evidence the Superintendent has provided the Board with information about any new or revised administrative policy requiring their approval.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

➔ Although most often new or revised administrative policies requiring Board approval are placed on the Superintendent’s Consent Agenda, we do pull them out for discussion when a Board member asks us to do so or when we anticipate a particular policy may generate questions from the public or even media attention.

An example of pulling administrative policies out of the Consent Agenda for discussion occurred last July 2020. The policies in question dealt with medical marijuana use in schools and general medications in schools. We targeted them for discussion because we anticipated the first one might be controversial. We came back to them at several different meetings to ensure the revisions met with Board approval.

On the other hand, in November 2020, we asked the Board to adopt a newly required administrative policy dealing with transgender students. Although we could reasonably anticipate this topic might also be controversial, we did not extract it for discussion -- suggesting that we do not have a uniform protocol related to this indicator. We invite the Board to weigh in to tell us how they would like to process new or revised administrative policies in the future.

- **We can show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ We attest to the fact that we have provided appropriate back-up materials for agenda items requiring Board action (although there have been times when we could have provided such support documents in a more timely fashion to allow ample time for the Board to review them).

All back-up materials presented to the School Board can be found in BoardDocs in the archives of past meetings.

- **We can show 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.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ On the November 20, 2020 survey, which is included as an Appendix to this report, Board members responded to the statement, "I feel I have been appropriately informed by the Superintendent about all action items on their meeting agendas" as follows: 3 Board member indicated they "strongly agree," 2 Board members said they "agree," and 2 Board members said they "neither agree nor disagree."

Comments provided one suggestion for improvement. That is, we need to share resources and support documents related to Board meeting agenda items earlier to give the Board more time to study them, preferably at least by the Friday prior to a Tuesday meeting.

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 show evidence of monthly written responses to community questions and concerns.**

___ Compliant
___ Non-Compliant
___ Partially Compliant

➔ For the past five years, I have written responses to community questions and concerns that I have gathered during the month and posted them on BoardDocs under the Public Comment section of the agendas for all School Board business meetings and also, subsequently, posted on the District website. In December 2020, I wrote the 61st edition of this publication.

All back issues of the Superintendent’s monthly responses to community questions and concerns are available on the District website.

- **We can show evidence the District has responded to all questions and complaints communicated via the website portal called the *Listening Post*.**

___ Compliant
___ Non-Compliant
___ Partially Compliant

➔ We can attest that we have responded to all questions and complaints communicated to us through the *Listening Post* feature of our website. When an issue has been personal in nature, or when it named a particular student or staff member, we responded, as appropriate, only to the individual who posed the question or concern.

When the issue has been more general in nature, I have also included it in our monthly responses to community questions.

- **We can show evidence the District has appropriately weighed into conversations about District-related concerns on social media.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ When we had a larger Communications Team, we played a more active role on social media. At our current staffing level, we are doing less “weighing in” on day-to-day conversations. However, we have always adhered to the philosophy that our correcting every criticism or misstatement on Facebook is less effective than when members of the community step up to correct one another.

As an alternative to entering the fray on social media, we have developed a strategy for being more proactive in this space through our Every Thursday Facebook Live programs, which we will be broadcasting for the 20th time this week. We started the Every Thursday Q&A sessions to get information out about the levy and our plans for reopening school during the pandemic. However, they have been so well-received that we have branched out to include other topics. For instance, our December program schedule was as follows:

December 3: Health and Safety Guidance during the Pandemic

With COVID-19 cases on the rise across the country, we know many people are anxious to learn more about how the Ferndale School District is responding. This program will feature representative(s) from the Whatcom Health Department, along with Ferndale School District officials.

December 10: New Legislation about Sexual Health Education

Senate Bill 5395 (SB 5395) and Referendum 90 (R90) passed by the Legislature and Washington voters in 2020, takes effect on December 3, 2020. It requires all Washington public schools, by the 2022–23 school year, to provide “comprehensive sexual health education instruction that is medically and scientifically accurate, evidence-informed, age-appropriate, aligned with health and learning standards, and inclusive of all students regardless of their protected class status.” We know this legislation has raised questions for some families and community members. In this program, we will describe what we are currently doing in the area of sexual health education and explain why the new legislation will not require any changes in Ferndale schools.

December 17: Supporting Students’ Social and Emotional (SEL) Needs

Before the pandemic, SEL was gaining traction in schools, especially as research has shown that students who manage their emotions perform better academically and have fewer disciplinary issues. Now, as COVID-19 continues, as the national political scene continues to create division and stress, as the holidays approach, and as our schools employ all or partially remote learning formats, the philosophies associated with SEL are more important than ever in helping students cope.

We advertise these Every Thursday Facebook Live programs and invite questions about the topic in advance, as well as taking questions during the broadcast. They have created a positive presence for our District on social media.

- **We can show evidence the Superintendent has provided timely updates to the Board following the resolution of any significant complaint requiring investigative action.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ We believe we have fulfilled this indicator. Although we do not brief the Board on every personnel investigation we undertake, we do keep them informed through Executive Sessions at their meetings when one of our investigations results in the termination of an employee or a student/family situation that could potentially end up in litigation.

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 show evidence that the District has provided regular updates to the Board both on the District Improvement Plan and on individual School Improvement Plans.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ We have not provided regular updates on District or School Improvement Plans during the past year. We submitted each school’s improvement plan to the Board for their perusal and perfunctory approval to meet our legal requirements, but this is definitely an area that has fallen off our agenda as we have wrestled with the unique challenges of 2020. It is also an area where we believe the Board has given us permission to pause our efforts while attending to more urgent issues. However, we realize we need to resume this work (just as we need to resume our governance policy monitoring reports) and we are doing so. For example, at one of the bi-weekly secondary principals meetings in December, resuming our school improvement planning process was the main topic for discussion.

- **We can provide Board agendas showing regular reports from the District’s Teaching and Learning Department.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ Although the content our Teaching & Learning Department reports in 2020 has been very different from past reports, we have delivered them with greater regularity. Nearly every Board agenda for the past nine months has contained a status report from the Teaching & Learning Department about the new models of education we have invented for teaching and learning during a pandemic.

Through July and August 2020, the Teaching & Learning Department met weekly with a large community-based Reopening Task Force to invent a new system of pandemic-safe schooling. Not only did we report on the progress of this group at each Board meeting, but also two members of our elected School Board served on the Task Force.

The Teaching & Learning Department has reported on various other topics as well, including how well our Native American students are faring in Ferndale schools and our newly formed Equity and Inclusion Team.

- **We can show evidence that the District has briefed the Board annually on the information contained in the OSPI Report Card.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ We have not briefed the Board on the information contained in the OSPI Report Card for more than a year for three main reasons:

- (1) This was the purview of Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Scott Brittain. When both Scott Brittain and Paul Douglas left the District and were replaced with only one executive administrator, Faye Britt, this particular task was among those we temporarily put on hold as we were adjusting to a smaller team.
- (2) The advent of the pandemic, which created the need to reinvent our entire school system, also caused us to transition from in-person to virtual School Board meetings. The Governor’s order establishing this transition directed us to focus our meeting agendas on essential business only. We did not consider a review of the OSPI Report Card as essential.
- (3) The pandemic also changed the data we have been able to collect and report. Standardized tests were suspended. Grading practices were upended. Attendance and discipline data became oranges when compared to the apples of previous years. As such, the information contained in OSPI’s report card, became less informative about our current situation.

- **We can show evidence the Superintendent has briefed the Board on any significant changes to instructional programs or materials in advance of implementation.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Compliant
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant

→ As mentioned above, we have kept the Board apprised of the changes we have made in our instructional programs to meet the safety guidelines required by the pandemic. Our briefings have included information about new online learning management systems, such as Canvas and Google Classrooms, and new online curriculum purchases, such as Edgenuity, Achieve 3000, and Khan Academy.

Prior to the first levy failure and the pandemic, we were engaged in a major English/ Language Arts curriculum adoption at the elementary level. We reported to the Board on that process, which, unfortunately, has had to be tabled due to budget constraints.

Recently, we have reported to the Board our plans to launch a new home-based learning support program in January 2021, called Ferndale Family Partnership. This program has been designed to meet the needs of families who are not finding what they want in any of our existing programs.

Superintendent’s Final Remarks

I believe communication is the key to relationships, and relationships are the key to everything. With that said, the quest to provide just enough communication, just the right kind of communication, and communication at just the right time is never ending. During my nearly five decades as a professional educator, communication has shown up on every list of “areas for improvement” created by members of a staff or members of a community. Communication is critical. Good communication is hard. And the world of communications is every-changing.

I appreciate the fact that the Board made communication the focus of their second of six Strategic Commitments. I appreciate that you have infused the need for effective communication throughout your governance policies, as well as making it the main subject of OE-8 and a major portion of OE-3. This demonstrates your understanding that communication is the ingredient that can make or break any initiative. It reminds me that you expect me to be an outstanding communicator as well as a knowledgeable educator, competent manager, and visionary leader.

Putting together this report has caused me to consider areas where we -- and I -- can improve our communications, even with the scaled back team we currently have in place to manage these efforts. It has encouraged me to approach communications creatively and strategically, harnessing all of the tools and resources we have at our disposal. It has reminded me of the need to include a communications plan which involves you, the Board, as an integral part of any major initiative.

I started out by saying communication is key to relationships. I believe the converse is also true. Good, trusting relationships make good communication possible. We have experienced this truth during the past nine months, as we have made more intentional efforts to build strong relationships with our staff and our labor leaders. The results have been greater trust, which has led to improved communication, which has led to more collaboration, which has led to a better experience for students and families.

I feel fortunate that I have had such positive relationships with School Board members during the dozen years I have served as your Superintendent. I am convinced those relationships were built through open and honest communication; and, in reverse, our relationships have facilitated healthy, ongoing communication. This past year, however, I feel like my relationship-building efforts with our two newest Board members have been somewhat thwarted by the restrictions and challenges of the pandemic. I applaud the grace with which they have been able to jump into the deep end and keep swimming. However, that doesn't take me off the hook for failing to facilitate the development of our new team.

I welcome your feedback regarding this report. It feels at once both too long and incomplete. I anticipate you will help bring the most important pieces into focus for me, as you always do. Thank you in advance for your feedback.

Linda Quinn