

Issaquah School District
Executive Limitations Monitoring Report

EL-10 STRUCTURE OF SCHOOLS
Annual Internal Report - February 8, 2024

The Board believes that all students should have the benefit of an effective and efficient learning environment that offers a balance between academic and co-curricular activities while safeguarding student health.

The Superintendent certifies that the District is in compliance with EL-10 without exceptions.

The Superintendent shall maintain a K-12 structure of schools that ensures an effective environment that supports challenging and relevant opportunities for all students to achieve at levels defined in the Board's Ends policies.

Accordingly, the Superintendent may not fail to:

- 1. Prevent the instructional time provided for students during the academic day from being interrupted by unnecessary intrusions, unnecessary teacher time out of the classroom, or the scheduling of activities that can be scheduled during other times.**

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean that District administrative leadership in partnership and collaboration with principals set the tone for maximizing instructional time, develop guidelines and protocols that minimize interruptions to classroom instruction and teacher absence while ensuring activities and teacher professional learning are intentional and align with learning standards and lesson objectives.

Evidence of Compliance:

To provide professional development opportunities for staff, while setting a tone of maximizing instructional time, district leadership coordinates District-wide professional development, fully using non-student days in August, October, and January. For example, during the October non-student day, all secondary teachers participated in High Leverage Instructional Practices training, focused on the four instructional stages.

Mandatory professional development for specific groups must be delivered within the workday to ensure the content; is aligned to District priorities, is research informed and utilizes best practices, and can be delivered with fidelity across the District. District release days for mandatory professional development is generally limited to 35 substitutes per school day, in attempt to avoid a student experiencing many substitute teachers on a particular day. For example, if the district is holding a 7th-grade language arts mandatory training, there would not be a 7th-grade math training on the same day.

Optional professional development in the form of after-school meetings, book studies, and virtual training opportunities remain a component of the overall District professional development plan and are offered outside of the school day.

No more than 25 certificated classroom staff may use personal leave on a Friday, on a day before or after a major break, or on a workday before or after a district-recognized holiday. Staff members not requiring a sub are not counted in the limit of 25. Certificated staff may be refused a request for leave on the first five and last five student days of the school year.

2. Adopt a District calendar for the school year that best serves the learning needs of students and achieves the Board’s Ends policies.

Interpretation:

The District has an existing contract requiring the annual calendar to be negotiated with Issaquah Education Association (IEA) and this practice is supported by Washington State Public Education Relations Commission (PERC). I interpret this policy to require the administration to identify calendar elements that impact student learning in partnership with the Board, and in consideration of staff and family input, and work through the negotiations process toward a series of calendars.

Evidence of Compliance:

The Board discussed the calendar on 10/27/22. Issaquah School District (ISD) and Issaquah Education Association (IEA) agreed on school calendars for three school years through 2026 school year (2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026) and was ratified in the board meeting on 11/10/2022.

3. Select bell times that meet District and state requirements while considering students’ instructional (academic) needs, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and health and well-being at a reasonable cost.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean that the District has bell times for the start and end of the day that meet state requirements for instructional minutes as required under the Basic Education Act (BEA). The bell times allow for dedicated time for announcements and additional student support in the form of morning circle, homeroom, and flex time. This assures that building schedules can minimize interruptions to the academic program while balancing the student health needs, well-being, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities at a reasonable cost to the system. It is within the District’s purview to make the case for changes to our bell times pending Board approval for any significant secondary school schedules and provided the changes meet the parameters outlined in EL-10.

Evidence of Compliance:

[ISD BEA Compliance Report 2022-23](#)

[ISD BEA Compliance Report Detail 2022-23](#)

The attached BEA Compliance Report shows that the bell times for ISD schools meet state requirements.

The district engaged in a feedback survey from staff and families on school calendars between September 26 and October 6th of 2022. The results of the survey were presented to the board on October 27th, 2022.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) opportunities vary across each level of school and address overall student health and well-being. To support the well-being of students, 15 consistent Second Step lessons are delivered in grades K-8 and specific SEL lessons were delivered at the high school.

- At the Elementary level, classroom teachers deliver a minimum of 15 lessons from the Second Step K-5 curriculum each school year, and morning circles are a support tool used to set each student up for a successful day.
- At every middle school, the homeroom period allows for at least 15 Second Step lessons, seven lessons from the digital citizenship curriculum, and a chance for students to connect with teachers. Weekly minutes dedicated to homeroom ranges between 110-140 minutes per week.
- Middle school co-curricular activities such as clubs, activities and athletics occur after school, not interrupting the learning program. An exception to this would be the annual music contests; students typically miss part of a school day to participate in regional music contests.
- High school flex time is used to deliver non-content specific information, which protects the class minutes assigned to academic program delivery. The comprehensive high schools have flex time on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with weekly minutes dedicated to this work between 75 and 95 minutes per week. Gibson Ek offers these activities, along with academic advising through their advisory period, which reflects 190 minutes per week of the student day. In the 2022-23 school year, SEL lessons were prepared by district staff and delivered at the classroom level during flex time. Student feedback included interest in building these topics throughout the learning day, and that some lessons fell short of the desired outcomes. Going forward, a plan for SEL lessons to be embedded throughout the content areas is planned.
- High school students involved in competitive activities such as DECA, Robotics, etc., may miss school time for annual contests. Student athletes who play in playoff games and matches may miss school for these events. Generally, the schedule for daily co-curricular activities such as practice or club meetings occurs after school.
- Elementary morning circle, middle school homeroom and high school flex time can also be used for students to check in with teachers, retake tests, make up work from an absence, check in on long term assignments or small group lessons on topics such as executive function or skill development.

Accordingly, the Superintendent may not:

- 1. Change the basic grade level configuration of schools (K-5 elementary schools, 6-8 middle schools, and 9-12 high schools) used in the District without Board approval.**
- 2. Make significant changes to any secondary school building schedule configuration (e.g. block schedule, 6-period day, semester or trimester schedule) without Board approval.**

Interpretation:

I interpret this to be a Board decision supported by input, research and recommendations provided by the District.

Evidence of Compliance:

In the 2022-2023 school year, Liberty High School transitioned to a 7-period day, in alignment with Issaquah and Skyline High schools' schedule as a result of the Board action taken on 12.12.2018 adopting a 7-period modified block schedule for LHS no earlier than the fall of 2022. *Note: Issaquah and Skyline High expanded from a 6-period day to a 7-period day in 2019-20 due to the same Board action.*

No changes occurred to the basic grade level configuration of schools.

Board Acceptance: February 8, 2024