



**OE-9 Communicating with the Public**

Policy Type: Operational Expectation

**Annual Monitoring Report for School Year 2024-2025 – January 29, 2026**

*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.*

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**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.

**Evidence:**

For the 2024-25 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 engagement on three core topics: secondary innovation, equity-based budgeting and the 2024 School Modernization & Construction Bond measures (on the ballot in November 2024 and February 2025). Much of this effort was driven by the Strategic Plan's priority area focus on authentic engagement.

In addition, the Communications Department conducted an audit using the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) framework in 2024-25. The overall rating for the district was "established" on the scales of either emerging, established or exemplary based on seven critical function areas. This audit will serve as a baseline for continuous improvement and will be adjusted as new findings emerge in future audits.

In addition, the district engaged in two-way communication to foster understanding, gather feedback and support for district initiatives through its various community advisory groups including the Equity Department's Family Partnership Advisory Group and the Communications Department's Language Access Advisory Group. Both advisory groups are comprised of culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse community members representing all feeder patterns within the district. These groups act as a vital link between the community and the district, offering meaningful feedback on district programs and sharing their personal experiences with how these initiatives impact them.

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. The Language Advisory Group provided updated information regarding language access resources and services, and requested feedback on areas of strength and improvement in terms of language access support. Both advisory groups supported the district's promotional efforts and informed their members at meetings and through communication channels about the two bond measures. They also encouraged participation in parent surveys during the Enrollment Verification Process, as well as in student soft-skills and exit surveys.

Historically, the district has gathered family feedback through elementary and secondary parent and caregiver surveys distributed during the Enrollment Verification Process each August and focused on experiences from the previous school year. In 2024, 8,566 families responded, providing data that helps inform and improve district systems, processes and customer service. Results year over year remain consistent, with subtle changes. Combined elementary and secondary responses show:

- 88.7% rated district performance an A or B, up 0.4%
- 88.8% rated their child's school an A or B, up 0.1%
- 90.5% rated the district's efforts to keep families informed an A or B, down slightly by 0.4%
- 85.7% rated the district as welcoming and encouraging of opinions an A or B, up 0.4%
- Top four sources of information about the district, in order: district bulletin, school bulletin, their student's teacher and their student
- 10.7% of respondents indicated they do not know how to access basic community services and resources; the most difficult to access, in order, were child care, food assistance, mental health services and utilities

For context, industry standards typically consider 1,000 to 2,000 responses highly accurate for large populations. For a district the size of ISD, 600 or more responses achieves the desired 95% confidence level with a plus or minus 5% margin of error. Additional survey reports, including the Annual Parent Survey, student exit surveys, and soft skills surveys, are available on the [Reports and Surveys](#) page of the district website.

Following the initial bond measure's failure, the district conducted a feedback survey to inform adjustments for a potential February 2025 ballot. More than 1,400 community members participated. Respondents consistently indicated the proposed bond amount was too high and recommended focusing on fewer, higher-priority projects. The Superintendent and School Board used this feedback to revise and better align the bond proposal for the February 2025 ballot.

As a preview for the 2025-26 school year, evidence will include the formation and support of a 2026 Levy Renewal Committee, expanded outreach to residents without children enrolled in the district, and using communication audit results to set goals that support district initiatives aligned with current and future Strategic Plan updates. Based on parent and caregiver feedback requesting a more streamlined Enrollment Verification Process, the district will shift from embedding the parent survey within EVP to a standalone Family and Caregiver Survey conducted while school is in session in November 2025. The revised survey will improve flow, identify bias, and use standardized questions aligned with K-12 best practices, including the industry-recognized Net Promoter Score. In addition, the district will distribute a separate community survey for those who are not ISD parents, caregivers, students or staff. The survey will include a Net Promoter Score and related questions, and the district will ask local municipalities, cities, chambers of commerce, homeowner associations, and other partner organizations to help share it.

## **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.

### **Evidence:**

During the 2024-25 school year, the Family Partnership team hosted multiple family information nights, and planned and held the district's first Back-to-School Resource Fair at the start of the school year. The district continued working with the PTSA Council to better understand declining membership and identify strategies to increase engagement. In addition, the district's Language Access Coordinator continued supporting families with limited English proficiency by reviewing and improving systems, processes and tools to increase effectiveness while reducing costs.

District leaders overseeing the Language Advisory and Family Partnership advisory groups have expanded opportunities to meet with cultural brokers and gather feedback, most notably from families in the Chinese, Hindi, and Latinx and Hispanic communities. In addition to advisory meetings, these efforts included hosting a bond presentation with members of the Chinese community and planning and launching the district's first Black and Brown Excellence Summit for high school students. About 70 students from across the district attended to hear three keynote speakers, participate in a panel, and engage with six workshop leaders.

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 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 to elementary, middle and high school families to focus 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. The sessions also provide guidance on navigating platforms like Canvas and Qmlativ, as well as support for key transitions such as starting Kindergarten, entering Middle School, and preparing for High School. The Family Partnership Team's information nights are developed in response to feedback from the Family Partnership Advisory Group and Parent Panels held in schools.

In 2024–25, the Language Access Coordinator achieved several significant milestones. First, the district hired in-house translators and interpreters, and developed comprehensive hiring procedures, including testing, training, and pay scales. These efforts improved the quality of language services and reduced costs by minimizing reliance on external vendors.

The Coordinator also strengthened connections with other school districts across Washington State by organizing and hosting a collaborative workshop. This networking became especially important after the elimination of the OSPI Language Access Supervisor position due to state budget cuts, allowing districts to continue to support and learn from one another. Language services were provided for the first time during high school graduation and at community meetings for bond presentations during the 2025 election. Additionally, while ensuring compliance with Civil Rights laws and district policies, the coordinator continues to explore innovative technologies, tools, and resources to provide meaningful communication for both community members and district staff.

As a preview for the 2025-26 school year, evidence will include using feedback from the Language Access and Family Partnership advisory groups; sharing planned survey updates for parents and caregivers, students and

staff; improving website calendar including better navigation and culturally-relevant information; increasing community awareness of local and state resources; expanding staff training on language access; and continuing to address how immigration policy and the impacts of potential federal funding reductions may affect our district.

### **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.

#### **Evidence:**

In the 2024-25 school year, the district worked collaboratively with the Issaquah Schools Foundation and the Issaquah PTSA Council to strengthen and optimize our partnerships with each organization. By working closely together on strategic priorities, we are able to co-design more meaningful and effective projects and implementation. Additionally, strategic partnerships can provide systemwide expertise that benefits the entire organization; and, external partnerships can provide specialized expertise that would be difficult or expensive to develop internally.

While not exclusive, district leaders participated in and presented updates monthly, and upon request, to the Issaquah Rotary, Kiwanis, and other community associations within municipalities across the school district boundary. In addition, in partnership with the Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce, the Superintendent joined the Chamber President, Mayor, and Police Chief to present for the first time to local elected, business, and community leaders. The presentation at the State of the City in January 2025 highlighted recent district accomplishments and objectives for the coming year.

In November of 2024, our district and the Eastside were at the center of an unprecedented "bomb cyclone" that was incredibly destructive and made communication extremely difficult. While our system and schools sustained significant impacts, our partnership and communication with respective city and county operation leaders, local first responders and Puget Sound Energy were immensely helpful as we navigated the aftermath of the storm. Our emergency response team, which also consisted of leaders and members from the Equity and Communications Departments, maintained full operations for seven days and stayed in regular communication with one another. The emergency radio system allowed for communication to be maintained despite phone (including cell phones) and internet outages. The district provided consistent updates to families, staff, and the community through all communication channels, including information on school reopenings and available food options, supported by staff, the PTSA Council and anonymous donors. In addition, the district partnered with the City of Issaquah to open Cougar Mountain Middle School during the storm, offering residents a place to charge devices.

In 2024-25, the district continued its partnerships with Swedish Mental Health, Care Solace and 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, The Garage, and others.

The district continued its partnerships with Swedish to provide school-based mental health services, ensuring students have access to critical support within their learning environments. 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.

We also maintain our collaboration with Care Solace to connect families to mental health and substance use care. In addition, we have partnered with various community agencies to support our annual Back-to-School Resource Fair, helping to ensure students and families are equipped with the resources they need for a successful start to the school year.

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, the CIS staff has helped families at IMS to find after-school programming for students. The CIS staff have been engaged partners in supporting the needs of students and families in both schools.

The Garage has been a collaborative partner in participating in the Community Advisory Board for the 2024-25 school year. The Counseling and Student Well-Being/Equity, Belonging and Family Partnership teams met quarterly with The Garage staff to discuss program updates, community resources and emerging needs in the community.

As a preview for the 2025-26 school year, evidence will include efforts and collaboration to support the Issaquah School District PTSA Council’s need to increase membership through value added events and information sessions, host and participate in renewal levy presentations with community partners, and identifying and possibly partnering with additional mental health providers.

#### **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.

##### **Evidence:**

During the 2024-25 school year, the Communications Team continued publishing 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.

In addition, the Communications Department developed a few video/audio podcasts called “School Board Chats” hosted by School Board members and district leadership covering key topics about district infrastructure, current and past state funding of students and schools. Also, the district added an additional direct mail end-of-year celebration postcard that was distributed to all residents who live within the district boundary.

When comparing the 2023-24 and 2024-25 annual report web analytics, community access and engagement increased significantly. Compared with 2023-24, page views for the 2024-25 annual report increased 133%, from 5,726 to 13,388. Total engagement, including views, clicks and downloads, more than doubled, increasing from 28,707 to 61,804. The report was promoted through district and school bulletins and social media posts.

The district bulletin has open rates with an average range from 59 - 68% and click rates averaging 6 - 29%. These metrics are significantly above national standards, and have shown an increase from the prior school year (2023-24: open rates averaged 55-65% and click rates averaged 5-20%). Per multiple direct marketing providers, standard open rates in the education sector for email newsletters typically range from the mid-30s to mid-40s. It should also be noted that each school has a bulletin maker and distributes school-specific information on Thursdays during normal school operations.

The Communications Department also uses social media to highlight student success, school accomplishments and district updates. Content is shared across district platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X and LinkedIn. Across most platforms, follower counts, reach and engagement increased, with the strongest growth on Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. Instagram followers increased 50% to 3,894, with page and profile visits up 170%. LinkedIn followers grew 50%. YouTube subscribers increased 22.4% to 2,195, with views up 18.4% and watch time rising 68.9%, totaling more than 7,600 hours.

Also in the 2024-25 school year, the Communications Team earned three awards from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). The following awards support priorities in the district’s Strategic Plan and are reflected below:

- Excellence in Writing: “[Transition to Kindergarten Shows Great Outcomes for Students](#)” - Priorities: Student Well-Being and Academic Opportunities
- Award of Honorable Mention for “[Our 2024 School Innovation Tour](#)” video – Priorities: Academic Opportunities and Authentic Engagement
- Handbook/Guide Award of Merit for “[2025 Course Guide Catalog](#)” - Priority: Academic Opportunities

The district participated and was mentioned in media articles during the 2024-25 school year. As examples, listed below are a few publications including news outlets, digital journals and local community magazines:

- Issaquah Highlands - [School Spotlight](#)
- The 74 Million - [How Early Adopter Districts Are Moving Ahead Fast With AI](#)
- The Washington Observer - [Local school politics shows the power of supermajority](#)
- Sammamish Independent – [ISD Board President Op-Ed – Time to Act](#)
- KUOW - [‘We are at a crisis.’ Seattle Eastside schools call for increased state funding](#)
- Puget Sound Business Journal - [Washington voters reject school construction bond measures](#)
- Microsoft Changemakers – [ISF Partnership](#)
- Sports Illustrated - [Bats alive! Issaquah conquers KingCo champion Skyline to capture first bi-district softball championship](#)
- Washington State Department of Commerce - [Grants over \\$14.3 million for energy efficiency](#)
- Kiro7 - [Lawmakers look to lower voter approval threshold for school bond measures](#)
- The Seattle Times - [WA students lag in reading and math, but some districts gain ground](#)
- The Seattle Times - [2025 WA National Merit Scholarship semifinalist students announced](#)

As a preview for the 2025-26 school year, evidence will include increased direct mail opportunities to all residents within the district boundary, more signage and literature drops during the renewal levy cycle, and updates to the district podcast to make it audio-focused, more frequent throughout the school year, featuring students and school or district staff, and published across major platforms including Spotify, Apple, Google, and YouTube. In addition, the Superintendent will once again present district updates and objectives to the greater Issaquah community during the State of the City, hosted by the Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce. Additional media opportunities may present themselves with school design and innovation, mental health supports, the new high school and academic rankings.

**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 reflect connections 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 Results in areas of civic engagement, 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 2024-25 Annual Report was published on the district's website on January 22, 2026. The Communications Department advertised the annual report in the school bulletins on January 22, 2026, and district bulletin on January 26, 2026, along with a link to the report located in the Reports and Surveys section of the district website. 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. Community members are encouraged to review additional information and evidence of progress toward strategic priorities on the website at: [Results](#), [Operational Expectations](#), [Monitoring Reports](#), [Strategic Plan](#), [System Health Indicators](#), and the [School Improvement Plan](#) dashboards for all elementary and high schools to further connect and understand school-level actions and outcomes.

- **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 clear information about estimates and budgets, and regular status updates are provided to the Board – please see this [example from June 26, 2025, of a status update for the critical repairs portion of the 2022 Capital Levy and newly developed Capital Projects Oversight Committee](#).
- **Annual Report:** Updated for the 2024-25 school year: [Annual Community Report - Issaquah School District 411](#)

*Board acceptance:*