



OE-9 Communicating with the Public
Policy Type: Operational Expectation

Annual Monitoring Report for School Year 2023-2024 – January 16, 2025

The Board believes that the school district community should be well-informed of student performance and the financial condition of the district. Information should be communicated in a clear and easy-to-understand format.

The Superintendent certifies that the district is in compliance with OE-9 without exception.

The Superintendent shall ensure that the community is informed about the condition of the district and is engaged in defining and supporting its direction.

The Superintendent will:

9.1 Ensure the timely flow of information, appropriate input, and strategic two-way communication between the district and the community that builds understanding and support for district efforts.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean that the district is intentional, timely and responsive in the sharing of information with the community about key district efforts. The district seeks input at appropriate times and for appropriate topics, and there is follow-up and communication about the feedback and input provided, and how feedback is, or is not, being used.

Proposed and Sample Evidence:

This Operational Expectation was updated in July 2024 and evidence for next year's monitoring report could include efforts to support the 2024 School Modernization & Construction Bond, the 2025 School Bond which includes the use of Thought Exchanges, the publication of the work on empathy interviews and community listening sessions.

For the 2023-24 school year, the district used a variety of traditional and digital communication channels to ensure the timely flow of information and opportunities for two-way communication. The primary set of activities included empathy interviews and engagement on three core topics: secondary innovation, equity-based budgeting and the Bond Advisory Committee. Much of this effort was driven by the strategic plan's priority area focus on engagement.

In addition, the district engaged in two-way communication to foster understanding and support for district initiatives through its "Family Advisory Group" through the Equity Department. This group comprises culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse community members representing various feeder patterns within the district. The group serves as a bridge between the community and the district, providing valuable input on district programs and sharing their lived experiences with these initiatives.

District departments were invited to present their programs to the Family Advisory Group, which offered feedback and suggestions, and raised concerns to ensure the programs meet the needs of all students and

families. For instance, last year, the Family Advisory Group provided input on critical topics such as the Strategic Plan, the November 2024 Bond, Elementary Report Card revisions, and Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) initiatives.

9.2 Maintain family engagement that recognizes the needs of our diverse students and ensures active participation of students' families.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean that the district ensures that communications are tailored and incorporate the preferred languages and cultures of our families to encourage active participation across all demographics.

Proposed and Sample Evidence:

This Operational Expectation was updated in July 2024 and evidence for next year's monitoring report could include efforts to increase participation and partnership with cultural brokers.

For the 2023-24 school year, the family partnership team hosted a variety of family information nights, the district worked in partnership with the PTSA Council, the district hired its first Language Access Coordinator and planned the district's first Back-to-School Resource Fair, which was hosted at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

The Language Access Coordinator, funded via the Language Access Grant, was introduced in February 2024 to provide equitable communication to better support Limited English Proficient (LEP) families. Key achievements include implementing the district's Language Access Plan to provide resources to support more than 90 languages spoken in the district, training staff and promoting culturally responsive practices. Future efforts will focus on regulatory compliance and training, providing translation devices and increasing support at the school level, and fostering stronger community connections.

[The Family Partnership Team's family information nights](#) are designed and based on feedback from the Family Partnership Advisory group and from Parent Panels held in the schools. Families new to the U.S. public schools have shared that they have many questions and experience confusion in understanding the basic policies, procedures and systems in schools since it is all so unfamiliar. Based on that feedback, the Equity Department team designed the "Tips and Resources for New Families" information event. We presented these sessions for elementary, middle and high school so they focused on the practices and key differences in each of these systems. Topics such as lunch, transportation, communications with school, school calendar, role of school counselors and other key staff are covered.

9.3 Develop connections and strategic partnerships throughout the larger community focused on understanding and contributing to district efforts to help all students achieve the Board's Results policies.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean that the district fosters connections and partnership throughout the community and works together around mutually beneficial goals that support all students.

Proposed and Sample Evidence:

This Operational Expectation was updated in July 2024 and evidence for next year's monitoring report could include our approach to partnership, a recap of strategic partnerships and additional information related to the November 2024 Bomb Cyclone in partnership with the City of Issaquah.

In 2023-24, the district began new partnerships with Care Solace and with Communities in Schools to strengthen community connections and to meet the needs of our larger community and at some of our larger secondary schools; the district continued its ongoing partnerships with Issaquah Schools Foundation, Swedish Mental Health, the Garage, and others.

In November of 2023, The Equity, Belonging and Family Partnership department formed a collaboration with a mental health and substance abuse care coordination hub called Care Solace. This was in response to Enrollment Verification Process survey data that indicated that the number one basic need families identified wanting help with is accessing mental health care therapists and/or programs. Care Solace finds therapists, programs, navigate insurance (including no insurance), and coordinates future appointments and care. This service is free of charge to students, families, staff, and families of staff, and is available 24 hours per day, every day of the year in many languages.

Communities in Schools (CIS) provided support to students at Issaquah High and Issaquah Middle school. Their mission is to “surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.” At each school, a full-time site CIS coordinator provided Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to students as a part of the CIS model that in particular focuses on tier 2 supports and attendance. They also helped connect students and families with resources in the community. For example, at IMS, the CIS staff has helped families find after-school programming for students. The CIS staff have been engaged partners in supporting the needs of students and families in both schools.

Swedish School-Based Mental Health Counseling Program (SBMHC) provided licensed Clinical Social Workers for in-person services at schools. The social workers' primary role is to provide mental health counseling and tier 2 support for students with mild to moderate mental health concerns. Support is time limited, and prevention focused. Services through SBMHC also include:

- Referrals to community-based services for students needing more intensive and/or specialized treatment.
- Consultation with staff, participation on school-based threat assessment teams, crisis response, presentations and mental health education.
- Consultative services to the Early Childhood and Assistance Program staff and families.

The Garage has been a collaborative partner in planning the district’s Back-to-School Resource Fair and Community Advisory Board for the 2024-25 school year. During the 2023-2024 school year, Counseling and Student Well-Being/Equity, Belonging and Family Partnership team met quarterly with the Garage staff to discuss program updates, community resources and emerging needs in the community.

9.4 Ensure that district successes are shared within the local community and with other appropriate audiences.

Interpretation:

I interpret this to mean the district ensures that we use consistent, predictable communication channels and methods to share the success of students, staff and our overall efforts as a district. Specifically, the methods we use are also being evaluated for accessibility, reach and engagement.

Proposed and Sample Evidence:

This Operational Expectation was updated in July 2024 and evidence for next year’s monitoring report could include efforts to increase reach and engagement via print publications, website, email bulletins, social media, and use of video.

In the 2023-24 school year, the Communications Team published the district “Weekly Bulletin: The 411” on Mondays when school was in session, along with special bulletins as needed. Other regular communication methods include: Horizons news, an occasional digital publication designed to share stories of excellence, achievement and engagement; FOCUS print newsletter, which is mailed to all residents of the district twice per year; regular updates to the district website and school building websites; an annual Student Art Calendar; the ISD Insider, a twice-monthly bulletin for district staff; and weekly “Rave Reviews” from staff members to other staff members. The team also publishes to district social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (Twitter) and LinkedIn.

- The district bulletin has open rates averaging 55-65%; and click rates averaging 5-20%. These metrics are significantly above national standards.

Also in the 2023-24 school year, the Communications Team earned seven awards from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) for:

- Excellence in Writing: “Hard Work, Dedication Helped I.H.S. Senior Overcome Obstacles” and “Student’s Smile is Best Part of Each School Day, Para Says”
- Video Series Award of Excellence for Superintendent Community Updates
- Single Video Award of Excellence: “Voice MentorQ with Kaili” and “The Skyline Shooting Stars”
- Award of Merit: Monthly Financial Report and “Horizons” Digital Newsletter

9.5 Prepare and publish, on behalf of the Board, an annual progress report to the public that includes the following items:

- **Student performance data indicating student progress toward accomplishing the Board’s Results policies.**
- **Information about school district strategies, programs and operations intended to accomplish the Board’s Results policies.**
- **Information about the district’s financial condition, including revenues, expenditures and costs of major programs.**

Interpretation:

The Issaquah School District will publish and advertise an online annual report for the community, which will be available in print format when requested. The report will include information about the School Board’s Operational Expectations and Results with links to monitoring reports, which provide evidence of annual reasonable progress toward accomplishing the Results. In addition, the annual report will make explicit any linkages to the strategic plan.

The report will include student achievement information that gives readers a high-level overview of the progress being made at each grade level in federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) content areas, as well as stories included in the programs and services section that highlight select examples about how our students are developing toward additional Ends in areas of civic engagement, and life management and personal awareness.

We will also share a summary of the District’s financial condition with information about revenues, expenditures, and major cost centers.

The District will ensure that the annual report to the community aligns with other state and District publications to ensure compliance with all public reporting laws and regulations.

Evidence:

- **Publication:** The online Annual Report was published on the district's website on Jan. 9, 2025. The

Communications Department advertised the annual report in the district bulletin on Jan. 13, 2025, along with a link to the report located in the Reports and Surveys section of the district website; and in the school bulletins on Jan. 16, 2025. Each year, the district shares the report on its social media channels after approval by the School Board.

- **Student Achievement:** The Annual Report includes an overview of student achievement, a grade-by-grade look at student progress in federal ESEA content areas on the Smarter Balanced tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math for grades 3-8 and 10, Science in grades 5, 8, and 11, as well as a summary of some of the accomplishments of students not reflected in test data, a link to post-graduate data, and other links for more in-depth information.
- **Programs and Services:** The Annual Report contains an overview of district programs, services, and educational programs employed for students who are struggling, performing and excelling. These programs and services highlight our students' civic engagement, life management and personal awareness.
- **Financial:** The Annual Report contains an overview of the state of district finances, including a summary of how public schools receive funding and build budgets; charts showing major cost and revenue sources; and links to the [Finance webpage](#), which includes the annual "Guide to Understanding the Budget." Additionally, the District prepares and makes available monthly budget status reports and a statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance to the Board of Directors for approval. For those who are interested in learning more about Capital Projects, the [website](#) has tiles for specific projects and with clear information about estimates and budgets, and regular status updates are provided to the Board – please see this [example of a status update for the critical repairs portion of the 2022 Capital Levy](#).
- **Annual Report:** Updated for the 2023-24 school year: [Annual Community Report - Issaquah School District 411](#)

Board Approval: 1/16/2025

