

Issaquah School District
EL-12 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Board believes that every student should have access to all academic and social-emotional learning supports that are necessary for them to achieve their full potential. Grading practices should be equitable and homework should meaningfully contribute to overall student learning

Executive Limitations Monitoring Report
June 8, 2023

The Superintendent certifies that the District is in compliance with EL-12 without exceptions.

The Superintendent shall not fail to establish and maintain a learning environment that is characterized by support and encouragement for high student achievement.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that the District sustains a learning environment that supports robust and rigorous learning experiences for every student, every day, in partnership with students and their families. I further interpret this to mean that the learning environment is supported by homework and grading practices that seek to reduce inequities that exist across the district in student learning experiences.

Accordingly, the Superintendent may not fail to:

1. Ensure that grading practices are equitable and based on a comprehensive and objective review of best practices research.
 - a. Determination of student grades should be driven by demonstration of mastery.
 - b. Students should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery.
 - c. Grading practices should be consistent across grades and secondary departments.
 - d. Departmental grading practices should be consistent across schools.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that grading practices reflect the learning of academic content for all students, are based on research, and are accessible to diverse learning needs and styles. I interpret this to mean that grades communicate to students and their families about their progress in learning academic content and course expectations. I further interpret this to mean that the District ensures alignment across the system so that:

- a. Students have a clear understanding of mastery and how there are different methods for how to show mastery.
- b. Students know how to access the process and journey of learning through multiple opportunities to show mastery (e.g late work, clarity around what mastery looks like in each like course).
- c. Students experience transparency and consistency in approach to grading across grades courses, and across schools.
- d. Students will not be graded on non-academic factors.

EVIDENCE

Elementary:

- Elementary teachers are provided with a grading guide to support consistent application of standards-based report card.

Secondary:

- Teachers participated in two modules in [October 2021](#) and [January 2022](#) where they worked to align their practices to: [ISD Grading Principles](#)
- Aligned gradebooks in [school course teams](#) (e.g.: all Geometry) to be implemented in 2022-23. [The results](#) of the course team submissions were reviewed by T&L and Principals to be used in planning for 2022-23.

...the Superintendent may not fail to:

2. Ensure that homework practices are equitable and based on a comprehensive and objective review of best practices research.
 - a. Homework practices should be consistent across grades and secondary departments.
 - b. Homework practices should be consistent across schools, not necessarily including elementary special programs and accelerated offerings such as AP, IB, and high school courses at middle school.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that teachers establish homework expectations aligned to best practices, are calibrated and consistent across grade levels and content areas, are developmentally appropriate, and are accessible to students with diverse learning needs and styles. Homework practices should prioritize learning over volume in accordance with the course expectations. I further interpret this to mean that homework assignments are intentionally focused to support the learning outcomes and objectives.

EVIDENCE

Elementary:

ISD Regulation 2422 and the Guidelines for Elementary Homework help teachers and principals calibrate and maintain consistency across the elementary grade levels. In June 2022, a survey went to teachers and parents about homework.

- [Elementary Teacher Homework Survey June 2022](#)
- [Elementary Parent Homework Survey June 2022](#)
- [Translations to the Elementary Parent Homework Survey June 2022](#)
- [K-5 Homework Guidelines](#)

206 teachers responded

660 parents responded across all elementary schools.

In general, the teacher respondents were following the Guidelines for Elementary Homework and ISD Regulation 2422P

- Differentiation is attempted
- Choice is offered
- Reading is required
- The ten-minute rule per grade level is used as a guide for quantity

There is a range of response for what role homework plays for elementary school and whether it is even needed.

- Out of 45 intermediate staff members surveyed, 82% mentioned that they believe reading and/or math practice homework is important in later grades for preparation in middle school
- Out of 536 K-5 parents surveyed, 3% mentioned that they feel it is important for intermediate grade students to have homework for preparation in middle school
- Out of 48 K-5 parent comments, 20% mentioned that they feel there should be no homework at the elementary level
- Out of 48 K-5 parent comments, 15% mentioned that they want more homework or more supplemental work at the elementary level

Of the 660 parent respondents, 101 were fifth grade parents.

- Twenty percent of fifth grade parents reported that their child is in a special program such as the Science Technology Magnet, SAGE, or MELRIN.
- In general, 65% of fifth grade parents reported that they are constructively involved in their child's homework and are able to help as needed and offer supplemental activities such as reading aloud, additional reading practice, or time with math materials and software programs if needed and desired
- Ten percent of parents reported that they are not constructively engaged in their child's homework because it is a struggle to get their child to engage with assigned homework and it causes conflict.
- Four percent reported not being constructively engaged because they do not understand the homework enough to help.

- The remaining 21% reported “other” and wrote comments. These comments mentioned a desire for more assigned homework, having a student who works independently and not needing help, feeling there should be no homework to allow time for friends and family and not requiring their child to do more than read.

The parent survey revealed that one school was perceived as a “No Homework” school. The principal was notified of this perception. The principal convened the leadership team which reviewed the school’s homework philosophy and handbook information. All staff were informed of this perception and were given resources for correction to align with district regulation and guidance; information about homework was shared at curriculum night.

Secondary:

The gradebook alignment work completed by teacher teams during non-student day PD included alignment in grading categories, weighting, and frequency/volume of work which includes homework. The results of the course team submissions were reviewed by T&L and Principals to be used in planning for 2022-23.

[Secondary Grading - EL-12 Learning Environment PP](#)

...the Superintendent may not fail to:

3. Solicit regular feedback from stakeholders on grading and homework practices, with consideration for overall student workload.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that the District and school staff make every effort to incorporate feedback from constituent groups on grading and homework practices to ensure a focus on student choice and relevance, reduce of stress for students and calibrate for consistency across schools.

EVIDENCE

Secondary:

High School administrators created a [high school student survey](#) that included questions about grading and homework. The survey results were shared with teachers and used to plan in 2022-23. Key takeaways from the survey results:

- Consistent student desire to have opportunities to recover from late work
- Consistent student feedback that teachers having effective communication about assessments/due dates/grading is important

...the Superintendent may not fail to:

4. Ensure access to student-driven opportunities to explore non-core options, especially in the areas of CTE, STEM and fine, visual and performing arts, providing career-connected learning.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that each school will provide a variety of electives and choices that support students' passion and potential.

EVIDENCE

Secondary:

The course guides below provide all of the course offerings available to students. Any course that a student takes outside of the courses they select to meet their core course requirements are considered elective courses. Each winter, students are provided an opportunity to review their transcript and then use the course guide to plan for the next school year. Students select courses of interest that meet graduation requirements and select additional electives that align with their personal pathways.

- Issaquah High School [course guide](#)
- Liberty High School [course guide](#)
- Skyline High School [course guide](#)

...the Superintendent may not fail to:

5. Consider student opinion in academic remediation and acceleration opportunities.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that the District will support students and their families through dialogue and analysis of pathways and options to support student selection of courses. I further interpret this to mean that students are aware of the types of courses and remediation that support their learning needs, academic and career pathways, and the result of these choices in relation to future course opportunities and pathways.

EVIDENCE

Secondary:

School course guides that are also listed in 12.4 above which highlight the self-select course opportunities for students

- Issaquah High School [course guide](#)
- Liberty High School [course guide](#)
- Skyline High School [course guide](#)
- All high school students participated in High School and Beyond Planning activities that align with their individual plan (e.g. of assignments can be [seen here](#))

...the Superintendent may not fail to:

6. Ensure that opportunities for social-emotional learning are embedded throughout the K-12 experience.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) opportunities are aligned with Washington State and CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) standards across all grade levels and content areas and are delivered in developmentally appropriate ways.

EVIDENCE

The adopted Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, Second Step, is aligned with [Washington State](#) and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) standards. The documents below show how the CASEL standards appear in the Second Step Curriculum for grades K-8.

- Second Step K-5 CASEL Alignment
- Second Step Middle School CASEL Alignment

In 2021-22 all high school teachers embedded an SEL lesson aligned with the WA State SEL standards into their courses

...the Superintendent may not fail to:

7. Provide adequate access to counseling and mental health supports.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that each school will have counseling services and mental health resources, with clear communication to students and families about how to access these services.

EVIDENCE

The Issaquah School District's comprehensive counseling program includes responsive and integrated counseling services and mental health supports. Information about, and access to these services is available on district and school websites [Counseling and Mental Health](#). The district website shows the name and contact information for counselors by building.

- In 21-22, there were 46 school counselors, serving all schools in the district. School counselors have a caregiver resource sheet that can be shared with parents as needed. [ISD Caregiver Resource Sheet](#).
- The universal screeners used in the ISD (BIESY at elementary and SDQ at secondary) allow school teams to proactively reach out to parents if students report high internalizing behaviors.

The district maintains a contract with Swedish to provide School-Based Mental health counselors. In 21-22, this contract added a school social worker to each secondary school, and four school social workers to be shared at the elementary level. The District website shows contact information for the [School-Based Mental Health](#) service providers.

Also available on the district website are updated resource lists for families in crisis including grief and suicide prevention resources, and community resource contacts for support in the areas of abuse, addiction, advocacy, basic needs, interpreters, immigration services and youth and family services, as examples. In 21-22, each secondary counselor provided an additional website presence through Canvas, accessible by students. All building-based counselors have a counseling department website, and going forward, these websites will be consistent and aligned with district standards.

...the Superintendent may not fail to:

8. Ensure that special education students have equitable opportunities and necessary supports to reach their full potential in an environment that is welcoming, safe, and as inclusive as possible.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that the District is continuously reviewing options and programs and partnering with families and educational staff to implement special education services and fulfill a student's individualized education plan.

EVIDENCE

During the 2021-2022 school year the Special Services department focused on recovery and transition recovery services. Recovery and transition recovery services were additional services that were offered to students that qualify for special education services to address lack of appropriate progress on IEP goals due to missed or limited services or for other reasons as a result of the pandemic. IEP teams made individualized student decisions about recovery and transition Recovery Services with a focus on addressing unique needs and unique impacts for each student and family. Recovery services meetings utilized a proactive and collaborative decision-making approach with guiding questions and a data protocol.

- In the Fall of 2021 over 1,700 families of students were offered a recovery services meeting. Recovery and transition recovery services were offered within a comprehensive framework that included was not limited to direct specially designed instruction in areas such as academics, social emotional learning, behavior, speech and language services, etc.
- During the 2021-2022 school year more than 1,550 students completed their recovery services. Recovery services meetings and service delivery were a collective systemwide effort in partnership with students and families.

An additional focus of the special services department during the 2021-2022 school year was on social emotional wellbeing for both students and staff. Staff received training within

professional learning communities and student supports were provided at the building level to include consultation and direct services from special services staff members such as special education teachers, board certified behavior analysts, social workers, school psychologists, and other related service providers.

As presented in EL 16, Special Services leaders conducted listening sessions to partner with families about the IEP experience for students and families. Insights and information gained were used to inform staff training on the IEP process, inform program improvements, and support family and community partnerships going into the 2022-2023 school year.

Board Acceptance: June 8, 2023