MONITORING REPORT: Policy OE-12 (Safety)
***Formerly OE-13**

PHASE ONE: Interpretation and Monitoring Indicators

DATE: June 2019

Policy

The Superintendent will implement appropriate measures to protect the physical, social, and emotional safety of every student and staff member.

Interpretation

We understand this policy expresses the value the School Board places on providing an environment for all students and staff where they feel respected, supported, and physically secure. We further recognize that this policy maps back to the Board's sixth Strategic Commitment, which states:

> ***We commit to ensuring the safety of each student and staff member.*** *We believe that safety is a basic need and fundamental right of every person. A sense of safety is critical for learning and development to occur. Therefore, ensuring the physical, social, and emotional safety of all our students and staff is an essential priority within our school system.*

Monitoring Indicator(s)

Provided below for each component part of OE-13

The Superintendent will:

- **Ensure that all students and staff are provided with a safe and supportive school environment where:**
  a. **The social, emotional, and mental health needs of students are assessed, acknowledged, and appropriately addressed.**
  b. **Positive relationships are encouraged and nurtured.**
  c. **Expectations for behavior are clearly communicated and taught, and remediation for infractions is consistently and fairly applied.**
  d. **Violence, drugs, bullying, and harassment are not tolerated.**
  e. **Disruptions are minimized so that teaching and learning are not negatively impacted.**

Interpretation

We understand this component communicates the Board's expectation that we intentionally design, carefully implement, regularly evaluate, and continuously seek to improve the culture, climate, and overall environment in our schools. Because Board members know that (1) culture and climate are foundational to any safety

program; and (2) policies such as this one set the tone and help shape the culture and climate of every classroom and school, they have chosen to make "environment" the subject of the very first component of their safety policy. They understand that school safety is about more than hardening our buildings and honing our response skills. Although emergency preparedness is a critical element of any comprehensive safety program, the most important elements on a daily basis are focused on prevention and intervention. And prevention and intervention are dependent upon such critical elements of school environment as climate, culture, expectations, norms, protocols, and relationships.

We further understand the Board's expectation that we balance our focus on clear discipline, appropriate consequences, and attendant legal implications with a strong sense of fairness and concern for the dignity and integrity of every member of the school community. They believe excessive attention to wrongdoing, blame, punishment, potential lawsuits, and the minutiae of legal requirements can actually detract from the creative effort to build more peaceful schools. In the safe and peaceful schools we desire, justice is not as much about exacting punishment and retribution as it is about working to repair a safe and secure vision and create conditions for accountability, healing, and restoration.

In short, the Board knows that policies and laws are guideposts for human activity and cannot serve as substitute for basic humanity. Such humanity requires each of us to engage our common sense, common compassion, and common creativity to build a more secure environment for student learning.

- **Social, emotional, and mental health needs** refer to two different, although sometimes overlapping, domains. "Social and emotional needs" in this context relates to the recent increased national focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) in schools. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as "the fostering of social and emotional competencies through explicit instruction." The key word in this definition is "competencies." In other words, SEL focuses on skills that can be taught and learned with the employment of appropriate curriculum and pedagogy. In many respects, SEL is not an entirely new concept. Schools have always taught some variation of "social skills," although our current SEL emphasis has been informed by a much larger body of research-based evidence linking the development of competencies -- like building healthy peer relationships, responsible decision-making, self-management, self-awareness, and social awareness -- to success inside and outside the classroom.

  Based on this CASEL definition, Board members believe all students can greatly benefit from SEL programming. However, they also know that SEL may not necessarily be a sufficient condition to meet the specific individual supports required by students struggling with mental health conditions. Although some students may have needs related to both SEL and mental health, the two represent distinct domains and the terms are not interchangeable. SEL does not

encompass such mental health conditions as depression, anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and bi-polar disorder.

At the same time that Board members acknowledge the significant impacts on our educational system of untreated mental health problems in students, they also recognize that public school funding is insufficient to provide medical diagnosis and/or ongoing clinical therapy for students with mental health conditions. To address students' mental health needs, our District must rely on partnership with families and professional health service providers not only to provide treatment but also to educate staff.

- **Assessed, acknowledged, and appropriately addressed** means our District must be systematic in collecting SEL data and available mental health data about our students. To this end, we must have the capabilities to house such data in a secure fashion; analyze longitudinal trends across the District, schools, and individual students; deploy early warning systems; and triangulate multiple measures of data (e.g., SEL, mental health, attendance, grades, test scores, climate, bullying) in order to develop the kind of whole child perspective that will enable us to deliver the best possible programs, services, and interventions to match our students' needs. By anticipating problems and actively addressing them, we can increase our ability to provide safe schools.

- **Positive relationships** refer to the Board's understanding that caring, empathetic, affirming connections between students, adults, and peers in the school setting are critical both to student success and to school safety. Such relationships foster constructive social interactions and engender trust and support. Students who feel connected to school are more likely to succeed. They have better attendance, grades, and test scores. They are more motivated and stay in school longer. They are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Research shows that a school where a young person experiences positive relationships is second only to family as the most important stabilizing force in his/her life. The Board also believes that, to the extent possible, the work of building positive relationships within the school environment needs to involve administrators, certificated staff, classified staff, students, community, and family members. In other words, it is the responsibility of all who touch the school.

- **Encouraged and nurtured** means that building positive relationships in schools cannot be left to chance. The Board expects that we will intentionally create and nourish the relational climate of the school through (1) collaboratively developing clear norms for how people treat one another; (2) making it a top priority for adults working in the school to get to know students as unique individuals; (3) modeling healthy friendships and respectful interactions among adults; (4) celebrating strengths and accomplishments; (5) providing opportunities for team building activities; and, in general, (6) communicating that our organization places a high value on relationships.

- **Expectations for behavior** refers to the Board's expectation that we will proactively and, whenever possible, collaboratively develop the kinds of policies, procedures, rules, and norms that promote a stable school setting, and provide a solid foundation for a comprehensive approach to school safety. This aspect of Policy OE-13 Component 1 is directly related to Component 2 of Policy OE-10 (Learning Environment), which speak to discipline procedures.

- **Clearly communicated and taught** refers to the Board's understanding that school culture will be stronger and the risk of violence will be minimized when everyone is on the same page about what constitutes appropriate behavior. Therefore, the Board expects that we will inform and instruct staff, students, and parents/guardians about behavior expectations.

- **Remediation for infractions** refers to the Board's expectations that we will be diligent about holding students (and adults) accountable for their actions; and, when those actions violate the District's or the school's behavior expectations, we will work to repair the damage to the extent possible, correct the wrongful actions, and prevent the reoccurrence of those actions. We further understand the Board's position -- in line with new State discipline regulations -- is that suspending students from school for violations of rules should be a last resort. The Board is familiar with research showing that a zero tolerance approach specifically and suspension generally are not only ineffective, but also potentially harmful both to the student receiving the suspension and to the broader school community. As such, the Board expects us to strive to remediate infractions through alternatives to suspension that (1) are effective in changing students' behavior while keeping them in school, and (2) do not compromise the learning opportunities or safety of the school community as a whole. Board members believe a shift from a system of punishment to a system of student development has the potential simultaneously to diminish negative outcomes of harmful discipline policies, boost student achievement, reduce student misconduct, and maintain safe and orderly schools.

- **Consistently and fairly applied** refers to the Board's expectation that this policy, like all of their policies, will be interpreted and implemented through an equity lens. The Board wants to ensure that all school personnel understand behavior expectations at a deep enough level that they can implement them in a manner that is fair, equitable, culturally responsive, and aimed at restoring every young person to a productive learning state as soon as possible.

- **Violence** refers to the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community that either results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, physical or psychological harm.

- **Drugs**, in this context, refers to substances, either legal or illegal, that students ingest without a prescription by a physician and/or approval by a parent or guardian. Beyond issues of legality, the Board is concerned about the negative

physical and psychological implications of illicit drug use on young people. They are aware of the research demonstrating that use of and/or addiction to illicit drugs (1) impedes healthy development and (2) changes the way a person's brain works, consequently altering his/her thoughts and actions. In this context, drugs include alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana in addition to other illegal substances and misused legal substances.

- **Bullying**, as defined by OSPI, refers to "actions which are intentional, repeated, negative, show a lack of empathy, and involve a power imbalance. A person is being bullied when he/she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Negative action is when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words, or in other way. Note that bullying can be both overt and covert behaviors." In the context of this policy, bullying also encompasses cyberbullying.

- **Harassment**, as defined by OSPI, refers to "any malicious act, which causes harm to any person's physical or mental well-being." Types of harassment include: (1) discriminatory harassment, which "does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents"; (2) malicious harassment, which involves "threat to harm often based on protected category"; and (3) sexual harassment, which involves "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct directed at person because of his/her sex where (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's academic standing or employment, (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions or employment affecting such individual, or (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment."

- **Not tolerated** refers to the Board's expectation that we will not allow harmful conditions related to violence, drugs, bullying, or harassment to happen or exist in our schools. Rather, the Board expects us to (1) take an active teaching stance aimed at preventing such harmful conditions from occurring; (2) be vigilant in noticing and identifying when they do occur; and (3) apply appropriate corrective action to stop their re-occurrence.

- **Disruptions are minimized so that teaching and learning are not negatively impacted** refers to the value the Board places on positive, safe, healthy learning environments where teachers can teach best and children can learn best. This aspect of Policy OE-13 Component 1 is directly related to Components 4 and 5 of Policy OE-10 (Learning Environment), which speak to prohibiting disorderly, discourteous, harmful, hazardous, or unlawful conduct that impedes teaching and learning or threatens health and safety.

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

- A comprehensive District Safety Plan that addresses the importance of school environment to the overall safety of the organization and that includes strategies for creating social, emotional, and mental safety in addition to physical safety.
- Evidence that a coordinated District-wide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) plan is operational and strategies are being implemented in all schools.
- Evidence that a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework has been implemented with consistency in all schools.
- Evidence that the State's new discipline guidelines -- which diminish the use of suspension as a primary remediation tool -- have been enacted in all schools.
- Results of an annual review of District data on the corrective and disciplinary actions that have been applied within each disaggregated student category showing no disproportionality -- or, if disproportionality is identified, evidence of a plan for taking prompt action to correct it and/or ensure that it is not the result of discrimination.
- Evidence of the District's efforts to develop partnerships with community agencies that are able to provide nonacademic supports to reduce barriers to students' academic success, including supports to students' families.

2. **Ensure that each school and department maintains an up-to-date safety plan, defining actions for the prevention of, preparedness for, and recovery from emergencies and critical incidents.**

Interpretation

We understand this component expresses the Board's requirement for the District to develop an emergency management plan that aligns with the emergency planning practices at the national, state and local levels and includes the five mission areas called for in Presidential Policy Directive 8. Those five mission areas are:

Prevention, which refers to the capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or stop an imminent crime or threatened or actual mass casualty incident. Prevention is the action schools take to prevent a threatened or actual incident from occurring.

Protection, which refers to the capabilities to secure schools against acts of violence and manmade or natural disasters. Protection focuses on ongoing actions that protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, networks, and property from a threat or hazard.

Mitigation, which refers to the capabilities necessary to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency. In this document, "mitigation" also means reducing the likelihood that threats and hazards will happen.

Response, which refers to the capabilities necessary to stabilize an emergency once it has already happened or is certain to happen in an unpreventable way; establish a safe and secure environment; save lives and property; and facilitate the transition to recovery.

Recovery, which refers to the capabilities necessary to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment.

Monitoring Indicator(s)
We will know we are compliance with this component when we can show:
- A Risk, Safety, Security, Emergency and Crisis Management Plan (RSSEC) for each building and department.
- Evidence of an annual update and review of each building and department RSSEC plan.

3. **Train students and staff to implement safety protocols and guarantee regular practice of the same.**

Interpretation
We understand this component expresses the importance of ensuring that everyone involved in our District organization knows his/her roles and responsibilities before, during, and after an emergency. To this end, the Board expects that, at least once a year, all buildings and departments will hold a meeting to educate all parties, including substitute teachers, on their Safety Plan. Such education will include: (1) training on general skills necessary for individuals to fulfill their roles; (2) information about how various roles support the Incident Command System (ICS) and; (3) appropriate training on special skills such as first aid, threat assessment, and provision of personal assistance services for students with disabilities. In addition to the annual training, the Board expects students will participate in drills or exercises each month that focus on at least one element of the Safety Plan.

Monitoring Indicator(s)
We will know we are compliance with this component when we can show:
- A record of training provided to staff and students.
- Documented monthly drills in each school building recorded on a drill calendar log.

4. **Regularly evaluate and modify safety plans to assure their continuing relevance and effectiveness.**

Interpretation
We understand this component expresses the Board's expectation that we will "close the loop" when it comes to planning and processing. That is, we will use the information we gain from exercising our Safety Plan, reflecting on our actions, and keeping abreast of best practices in the field to make continuous improvements. The Board expects our safety plans will evolve as the school and planning team learn lessons, obtain new information and insights,, and update priorities.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

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

- Documented annual review and update of our RSSEC (Risk, Safety, Security, Emergency and Crisis Management) Plan.

5. Review facilities frequently to identify and address unsafe conditions.

Interpretation

We understand this component expresses the Board's expectation that we regularly assess all district facilities to prevent, detect, and repair any potential hazards. These assessments should be thorough enough to include walkways, doors, windows, roofs, parking lots, and fields, as well as the structures themselves.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

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

- Results of bi-annual facility security assessments, along with evidence that appropriate corrective action(s) were taken.
- Summary report on playground inspections, along with evidence that appropriate corrective action(s) were taken.
- Summary report of building inspections and work orders submitted and completed.

6. Develop partnerships with community agencies and first responders in the service of safety and security.

Interpretation

We understand this component expresses the Board's expectation that we will take a team approach to conducting operational planning related to safety. Case studies reinforce such an approach, pointing out that a common thread found in successful safety operations is a shared understanding of the role of each participating organization. Close collaboration between schools and community partners ensures everyone's efforts are coordinated and emergency management plans are effectively integrated.

The District's community partners must encompass first responders, local emergency management staff, and others who have responsibilities related to school safety before, during, and/or after an incident. This includes local law enforcement officers, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, school resource officers, fire officials, public and mental health practitioners, and local emergency managers. The expertise they each bring to the table will inform the development, implementation, and refinement of the District's emergency operations plan.

Monitoring Indicator(s)

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

- A contract with Ferndale Police Department for School Resource Officer.
- A contract with Whatcom County Sherriff for emergency services and support.

- A roster of participants in Safety Committees throughout the District.
- Roster of staff members who have been trained in the Threat Assessment process.
- A summary of community partners who participated in safety drills and/or exercises within the District.

The Superintendent MAY NOT:

7. **Permit any action or activity that creates an unreasonably unsafe condition for students or staff.**

   ### Interpretation
   We understand this component expresses the Board's expectation that maintaining safe environments for staff, students, and the community must be our highest priority. This means the Superintendent's number one goals are to anticipate, prevent, notice, identify, stop, and/or fix any situation or potential hazard that would be likely to cause harm.

   ### Monitoring Indicator(s)
   We will know we are compliance with this component when we can show:
   - A report on regular inspections of all District facilities and grounds.
   - Evidence of the ways the Superintendent has communicated the District's emphasis on safety to students, staff, parents, and community.