

Issaquah School District Executive Limitations Monitoring Report

EL-2 TREATMENT OF PEOPLE
Annual Internal – August 27, 2020 (monitoring the 2018-19 school year)

The Superintendent certifies that the District is in compliance with EL-2

With respect to treatment of people, including parents, citizens, and students, the superintendent shall not permit an organizational culture that treats people with disrespect, indignity or discourtesy.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION

I interpret this policy to require a courteous, respectful and equitable culture throughout the school district. This is accomplished through policies, leadership practices, professional development and communication structures that support and maintain appropriate conditions as noted below.

In a large complex organization like the Issaquah School District, there are countless interpersonal exchanges each day. I interpret compliance as the maintenance of clear expectations and procedures for corrective action, both formal and informal, to be used, if needed, to sustain these values. In short, compliance is the clear, consistent valuing of respect, courtesy, equity and meaningful informational exchange as hallmarks of district life.

Accordingly, the superintendent may not:

- 1. Use methods of managing information that fail to protect confidential information.*

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean that confidential student and staff information will be:

- maintained in secure locations;
- accessed only by authorized persons performing official duties;
- appropriately transmitted to or made available for review by the individuals to whom it pertains, or have a legitimate educational interest, including parents with the right of access to their student's records;
- lawfully archived and destroyed;
- password-protected when stored in electronic formats.

Further, I interpret this to mean that the District complies with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) by creating and following a system that ensures that individuals who work and learn within the school district will not be photographed without their consent; they will not have personally identifiable information (directory information) published if they request that it be withheld; nor will the media or members of the general public have unauthorized access to the ordinary activities of students and staff except when activities take place in a public setting—for example, a student concert or drama production, athletic competition, or special assembly open to the public.

In this context, I interpret *general public* to mean non-staff members who have not been specifically authorized or invited to be present by a school or district official.

EVIDENCE

- In 2018-19 all Principals verified through the annual Board monitoring survey that confidential student records are maintained in secure locations. This includes, but is not limited to, student cumulative folders, emergency cards, teacher gradebooks, guidance team evaluations, special education records, health records, and federal free/reduced lunch applications.
- The Skyward electronic student records system, including Family Access, is password protected. Staff members are required to change their passwords periodically.
- In 2018-19 administrators and all Principals verified confidential employee records, including personnel and payroll files, are maintained under lock and key; access is by authorized personnel only, or by other individuals under specified requirements in the presence of authorized personnel.
- District archives are managed and monitored by the Chief of Finance and Operations in keeping with applicable law, as determined by State Audit.
- Via registration and first-day packets, families receive notice every year of their right to provide a “FERPA” (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) letter to their school, which will prevent the District from releasing any identifying information about their student to outside organizations. The notification states that the school has legal authorization to provide “directory information” (including name and photo) to outside organizations for an educational purpose if a student has no FERPA letter on file. Before releasing any information to an outside organization—including the media or photographers—a school or the District will check the Skyward records system to ensure the student has no FERPA letter on file. When time permits or the circumstance is exceptional, schools do provide advance notice to parents and provide an opportunity for them to opt out of a particular situation where directory information may be provided to an outside organization.
- All parents/students have the right to withhold personal directory information from publication. In 2018-19 all Principals verified that forms for this purpose were distributed this year during student registration.
- Student registration packets include the FERPA forms so even as new students/families arrive during the school year they are asked to consider the FERPA letter.
- Procedures for protecting privacy as external research is conducted in the District are managed and monitored by the Superintendent and designee.
- All request for Public Records are reviewed and processed according to RCW 42.56: Public Records Act.
- The District created and staffed the position of Public Records Officer in October, 2017, in order to more efficiently manage the increasing volume of Public Records requests to help ensure that these requests are managed in keeping with this executive limitation.

*Copies of all principal/building certification check-lists are on file in the Superintendent's office. For direct inspection of these check-lists please contact the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; these check-lists provide evidence as needed for EL-10, EL-12 and EL-2.

... *the Superintendent may not:*

2. *Fail to provide a process for the effective handling of complaints.*

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to require two types of hearing-and-response systems: one for community members, parents or students; another for staff. Both should provide an effective means of bringing complaints to the person or persons in charge and receiving a timely response/resolution.

As a practical matter, employee appeal rights are noted, but are not treated in depth in this monitoring report. They are treated in more detail in the monitoring of [EL-3: Personnel Administration](#).

EVIDENCE

*Please note: [All District regulations, procedures, and forms are available on the District Website](#)

- **Community members**
 - [District Regulation 4220: Complaints Concerning Staff or Programs](#) is an omnibus provision for any community member to bring a complaint or concern of any type to the appropriate source within the school district. If a complaining person does not find remedies and/or information to be satisfactory, the Regulation provides for timely, progressive appeals through the administration to the Board level. This Regulation, including procedures and forms, is available to the general public through any school office or the office of the Superintendent.
 - *Student Handbooks* describe the rights and responsibilities of students in the Issaquah School District, including appeal rights. These are reviewed by the grade level Executive Directors and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and updated annually and distributed to all students/parents, and are available on-line on the schools' website.
 - *Special Education Procedural Safeguards* clarify the educational, informational and appeal rights of students and their parents. This document is given at least once each year to parents of children who are eligible for special education services; it is given to parents as specified by law and at any other time it is requested.
- **Community members, students, and employees**
 - [Prohibition Against Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Regulation 3207](#) provides a specific complaint and appeal procedures for all students in the school community who believes he or she has been the target of unresolved, severe, or persistent harassment, intimidation, or bullying. This Regulation aligns with state law.

- [Civility Regulations 4011, and 5282](#) provide effective avenues of complaint, and resolution, if found to be warranted, for all members of the school community who believe the District’s cultural expectation of civility has been violated.
- *Various other federal laws and District Regulations* provide specific complaint and appeal procedures for individuals seeking to remedy particular conditions or decisions. Each ensures specific rights of individuals within the school community:
 - [Regulation 3210](#): Nondiscrimination (Student)
 - [Regulation 5010](#): Recruitment, Selection, Assignment: Nondiscrimination
 - [Regulation 3115](#): Homeless Students
 - [Regulations 3205, 5013](#): Sexual Harassment
 - [Regulation 5010](#): Nondiscrimination (Personnel)
 - [Regulation 5207](#): Prohibition Against Harassment (Personnel)
 - [RCW 28A.85](#): Gender Equity
 - Regulation 2162 [Education of Students with Disabilities Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - [Regulation 5241](#): Whistleblower Protection

- **Employees**

[*All Collective Bargaining Agreements are available on the District Website](#)

- Beyond the provisions noted above, employees who are members of labor organizations have additional grievance rights and procedures outlined in their collective bargaining agreements with the District. There are eight such bargaining units within the Issaquah School District covering approximately 92% of District employees.

... the Superintendent may not

3. Permit any form of illegal discrimination.

INTERPRETATION

I interpret illegal discrimination as acts or omissions by school authorities that create unequal access to District resources on the basis of race, creed, ethnicity, skin color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, varied abilities, or any other class or condition protected by law. Thus, the District must:

- make District opportunities available to all students on a fair basis without regard to the factors or conditions referenced above;
- fairly consider all qualified applicants for employment, assignment, promotion and retention without regard to the factors or conditions referenced above;
- publicize the District’s commitment to nondiscrimination and procedures for addressing perceived discrimination within the school district;

- have ready procedures for determining and taking corrective action in the event that discrimination should occur within the District.

EVIDENCE

- Equal educational opportunities and fair treatment of all students are guaranteed in [Regulation 3210: Nondiscrimination](#) and [Regulation 3200: Rights and Responsibilities](#). Procedures for addressing perceived discrimination against students are set forth in 3210P and in student handbooks which are distributed to all students/parents.
- Nondiscriminatory recruitment, selection, assignment, transfer, promotion, retention and training of staff are high priorities of the Issaquah School District as noted in [Regulation 5010](#) and its related procedures. These procedures have been developed to achieve equitable solutions to justifiable complaints.
- Nondiscriminatory employment practices are clearly valued and communicated on district application forms and District website:

The Issaquah School District complies with all applicable federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability in its programs and activities, or employment related matters, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employees are designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Executive Director of Compliance and Legal Affairs, District Title IX Coordinator, Section 504/ADA Coordinator or Compliance Coordinator for 28A.540 and 28A.642 RCW, in writing or by telephone at 425.837.7060. The Issaquah School District will also take steps to assure that national origin persons who lack English language skills can participate in all educational programs, services and activities.

- Individuals who have or share in responsibility for hiring are trained in fair, appropriate, nondiscriminatory practice.
- During the 2018-19 school year there were three complaints from families and/or adults of illegal discrimination on behalf of students. Each of these complaints have been appropriately addressed.
- Staff trainings and professional development in the areas of cultural competence and equity which include implicit bias and institutional racism that can result in discriminatory practices.
 - [Cultural Competency Staff trainings 2014 through 2019](#)
 - Added Alaina Sivadasan, Executive Director of Equity in 2019

... the Superintendent may not:

- 4. Fail to maintain an organizational culture that conforms with the following values:**
 - a. encourages exchange of opinion**
 - b. reasonably includes people in decisions that affect them**
 - c. open and honest communication in all written and interpersonal interaction**
 - d. focus on common achievement of the Board's Ends policies**

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to require the creation of communications structures that support the desired culture. Well-developed communications structures will:

- provide opportunities for meaningful input and feedback on topics of interest and importance to the individuals participating and the constituent groups they represent;
- keep the school district community generally well informed about District programs, decisions and conditions;
- build trust through transparency (access to public information and clear demonstration of reason and process in decision-making);
- maintain staff and community commitment to the Board's Ends for Students through frequent and relevant interaction and shared decision-making.

EVIDENCE

- Teacher Evaluation Process: ISD and the Issaquah Education Association (IEA) have partnered to implement the certificated teaching and support staff evaluation system and to develop and implement professional development for our principals and teachers. Inherent in the Danielson Framework is a focus on equity for students most challenged to access their education.
- [Cultural Competency Staff trainings 2014 through 2019](#)
- Principal Evaluation Process: The District is in its seventh year of the implementation of the AWSP Principal Leadership Framework and the evaluation process with Principals evaluated on both the Comprehensive and Focused strands.
- Opportunities for input and feedback: ISD culture is supported by numerous opportunities for community, staff and students to provide input and feedback on matters of interest and importance to them. Prominent examples are listed below:
 - Levy development committee and several community engagement session related to the EP&O levy
 - Numerous opportunities were provided for community input and feedback on the proposed Bell Times Changes:
 - ThoughtExchange Engagement
 - Dedicated email account
 - Student and staff surveys
 - Three regional public meetings
 - School Bond Presentations for a variety of community groups and stake holders.

- Continuation of a district Equity Advisory Group comprised of staff and community members for the purpose of soliciting input and feedback, and making recommendations to the district.
- Continuation of an Equity Family Engagement Partnership Team for the purpose of supporting student success and family engagement.
- An ISD Equity Team was formed for the purpose of providing input on the direction of this initiative and specifically on professional development for district staff.
- Curriculum Adoptions include opportunities for parents to provide feedback through the adoption websites and during two week parent reviews of adoption materials.
- Depending on the Curriculum materials being adopted the District may hold special public previews of the final few options identified by the committee prior to public preview of the selected materials.
- Instructional Materials Committee includes parent representatives from each region of the district members, district staff and TLS Leadership. This group reviews all recommendations from adoption committees, hears curriculum challenges and makes final recommendations to be presented to the School Board.
- Assessment Advisory Committee, comprised of IEA members, Principal representatives, and TLS administrators, meets three times during the year to review assessments and timeline. Collaborative problem solving and planning ahead are included in each meeting.
- Standing committees in all areas of district operations contribute to a culture of collaborative decision-making. Examples include Employee Benefits, Safety, Nutrition, Emergency Preparedness, Health Services, Library/Media, and Counseling Services.
- Interview hiring teams of staff and/or community stakeholders help express community and district culture and identify candidates who reflect cultural values.
- Specially chartered Committees ensure that community and staff values are prominently represented in major initiatives (i.e., Bond Committee, Nutrition Advisory, and Safety).
- Ongoing surveys have maintained an open feedback loop with the community since 2003. These include continuous random-digit dialing of all district residents (including staff) and yearly online parent experience surveys (results are reported in EL 9 Monitoring Reports). Every major curriculum adoption is also preceded by a parent survey. Further, parent and staff members' input regarding their learning community is solicited when the District initiates the hiring process for building principals.
- In the Fall 2018 Parent Surveys (Panorama), parents were asked, *“Students are given letter grades to reflect the quality of their school performance. Suppose the schools in Issaquah School District were graded the same way. What grade would you give to the school your oldest elementary (or oldest middle or high school) child attended last year?”* 92% of elementary and 87% of secondary families answered A or B. 4496 elementary and 5321 secondary families responded.

- Annual student interviews and the Bi-annual Healthy Youth Survey for sixth, eighth, tenth and twelfth graders, consistent with FERPA, provide important knowledge of student issues, concerns, and risk behaviors. Results are posted on the District website.
- Student surveys were conducted with grades 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 12. These include HIB, soft skills, and exit surveys, which include questions such as “I feel safe/free sharing my opinions in my class/school.”
- Special Education Staff Advisory Committee gathers staff perspectives in Special Education communications and problem-solving.
- School Site Councils have been carefully designed to blend community, staff and student perspectives for input and feedback. Site Councils take a different form in some of our schools as PTSA and the principals have combined their meetings.
- Regular labor relations meetings between administration and union leaders, and Meet and Confer meetings per the *IEA Negotiated Agreement* provide ongoing open communications and positive relationships for problem-solving and collective bargaining.
- **General Information:** Major communications strategies are continuously improved based on user feedback. These include the District website, FOCUS newsletter, school E-newsletters, District calendars, school bond election information, District E-News, emergency notification systems, special parent letters, media relations and releases, Social Media, community presentations and activities by district leadership, advisory committees and focus groups, and regular, open agenda community coffees with principals, and support for all teachers to develop and maintain a District endorsed web presence.
- **Transparency:** Transparency is the honest, continuing effort to help members of the school community (a) obtain and understand non-confidential information, and (b) understand the reasons for and process behind decisions. Primary examples of the District’s commitment to transparency include:
 - The District’s web-based budget process, which keeps budget information, the budget development process, and input opportunities before the general public;
 - Financial Advisory Core Team, facilitating full inquiry into the budget development process by internal and external stakeholders;
 - Web posting of minutes and agendas for the school board and major district committees;
 - Podcast of School Board Meetings;
 - Easy web links to student achievement data for every school and the overall district, including the District Scorecard (currently under re-design);
 - Regular budget status reports to the school board in public meetings;
 - Timely, cooperative, and appropriate response to all public records requests;

- Compliance with all state and federal reporting requirements, including ESSA provisions;
- EL-9 Report to Public – a comprehensive online report of Student Achievement, Programs, Services, and Finances updated annually;
- Posting of annual and/or periodic parent survey results community polling results, school exit surveys, Healthy Youth Survey and graduation research reports.

... *the Superintendent may not:*

5. Fail to provide an open and responsive environment that encourages parent involvement

INTERPRETATION

I interpret this to mean the District must provide meaningful, ongoing opportunities for parents to act as educational partners in their students' school experience. The District will use valid and reliable method of community-wide data collection to show the degree to which parents perceive they are treated as valued partners in their student's school experience.

EVIDENCE

The Issaquah School District is striving to become a welcoming place to parents who wish to support the learning of their children as individuals, serve as volunteers within the schools or on committees; question, give input, and/or become better informed on topics of interest.

- In the Fall 2018 Parent Surveys (Panorama), parents were asked, *“What grade would you give the Issaquah School District for welcoming your involvement in your student’s education?”* 92% of elementary and 87% of secondary families answered A or B. 4496 elementary and 5321 secondary families responded.
- Every school holds unique activities to incorporate parents into the learning process and school culture. Examples are: Culture Celebration events, kindergarten classroom and bus rider orientations, transition programs for parents of new middle school and high school students; curriculum nights; invitations to assemblies, concerts and other productions; information meetings for magnet program opportunities; graduation, assessment, Special Education information meetings, Highly Capable meetings, literacy presentations, and Common Core parent/community information presentations.
- Parent resources for supporting student learning in the various content areas are available on the district website.
- Parents are invited to preview, become fully informed about, and give or withhold permission for their students to participate in the FLASH curriculum.
- Parent seminars on topics of special interest are posted as a PTSA link on the district website.
- Electronic student reporting systems (Family Access) give students and parents convenient on-line access to student grades, emergency information, and other data on file.

- Direct access to teachers through District e-mail and District endorsed teacher web presence enhances and reduces time lag in parent-teacher communications.
- Issaquah Connect is a web network that allows teachers to build and maintain a web presence with up-to-date classroom information and secure, interactive features such as question forums and wikis that will encourage and foster student and parent involvement.
- Teachers are expected to establish and maintain an up-to-date web presence for communication. This includes contact information, homework/projects with due dates as applicable, syllabus/classroom/program expectations, and a schedule of upcoming events.
- Title I requires schools to involve parents in the decision making and development of their yearly building plan. Each Title I school shares the building plan and gets approval from Title I parents.
- In 2018-19 opportunities for parent engagement, examples in part include:
 - Equity Advisory Committee;
 - Levy Committee;
 - Website Redesign Parent Focus Groups;
 - ELL Parent Advisory Group;
 - Highly Capable Parent Engagement Group and Information Nights;
 - Superintendent and staff give monthly updates to the PTSA;
 - Superintendent gives monthly updates to the Issaquah Schools Foundation Board;
 - Receive and consider parent feedback on the Enrollment Verification Process;
 - Building and District level administrators receive and respond to countless emails and phone calls;
 - Curriculum Nights;
 - Parents volunteer thousands of hours throughout the district and schools;
 - Principals hold informal coffees and other meetings with parents to answer questions and maintain personal relationships with their parents;
 - PTSA and ISF support for Issaquah schools is well known across the state. The Superintendent, Cabinet and Principals maintain regular meetings and cooperative relationships with PTSA and ISF leaders.

Board acceptance: