

**Issaquah School District
Executive Limitations Monitoring Report**

**EL-8 COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT TO THE BOARD
Annual Internal – October 14, 2021**

***The Superintendent certifies that the District is in compliance with
EL-8 with no exceptions.***

The Superintendent shall not fail to appropriately inform and support the Board in its work.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall demonstrate a regular pattern of providing essential decision and monitoring information to meet the Board’s work needs. This information is based on a reasonable anticipation of the work needs of the Board in cooperation with the Superintendent and the operations of the School District. Because the Board composition and informational needs change over time, this work will always be based on a dynamic set of understandings outlined in the Policy Governance structure established and followed by the Board.

Evidence of Compliance

- As the Superintendent, all information and support of Board meetings, the fulfillment of Board legal requirements, Board decision-making information and documentation, Board committee work and materials, Board official documentation and records, Board webpage on the ISD website and communications, calendars, work flow, and meeting logistics have been prepared and submitted in accordance with Open Public Meetings Act and all Washington state codes and laws.
- Open Public Meetings Act training was provided and attended by all current Directors and the Superintendent on March 29, 2018. The Public Records Act training occurred on December 12, 2018 during a work study prior to the regular board meeting and attended by all board members. Director Sydne Mullings joined the board in March of 2019 and took both trainings on April 19, 2019. These trainings occur every four years.
- The Superintendent, Superintendents Advisory Council and Superintendent’s Cabinet work together to make sure the Board is informed and updated on all matters of the District. Our Executive Emergency Response Team Guide continues to be updated and implemented to meet the challenges of mass media and new technological changes available to the public. The speed with which news and information travels today can present challenges when attempting to communicate with the Board before a story gets reported through mass media. The Superintendent and Cabinet have a Crisis Response Plan and District-Level Immediate Response system to address issues that meet the threshold of newsworthy events or crisis requiring Board notification. This plan includes our Board notification preferences as outlined in GP-5.2F. This was last updated in March of 2019 after Sydne Mullings was appointed to the Board.
- The Board is provided with frequent budget updates on the capital and operations side. These updates are typically provided in the board agenda packets. During the 2020-21 school year these updates occurred more frequently due to the pandemic. During the spring of 2021 the District updated the Board on budget shortfalls resulting in the need for a reduction-in-force.

- The District, in executive session, gave frequent updates on bargaining during the 2020-21 school year as a result of the pandemic. This included bargaining surrounding the creation of ISD L.I.V.E. remote learning and the eventual return to in-person learning.

Further, without limiting the scope of the above evidence the Superintendent:

1. **Shall not neglect to submit required monitoring data (BSL-4 Delegation to the Superintendent) in a timely, accurate, understandable, non-defensive and unbiased fashion, directly addressing provisions of Board policies being monitored and justifying his/her interpretation.**

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall submit all monitoring reports on time with reasonable allowance for emergencies and unforeseen circumstances. Further, all data, information, and Board materials will be presented in a manner acceptable to the entire Board to support the Superintendent's interpretation.

Evidence of Compliance

- All monitoring reports were submitted for the 2020-21 school year. Ends and Executive Limitations calendar has been developed and it lists all monitoring dates scheduled for the entire year for both Board and Cabinet use. A practice has been implemented to note our conversation and suggestions for future work when Ends and ELs are monitored.
- In accordance with B/SL-4 and EL8.5, I will continue to suggest the Board and Superintendent spend future time in Work Study or Retreat settings continuing policy work on Executive Limitations (ELs) and Board Governance Policies (GPs).
- To see posted monitoring reports: <http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/board/policies/Default.aspx>

2. **Shall not fail to report in a timely manner an actual or anticipated noncompliance with any policy of the Board.**

Interpretation

The Superintendent's monitoring reports must truthfully and accurately alert the Board to any condition of current noncompliance or condition of noncompliance considered likely in the future, and should include a plan for incremental movement toward compliance in a reasonable timeframe.

Evidence of Compliance

- All 2020-21 monitoring reports were approved by the Board. EL-9 Annual Report to the Community and EL-14 Instructional Program were both approved with exceptions due to the pandemic.
- During the May 9, 2018 monitoring of EL-2 it was pointed out that some special program parent advisory committee meetings were not held, i.e., Highly Capable and Special Needs groups. Since then these groups have held their annual meetings.

3. Shall not neglect to submit decision information required periodically by the Board or fail to inform the Board of relevant trends.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall periodically provide information, data, and evidence of trends necessary for the Board to make informed decisions in the following areas:

- Student achievement data relative to Student Ends
- Annual district budget and monthly budget status reports
- Enrollment projections for annual and long-range planning
- Ballot measures both levies and bonds
- Capital facilities planning and management
- Bond sales and debt restructuring
- School boundary adjustments and revisions
- Real estate transactions
- Census data for balancing school board director districts
- Other information as needed or requested by the Board

Evidence of Compliance

- The majority of these items and matters arise on a cyclical basis. School Board minutes document information provided in support of the Board’s work throughout the year. The Board and Superintendent also strive to be very transparent with all matters of the District and with the public. To the extent possible and legal, all of the above items are placed on the District website under the appropriate headings. <https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/board/dates/archive>
- With the planned opening of two new schools, the District created a Boundary Committee and created new K-8 boundaries.
- The Superintendent provided data related to COVID-19 including mitigation strategies, impacts on enrollment, budget, staffing, student engagement in remote learning and hybrid learning.
- Numerous public communications related to the impacts of the pandemic, including video messages, FAQs and E-News messages, all of which provided the Board with up-to-date information of the impacts the pandemic had on our school system.
- Information related to the Special Education Recovery Plan and the OSPI Academic & Student Well-being Recovery Plan
- During the 2018-19 school year a Superintendent’s Levy Feasibility committee was formed and they made a recommendation to the Superintendent for a Educational Program and Operations Levy which was then modified by the Superintendent and forwarded to the Board for consideration.
- In response to Board questions regarding ethnic and other subgroups’ discipline suspension rates, the Superintendent brought this data forward to the Board and has now included as part of the annual monitoring of EL-11. Data disaggregating by racial and other OSPI identified sub groups has now become the practice for all monitoring reports whenever possible and appropriate.
- During the 2018-19 school year the Superintendent recommended the purchase of real property located in the City of Issaquah within the Talus community which came before the board on December 4, 2018.
- The Superintendent recommended the ballot measure on February 11, 2020 Educational Programs and Operations Replacement Levy which passed by 63.66%.

- Updates on Providence Point property and meetings with City of Issaquah and PP Homeowners Association
- Facilitated HS Equity Listening Sessions
- Equity Department facilitated SRO Student Listening Sessions
- Teaching and Learning Department Facilitated Dyslexia Parent Information Sessions
- COVID-19 pandemic updates. Planning began in earnest in early March leading up to the closure of schools on March 13, 2020.
- Governor Inslee’s Stay Home Stay Healthy order and waiver of the Open Public Meeting Act, board meetings go virtual
- Grading policy change decisions in light of pandemic
- Decision to hold graduation remotely in 2020 and back to in-person graduation in 2021
- Summer 2020 - Planning team workgroups were formed for hybrid learning, decision process for going fully remote for fall of 2020, website regularly updated
- Bond Sale originally scheduled for March 26, postponed due to the pandemic and rescheduled May 28, 2020.
- Summer and fall of 2019 – informed the Board of two student deaths as a result of opioids and acknowledged an increasing trend of use by young people in our community. District provided community resources and information related to this crisis.

4. Shall not fail to advise the Board of any incidental information it requires, including anticipated media coverage, threatened or pending claims or lawsuits and material internal changes.

Interpretation

Whenever possible, the Superintendent will keep the Board informed of essential information to avoid “surprises.” The Superintendent and Cabinet continually update and refine our Crisis Management Plan to address events of noteworthy information for the Board or fast developing media events that are out of our control. Because of the speed of communications through new technology and individual’s ability to access mass media, updates to our plans are a continuous process. The Superintendent shall provide incidental information as agreed upon by the Board and Superintendent in some form of written guideline such as board minutes, emails, work session notes, linkage meetings minutes or notes, evaluations, contracts, Superintendent updates, memoranda or other written means by which the Board clarifies in advance what information the entire Board requires.

Evidence of Compliance

- The Superintendent’s routine communications (Superintendent updates, emails, text, phone calls, etc.) to the Board are designed to meet the “no surprises” standard as it relates to litigation, personnel matters of a sensitive nature, significant personnel changes, matters likely to result in media coverage, student safety and welfare, and calendar of events and commitments to name just a few. To meet the requirements of this limitation, I am supported by my Executive Assistant, Executive Director of Communications, members of the Cabinet, and occasionally members of the Leadership team (building principals, directors and supervisors). Regular updates and emails document this information flow, including periodic updates to staff and department newsletters which are copied to the Board. Of note, many major decisions are communicated to the staff and public through the District website, E-News, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube channel, and more traditional outlets including mass media.

- During the 2020-21 school year the Board was notified that Middle School #6 (Cougar Mountain Middle School) would not be open for the start of the 2021-22 school year.
- Other examples during the 2020-21 school year:
 - Good News stories: [ISD Webpage "Snapshots"](#)
 - Timely emails and updates from the Superintendent keep the Board apprised on potential media events
 - COVID-19 impacts to the system's ability to offer in-person learning for the start of the 2020-21 school year
 - Additional COVID-19 media coverage
 - The Superintendent informs the Board of all media interviews
 - Hiring and departure of Superintendent's Cabinet members
 - Assignment of Assistant Superintendent of HR as COVID-19 response lead

5. Shall not fail to advise the Board if, in the Superintendent's opinion, the Board or any of its members are not in compliance with its own policies on governance process and Board-Superintendent Linkage, particularly in the case of Board or Board member behavior that is detrimental to the working relationship between the Board and the Superintendent.

Interpretation

The Superintendent has the responsibility to bring matters to the Board's attention, when in his opinion, any Board behavior is out of compliance with Board policies (see EL-8.5). The Superintendent shall handle all Board non-compliance in the same manner complaints are brought to staff and remedied, when and if possible, with the individual Board member(s) to which it applies. If an individual matter or the infraction is of the entire Board, it shall be brought to the attention of the Board as a whole.

[EL-8 Communications - Board Policy](#)

Evidence of Compliance

- This requirement has not had to be used by the current Superintendent to date.

As noted in the interpretation, if the issue of policy or governance compliance is with a single Board member the situation would be addressed by making an effort to address the matter with the individual while keeping the Board president informed and/or other members of the Board informed as appropriate. If the situation involves multiple Board members it would be addressed during Board/Superintendent/Cabinet work study session(s), Board/Superintendent Retreats, and/or bi-monthly agenda planning with the Superintendent and Board President. When used properly, it effectively provides dialogue for improving policy governance and the roles of all participants. Our Board/Superintendent Retreat(s) have typically provided the opportunity to devote time for this discussion and for Policy work on GPs and ELs.

6. Shall not present information in unnecessarily complex or lengthy form or in a form that fails to differentiate among information of three types: monitoring, decision preparation, and incidental.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall submit all written and verbal reports/information in a manner which is short, concise, and to the point, distinguishing between reports to be used to oversee operations, to make decisions, or solely for informational purposes. Whenever possible, use website links to refer to information rather than providing lengthy handouts, etc.

Evidence of Compliance

- The Superintendent works to keep Updates and Board Agenda and Materials concise while adequately conveying the information. During the 2020-21 school year the Superintendent received no Board complaints regarding information prepared by staff that was unnecessarily complex or lengthy.
- We have added the Board to updates/newsletters from Teaching and Learning, Special Services, Equity Department and Human Resources Departments.
- As Ends monitoring evolves, reports should be more concise and useful. The format of all Ends Monitoring Reports was changed to embed evidence tables and links into the one monitoring document. More and more information and evidence is web-linked for easier access by the Board and community whenever appropriate.
- Superintendent updates include synopses of, for example; legal matters, property and construction updates, personnel changes and curriculum updates.
- Work Study on Boundary Review Process
- Work Study on Ends monitoring reports
- Each year the Board receives a copy of the school year's Guide to Understanding the Budget.

7. Shall not fail to provide a workable mechanism for official Board, Board officer, or Board committee communications.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall provide access to up to date technology to communicate effectively among Board members, Board committees, the community, staff, and the Superintendent. This technology provides access to district websites, email, and the worldwide web. I also interpret this to mean that the Superintendent will provide systems that will facilitate a reliable flow of information between the Board and Superintendent, Board President and Superintendent, and Board Committees and committee members (and staff).

Evidence of Compliance

- Many years ago, the Board elected to go paperless at meetings and is using technology as a means to do so to the extent we can legally. The Superintendent and Board President also hold regular communications and Board agenda planning meetings to ensure well planned and productive Board meetings. The Board has procedures to gather email communication and publicly report out. Also, the Board has been issued computers to do its work at Board meetings and address all school related responsibilities.

- Communications software Zoom and MS Teams were implanted to facilitate virtual board meetings and other meetings as a result of the pandemic.
- Productivity software such as MS Outlook is used to schedule meetings, appointments and manage calendars.

8. Shall not fail to deal with the Board as a whole, even when fulfilling individual requests for information.

Interpretation

Five individual elected board members comprise “the Board.” If the Superintendent provides information which has been requested by one Board member, it shall be provided to all Board members as appropriate. I further interpret this to mean requests or direction from one Board member shall not be treated as directive from the Board, but rather redirected to the Board as a whole for consideration. However, when “the Board” has made a decision to direct the Superintendent, it shall become the work of the Superintendent to comply and accomplish the directive.

Evidence

- Upon direction from the Board as a whole, information and materials are provided and distributed electronically the same way, at the same time, to all members. Additionally, Board files are kept in the Superintendent’s office to provide for traditional mailed materials and correspondence. With new and updated technology, most postal mail is electronically scanned and is forward to all Board members.
- A Board member requested information about K-1 attendance and Superintendent Thiele provided the data to the whole Board.
- In the spring of 2018 a Board Director requested information about possible future school sites. That information was provided to the entire Board.
- When discipline data broken out by subgroups was requested during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years all Board members received copies of this data. This data has been imbedded in the EL-11 document since the 2016-17 school year.

9. Shall not fail to supply for the Board’s consent agenda, along with applicable monitoring information, all decisions delegated to the Superintendent yet required by law, regulation, or contract to be Board-approved.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall advise and include consent agenda items that fulfill the Board’s legal, contractual and regulatory responsibilities. I also interpret this to mean that if the Superintendent complies with all of the Board GP, B/SL, and Executive Limitations he/she is free to lead the District in an appropriate and professionally sound manner as stated in B/SL-4.

Evidence of Compliance

- All administrative policies, personnel actions, contracts, and other actions requiring Board approval are routinely placed on the Consent Agenda for Board action. Background information, Board Reports, Superintendent Updates, Works in Progress, and monitoring reports of Ends and Executive Limitations material are also provided in advance to prepare the Board for action at all regularly scheduled Board meetings.

10. Shall not fail to advise the Board of significant transfers of money within funds or other changes substantially affecting the district's financial condition.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall advise the Board of significant transfers of money within any of the five identified budget categories. The Superintendent will also provide the Board with a monthly financial status report and other financial documents as appropriate. The monthly budget status reports will be regularly included on the Consent Agenda.

Evidence of Compliance

The following documents serve as evidence of EL-8.10. These include, but are not limited to:

- The monthly budget status reports
- Financial monitoring reports
- Audit reports
- School Start and End Time Processing for Basic Education Allocation (BEA)
- Written communications related to financial transactions such as Bond Sales and the deposits into our Capital projects account are provided as needed
- Bond and Levy Committee work and presentation
- Budget extension presentations when necessary
- Boundary Review Committee work
- Frequent construction updates and change orders
- Systems related to bids and purchasing

11. Fail to establish a procedure for informing the Board in a timely manner of the administrative disposition of complaints presented to the Superintendent by the Board.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall develop and implement procedures to inform and advise the Board of the handling of community concerns and complaints.

Evidence of Compliance

Evidence is provided to satisfy EL-8.11 through the following processes:

- Superintendent Works in Progress presented at all Board meetings [Board Meeting Archive](#)
- Superintendent updates with the Board Agenda and Materials on Friday before a regularly scheduled Board Meeting
- Confidential reports to the Board in Executive Sessions
- Emails to the Board
- Accumulating and summarizing communications directed to the Board in preparation for board meetings
- District Regulation 4220 and 4220P Complaints Concerning Staff and Programs
- District Regulation 3241 and 3241P Classroom Management, Discipline and Corrective Action
- Annual monitoring of Executive Limitation 3 Personnel Administration

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

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall develop and implement procedures to inform and advise the Board of instructional and curriculum changes in the District.

Evidence of Compliance

- Notify the Board to our shift to remote learning after Governor Inslee's school closure order in March 2020 impacting the instructional program
- July 2020 Superintendent Thiele recommended school begin fully remote and created ISD L.I.V.E.
- Notified the Board of the return to in-person learning for self-contained special education students in fall of 2020
- Notified the Board of return to in-person learning of specific grade bands in winter 2021
- Notified the Board of return of concurrent teaching model of grades 4 and 5 in winter/spring 2021
- Notified the Board of return of hybrid/in-person learning grades 6-12 in spring 2021
- Board and Public communications related to the implementation of the District's changed daily school schedules implemented in the 2017-18 school year.
- Frequent Board and community updates related to curriculum adoptions
- As Superintendent, I have developed communication systems and practices listed elsewhere in this report and EL-14 Instructional program. I am always open to Board suggestions and exploring new ways to improve education in the District through innovative approaches and sound educational delivery systems. As an example, the following are just a few of the innovative approaches we are implementing and have communicated to the Board and public:

Opening a new choice high school Gibson Ek based on a leave to learn internship philosophy in fall of 2016, adoption of new Common Core aligned curriculum in elementary math and middle level Language Arts, work related to re-thinking of grade reporting and homework practices, Lego Robotics Kits and Science Sensors and Probes for the elementary Science Tech Programs, SAGE Program and MERLIN Program, Partnering with Columbia University Teachers College to provide a new approach to teacher professional development, implementing new data aggregating software system (HomeRoom) for staff to use in analyzing student achievement data and to support the goal of development and tracking for student growth in the new evaluation system. Moreover, we have implemented a middle school advanced science pathway that allows students to take high school credited Biology in eighth grade, before and after school periods On Demand at our comprehensive high schools and expanding summer school options.

It is the Superintendent's responsibility to assign management tasks relative to this element and monitor their successful implementation using both formative and summative methods.

As Superintendent, I am committed to improving transparency wherever possible in the District. This will include curriculum, assessment and instruction initiatives, evaluation work, calendar updates and activities, sharing of assessment data, etc. This continues to be provided through the use of the District's website, E-news, social media, frequent updates to PTSA Council, ISF Board and other public meetings.

13. Inform the Board of any significant changes in District Regulations, either deletions, additions or amendments.

Interpretation

The Superintendent shall develop and implement procedures to inform and advise the Board of significant changes to any and all District Regulations. I further interpret this to mean that the Board wants to be in the communication loop and that we honor the “no surprise” rule.

Evidence of Compliance

All significant changes to District Regulations and have been communicated to the Board through various means including but not limited to:

- On-going review of all RCWs, WACs and OSPI technical guidance for changes by the Superintendent’s Cabinet to help ensure that our regulations comply with the law.
- Weekly review of all OSPI Bulletins by the Superintendent’s Cabinet to help ensure that changes to interpretation or rules related to RCWs and WACs are incorporated into our Regulations.
- Superintendent Works in Progress presented at all Board meetings
- Superintendent Updates
- Emails to the Board
- During the 2014-15 school year we began a practice of annual review, updating and revising District regulations as needed and as laws changed. These updates/changes are provided to the staff and public on the District website for public access.
- During the 2014-15 school year work began to review and update all District regulations with the goal of better alignment with our policy governance model. This work was completed during the 2015-16 school year. *(Please note that we now use the term District Regulations to describe what were formerly called policies. The term policies is now used exclusively to refer to Board Policies)*

Board approval: October 14, 2021