



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Greg Baker, Superintendent
DATE: October 5, 2022
SUBJECT: Monitoring Report for EL-10, Race and Equity

I certify that the following is accurate as of October 5, 2022. The reporting period is from the completion date of the last report on this Executive Limitation (October 6, 2021) to the present. The report includes updates on work instituted prior to the reporting period to provide evidence of ongoing progress on work in this area, as well as priority areas for our work for the reporting period and beyond.

Policy Type: Executive Limitation
Policy: EL-10 Race and Equity (copy attached)
Adopted: August 14, 2019

Background Information: This report is about Executive Limitation (EL)-10 Race and Equity. EL-10 states that, “The superintendent shall not fail to interrupt factors that perpetuate systemic inequities and/or practices that contribute to over and under representation of any student group compared to peers. The superintendent shall confront the institutional bias that results in predictability of student success or lack thereof, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, language and culture.”

1. The superintendent shall not fail to take all reasonable and prudent actions with respect to reporting, processing and tracking incidents of bias that are typical for similar and highly effective organizations.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to implement processes for reporting, processing, tracking and resolving incidents of bias, racism or hate speech of other kinds that occur.

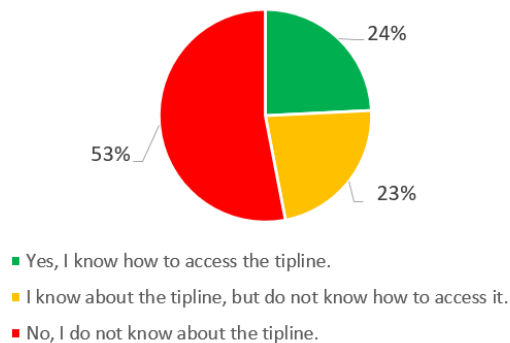
Evidence of Compliance:

- *New/Update:* The district’s Bias Team in collaboration with our student services team has made improvements toward collaboratively and effectively tracking and responding to bias and hate incidents.
- *Update:* The district safety [tipline](#) continues to be a useful tool for ensuring confidentiality in reporting incidents of safety (including bias, bullying, intimidation, hate speech and/or racism).

Student data on the question of “Do you know how to access the tipline?” shows an increase in students’ awareness of this tool and how to access it. In 2018, 24 percent of high school students indicated they “know how to access the tipline”; that number increased to 46 percent in 2022 data (see graphic below).

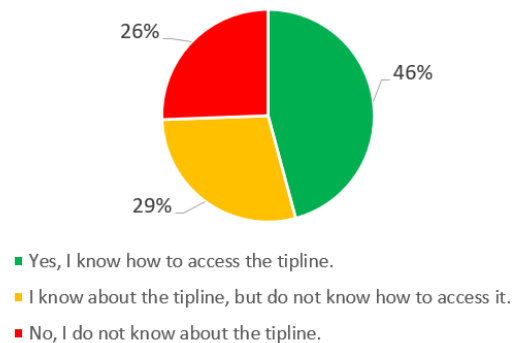
High School Students 2018

Do you know how to access the tipline?



High School Students 2022

Do you know how to access the tipline?



- *Update:* District response team efforts to support staff, students and families when incidents of bias, racism, anti-LGBTQ or anti-Semitic actions occur in conjunction with the response system noted above.

2a. The superintendent shall not fail to recruit, employ, support, retain and continuously develop a workforce of culturally responsive staff.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to continuously work to diversify the district’s staff through recruitment, support and retention strategies.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New/Update:* A district-sponsored job fair focused on recruiting and hiring BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) candidates was held on March 19, 2022. An estimated 125 people attended, and the event resulted in multiple new hires, including one of our new assistant principals. We have continued recruitment fairs within our local Russian and Punjabi communities.
- *New:* Under the leadership of Dr. Janis Velasquez-Farmer and hired consultant Malcolm Oliver, our district has joined ESD (Educational Service District) 189 two-year planning grant effort with the Leaders in Education Advancing Diversity, Equity and Racial justice (LEADER) initiative funded by the Washington State Professional Standards Board in 2021. The effort aims to elevate community-driven efforts to increase and sustain diversity in Washington’s educator workforce.
- *Update:* We continue to work with Mr. Oliver to focus on recruitment and hiring strategies, working in collaboration with our human resources staff. New partnerships for recruitment include Goodwill job training, the previously mentioned LEADER initiative and the Martinez Fellowship. Mr. Oliver and Dr. Velasquez-Farmer have established a regional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion network to support retention of diverse candidates in Whatcom County.

- *New/Update:* We continue to develop our systemwide professional learning efforts in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Department of Teaching and Learning team engaged in an extended professional learning series with Dr. Cassie Martin and colleagues from the University of Washington's Haring Center over this past year, with a focus on increasing learning about inclusive educational practices. School leadership teams from all 23 sites met in a retreat held in early August to develop their professional learning plans for the 2022-23 school year centered around the central focus of creating belonging and engagement for more equitable student outcomes. Efforts such as these will help ensure all staff are provided with opportunities to meet the new state requirements for EDI professional development.
- *New/Update:* We continue to engage the entire district leadership team in professional learning about leading for equity. The focus this year includes a book study of *Equity by Design*, by authors Mirko Chardin and Katie Novak to support creating inclusive practices and environments that create belonging and engagement to reach equitable outcomes.

2b. The superintendent shall not fail to increase workforce diversity reflective of our students.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to continuously work to diversify the district's workforce in ways that more robustly reflect the diversity of our student population.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New:* The district and Bellingham Association of School Employees (BASE), the employee union representing administrative assistants and paraeducators, collaboratively worked together to recognize the diversity of languages expressed in our school community. As a part of the contractual agreement from August of 2021, where a language assistance need has been identified at a school site, a BASE employee may apply for recognition of the bilingual skills they use to support student and family needs. Language skills are assessed through a skills assessment, and each BASE employee passing the assessment becomes eligible for an increased per hour wage premium for all hours worked for the school year.
- *Update:* As noted above, the district continues efforts to grow our diversity through job fairs conducted within the BIPOC, Russian and Punjabi communities. Our Human Resources department's continual work is to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce.
- *Update:* Our Human Resources department tracks applications of ethnic minority candidates annually. There were 110 applicants who identified as non-white that applied June-August 2022. Of those, sixteen were offered contracts, which constitutes approximately a 15percent hire rate from that pool. This data does not include coaches or substitutes.
- *Update:* We continue building employee resource groups focused on increasing retention and recruitment for Black and Brown staff and staff from additional marginalized identities. As well, we continue to expand the support for affinity groups for students at the school level as well as working to better incorporate students and student voice into school leadership/professional learning teams.

2c. The superintendent shall not fail to seek out and incorporate student voice in order to develop and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for each and every student.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to continuously work to engage student voices, and in particular the voices of students who reflect the diversity of our community.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New/Update:* We continue to support LGBTQ+ youth by developing capacity in our schools through an expansion of clubs, staff training for best practices, highly trained support staff and connections to community partnerships such as the Common Goodness Project that recently provided professional learning for the Options HS staff.
- *Update:* The Bellingham High School process focused on the adoption and implementation of a new mascot for the school came to completion. This process was significantly informed by student voice throughout. The completion of mascot emblems/language being replaced in the gymnasium and in other key locations around the school continued over this past summer.
- *Update:* The superintendent's Student Advisory Committee, which includes two representatives from each of our four high schools, continues to meet monthly with the superintendent to discuss issues and provide feedback. Meetings for the 2022-23 school year will begin soon.
- *Update:* Our Prevention-Intervention Specialists continue to facilitate Peer-centered Outreach (PCO) and Peer-centered Support (PCS) groups at our high schools, while also providing individual support for students in need throughout the school day.

2d. The superintendent shall not fail to engage families and community partners in culturally appropriate ways to ensure multiple cultural perspectives are elevated and valued.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to continuously work to engage families and community partners who represent the diversity of our students in culturally appropriate and relevant ways.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New:* A new community coalition (yet to be formally named) is engaged in putting on cultural events that are highly relevant for both schools and the broader community. Dr. Velasquez-Farmer represents the PK-12 community in this group and is working to bring more events into classrooms and/or provide access to our students and families. The group includes representatives from local institutions of higher education, PeaceHealth, and other community partners. Last year's efforts included a Martin Luther King Jr. event focused on voting rights which was widely attended by students, staff, and community members. The coalition further offered two district events with Jesse Moore, a former White House staffer and board member of *Rock the Vote*. He spoke with the leadership class at Bellingham High School and a 3rd grade class at Happy Valley Elementary. As well, the group offered a series of speakers for Asian Pacific Islander Desi Heritage Month. Among the powerful lineup of speakers was a WWU (Western Washington University) alum who was interviewed by a Squalicum High School student and a historic panel of Asian and Pacific Islander legislators.
- *Update:* The @bellingshamschoolsedi Instagram account that highlights culturally relevant information and supplements resources became available on the EDI webpage last year. The Instagram account highlights celebrations and observances while providing teaching and learning opportunities centered on diverse communities. At the time of this report, the account has 572 followers, and approximately 70 posts, with most content focused on heritage and history, amplifying historically silenced voices and cultures. Most interactions were posts focused on

LGBTQ+ community issues. In addition, frequent district communication and engagement on educational topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion continues on the EDI blogpost located [here](#).

- *Update:* The superintendent continues to communicate regularly and directly with parents and community members about our district's work on issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. Communication includes engagement with parents or community members who may agree or disagree with something they have read or heard related to our district's work in EDI, or who have questions about our work in this area.
- *Update:* Monthly dialogues with the Parent Advisory Committee continued this past year. Topics included:
 - Inclusive playgrounds, and a tour of the Alderwood Elementary School site.
 - Additional district efforts to support mental health and wellness, including the hiring of more mental health specialists.
 - Curriculum updates, including Since Time Immemorial and Comprehensive Sexual Health Education.
- *New/Update:* The Family Engagement team continues to grow in its support of families in all the schools. As of this year, with added personnel resources, every school has a point person who is a family liaison, whose work includes supporting families who are homeless. In addition, Christina Manterola is now working closely alongside Executive Director Isabel Meaker to help coordinate the team members' work across schools.

2e. The superintendent shall not fail to provide an environment that supports the creation and implementation of culturally responsive instructional practices and curriculum.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to continuously work to seek out, identify, adopt and develop culturally responsive curricula and instructional practices.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *New/Update:* Leaders and teachers in special education continue to work to improve programs and practices that foster inclusion of all students across our schools. This year with the advent of yearlong Promise Kindergarten, the four-year-old students who have previously been served in a special education developmental preschool program are now being served in Promise Kindergarten. These students are identified for additional support through an Individualized Education Program in special education.
- *New:* Multicultural and inclusive art supplies were provided at Bellingham elementary schools this year. Classrooms stocked with multicultural art supplies allow each child to feel seen, heard and represented as they learn and play. Our Department of Teaching and Learning supported this work this Fall by providing a starter pack of multicultural art supplies, guidance and accountability for our teaching and learning community.
- *New/Update:* Now in the second year of implementation, the attendance area changes in the middle schools have resulted in a distribution of students that more accurately represent for the diversity of the school district within each school and have resulted in better balanced overall population numbers.
- *Update:* Ethnic studies high school course partnership with WWU continued with professional learning opportunities for staff this year. Course enrollments continue to increase in year-over-

year comparison. Ethnic Studies enrollment for 2021-22 was 113 students; for 2022-23 this increased to 136.

2f. The superintendent shall not fail to provide professional development, training and engagement opportunities to inform and practice cultural competence and increase awareness of personal bias and inequities in leading, teaching, counseling, advising and coaching practices.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to continuously work to increase the awareness of personal bias and inequities, including the continuation of ongoing efforts to inform and practice cultural competence among our system's leaders, teachers, counselors, teacher leaders, and classified staff members.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *Update:* The district continues to provide learning opportunities for employees, some in collaboration with educational partners, to address equity and bias. Examples of professional learning experiences delivered by district staff or partners this past year included training on:
 - Cycle of Socialization (Velasquez-Farmer)
 - Culturally Responsive Teaching (Quigley)
 - Inclusive Instructional Practices (University of Washington Haring Center staff)
- *New/Update:* School leadership teams again engaged in professional development planning through a day and one-half opportunity prior to the start of this school year (August 10 & 11, 2022). Teams from all 23 sites included the principal, instructional coach, and other key leaders. Focus for the year includes deepening instructional practices focused on EDI and specifically our work on inclusive instructional practices across the system.

2g. The superintendent shall not fail to recognize and value the funds of knowledge that students and families bring to each classroom, school and our system as a whole.

Interpretation: Through the direction provided by the superintendent, the administrative team and staff have demonstrated reasonable efforts to continuously work to celebrate and highlight the value of diverse perspectives and the funds of knowledge that students with diverse backgrounds bring to our schools every day.

Evidence of Compliance:

- *Ongoing:* Our ongoing effort at collaboration continues with Lummi Nation (and Western Washington University) partners to increase our knowledge and implementation of Since Time Immemorial curriculum and to value the funds of knowledge inherent in that work and implement more culturally responsive practices with particular attention to our Native students. Director of Teaching and Learning Charisse Berner is our primary contact for this work with the tribe.
- *Ongoing:* Our Communications office shares a monthly listing of major religious holidays via email to all district staff to improve awareness and sensitivity. This information is also published on the EDI webpages.

Statement of Compliance: The superintendent is **in compliance** with EL-10 Race and Equity.