

Expectations of the Superintendent

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The Superintendent shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, condition, procedure or organizational circumstance which is unlawful, unethical, unsafe, disrespectful, imprudent, unfair, inequitable, disruptive, undignified or in violation of contract, Board policy, or collective bargaining agreements.

Interpretation: *I interpret this EL to mean that the Superintendent must ensure that the district complies with all relevant laws, policies, bargaining agreements and contracts; that all staff members, students and constituents are treated fairly, respectfully and with dignity as they interact with the school district and within the district's programs; that actions by district staff and the Superintendent, beyond the scope of law and policy, are ethical, prudent, respectful and promote order and organization; and that the district provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all of our constituents.*

In compliance. The Superintendent has not knowingly violated any law or standard of ethical practice, any Board policy or any collective bargaining agreement. Similarly, the Superintendent has never knowingly allowed others in the system to violate any law, policy or contract. When issues of compliance with law, contract or policy are identified, the district takes immediate action to respond to the oversight and ensure that such problems are not repeated. The Superintendent regularly reminds administrators and staff of our collective obligation to observe both the letter and spirit of the law and our collective bargaining agreements, and this is monitored carefully on an on-going basis. Regular attention is given to district operating policies and Board policies to ensure compliance by both the Superintendent, administrative staff and others. Operating policies are a regular topic in administrative meetings to ensure that all members of the district leadership team are aware of such policies and their requirements. Appropriate additions, deletions and updates are made to all policies as required by law and/or circumstances.

Substantial effort is made on an annual basis to inform district administrators and staff of specific legal obligations related to nondiscrimination, child abuse reporting, harassment/intimidation/bullying, disciplinary rules and procedures, confidentiality (FERPA), use of public funds, public records requests, use and reporting of isolation and restraint and other critical issues that impact student safety and public confidence. A series of regular "compliance" trainings are organized on an annual basis to address these – and other - important topics. We continue to require staff to engage in an organized series of online training developed by our insurer, the Washington State Risk Management Pool, on a rotating set of critical topics. Many of these online modules address law and legal issues. During the 2022-23 year, the following Vector trainings were required of certificated and administrative staff:

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Preventing Boundary Invasions
- Child Abuse Reporting
- Slips, Trips and Falls Prevention
- Cybersecurity
- Sexual Harassment Prevention
- Youth Violence and Suicide Prevention

We continue to pay close attention to equity issues in the school system- particularly in the areas of discipline, achievement and program participation. Ensuring that UPSD is an equitable system has been, and will continue to be, a priority and an organizational value. To this end, district staff continue to disaggregate, review and respond to data in an effort to close gaps and improve equity. The district's equity advisory committee worked through the year to build capacity and to review district equity initiatives. Systematic efforts to eliminate inequity and bias in our system will continue into the coming year and building-based equity teams perform similar functions at each school site.

District administrative staff have a standing directive that if at any time any decision made by the Superintendent is perceived as being illegal or questionable -or running counter to the highest standards

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of public sector accountability- they are to notify the Superintendent immediately, and, if the Superintendent fails to respond, they are to notify the Board of Directors.

The Superintendent consistently responds to all of the district's employees, students and constituents in a prompt and respectful manner. Ensuring that concerned staff and citizens have access to district leadership and can share their concerns is a priority and a value. We continue to engage in email exchanges, phone calls, virtual meetings and face-to-face discussions in an effort to be responsive to stakeholders. Each year, different community needs and issues arise that require thoughtful consideration and response. This year, parent volunteering was such a topic. District administrators made special efforts to engage with parents, staff and community members on this important issue to gather information, share perspective and, ultimately, develop policy.

The district places great emphasis on ensuring safety and safe conditions for staff and students. Substantial planning and training takes place annually to ensure that everyone in the district is ready to do their part to keep themselves and others safe. Student safety is a regular topic in administrative meetings and substantial efforts are made on an annual basis to implement strong emergency procedures, effective preventative measures, positive behavioral interventions and supports and professional development that promotes the safety and well-being of staff. School administrators invest substantial time in reteaching expectations and responding to problems to ensure that kids are safe. We also strive to build trust and feelings of safety and security amongst our staff and parents by communicating well during and after incidents. Training is provided on an ongoing basis for school safety measures.

The Superintendent makes every effort to represent the district in a respectful and dignified manner in a wide array of public settings by modeling polite, positive, courteous and respectful interactions with all stakeholders- even when confronted with angry or unreasonable parents or community members. In addition, the Superintendent seeks to demonstrate patience, courtesy and responsiveness for all while expecting the same from colleagues.

In order to ensure continuity of district operations, the Superintendent shall not allow the district's leadership or any critical functions to be unprepared to respond to conditions that can stop or otherwise impede district operations. Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not fail to:

- 1. Ensure that at least one other executive staff member is familiar with Board and Superintendent issues and processes and is capable of assuming Superintendent responsibilities on an emergency basis.**

Interpretation: *I interpret this to mean that a designated UPSD administrator should be prepared to take over leadership of the district in the event I am unable to do so.*

In compliance. The district Assistant Superintendent is involved in -and has assumed significant responsibility for – extensive executive level decision-making, fiscal stewardship and board-superintendent issues and processes. He attends all board sessions and meetings and is familiar with the operations side of our organization in addition to the areas under his own supervision. The Assistant Superintendent is kept informed regarding all major district issues and projects (even those outside of his responsibilities) in the event he is needed to take on the role of Superintendent, and is also well versed in the district's budget and finances. The Assistant Superintendent's long-standing service to the district and his strong management and leadership abilities make him fully prepared to assume the role of Superintendent on a temporary or on-going basis should this be necessary. Recently, the Assistant Superintendent completed the Superintendent Certification Program at Washington State University and now possesses an official Superintendent certificate. Completion of this program increases the Assistant Superintendent's ability to perform the duties of Superintendent in either an emergency or official, permanent capacity.

2. Ensure that continuity of leadership exists at each level of the district's management.

Interpretation: *I interpret this to mean that plans should be in place to provide immediate support when a manager or supervisor becomes unable to perform their duties and to ensure that the organization can function in spite of any sudden and/or unexpected change in leadership/management staffing.*

In compliance. There is significant overlap built into key district office leadership positions to accommodate the unanticipated absence (e.g., for periods longer than normal sick leave or vacation periods) of critical staff. Because of this overlap and because of close collaboration among central office administrators, there is capacity for the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Executive Director for Primary Education, Executive Director of Secondary Education, Executive Director of Human Resources and Executive Director of Special Services to cover central office absences- temporary or prolonged. Additionally, the leadership team for the district meets on a weekly basis to discuss current issues, projects, etc. so that members of the team are aware of the work their colleagues are doing. In many cases, leadership team members are working in concert on issues. Over the long term, the recent changes in the structure of the district leadership team will serve continuity well as it will increase the overlap of duties and responsibilities.

We also have significant 'redundancy' at the building administrator level. Assistant principals at all levels can perform 'acting principal' duties under the direction of the Superintendent and Executive Directors for unanticipated principal absences in their building (or at other buildings) in the district. District office leaders also have extensive principal experience (Superintendent, Executive Director of HR and Executive Directors of Primary & Secondary Education) should it be necessary for them to engage in principal level work. With specific regard to replacement of administrators on an emergency basis, the district maintains relationships with retired/substitute administrators who can be called in on an emergency basis.

3. Ensure that district plans include a projection of foreseeable disasters or emergency situations.

Interpretation: *I interpret this to mean that the district must have a set of emergency preparedness plans in place that are known and understood by staff and that cover the kinds of emergencies most likely to occur (i.e., earthquakes and fires)*

In compliance. The district maintains and continually updates a set of emergency plans for a wide variety of possible incidents and situations. This work is led by a team of district administrative staff at both the building and district office levels.

The Superintendent and Director of Transportation and Safety collaborate regularly with city officials and law enforcement/first responders to increase familiarity and plan for emergencies. The District's Director of Transportation and Safety is also closely involved with county DEM activities and meets regularly with this group.

District leaders attend trainings and workshops to develop expertise on emergency preparedness. Other staff attend as needed. Training is also identified and implemented for appropriate district staff. The UPSD Emergency Operations Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan and Suicide Prevention Plan can be found using the following links:

- UPSD Emergency Operations Plan (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k5zadnxv_hVIDgmcbyHYypUCicGy2zaH8/view?usp=sharing)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c0ANiS7Fs54-ArM-FsE-uGibj02K0SCv/view?usp=sharing>)

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- Suicide Prevention Plan
(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VZkf6M1IZU3SMFDQ7_Bm96yVarsHMf6P/view?usp=sharing)

Furthermore, as part of the emergency planning process, the district maintains extensive emergency supplies in special containers at each site. These containers are ready for use in disasters or emergencies and contain first aid supplies, clean water, blankets, flashlights and other equipment. The contents of these containers are monitored and refreshed as needed.

4. Ensure that the district tests disaster/emergency preparedness plans for their ability to assure organizational continuity.

Interpretation: *I interpret this to mean that efforts are made to ensure that emergency plans are reasonable and appropriate and that key staff have an opportunity to practice emergency response in either actual or simulated drill situations.*

In compliance. The district conducts regular, monitored drills as required by law at all district sites for emergencies generated by: fire, earthquake, school violence (e.g., lockdown) and shelter in place. Administrators are required to report all drills, and these are recorded and monitored to ensure that emergency preparations are conducted routinely at all sites. Local law enforcement is involved in reviewing drills in each school on a periodic basis. Staff continues to engage in regular review and training related to school lockdowns, evacuation, earthquake “duck and cover” drills and other safety/emergency actions. The central office maintains a monthly record to ensure all drills are conducted according to law and the district’s Emergency Plan. Also, we rely on internal and external safety experts at UP Police, West Pierce Fire and Rescue, Pierce County Emergency Management, etc. to help review plans and ensure that they are appropriate and up to date. Training, collaborative planning and other “tabletop” discussions are also used to prepare to put emergency plans into action.

With respect to interactions with stakeholders (parents, students, and the public), the Superintendent shall not fail to ensure that parents, students and the public are treated with respect and dignity at the district level and within each school and classroom. Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not cause or allow a compromise of confidential information.

Interpretation: *I interpret treating all stakeholders “...with respect and dignity” as requiring a standard of behavior that is welcoming, inclusive, responsive and courteous; treating all stakeholders with respect means responding to any and all concerns or questions in ways that seek to resolve those concerns and answer questions to the fullest extent possible. It means that even stakeholders (students, staff) whose behavior warrants discipline or even separation from the district/employment are treated throughout the process with compassion for them as individuals. Furthermore, an important element of respect is access and availability. I believe strongly that parents and stakeholders, within reasonable limits, deserve our time and have a right to meet with district staff and administrators to share ideas, discuss concerns and/or advocate for their students appropriately.*

In compliance. I make every effort to be available to all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, alumni, citizens, etc.) to discuss concerns, hear suggestions, receive complaints, listen to demands and/or accept feedback. In all of these interactions I make it a priority to communicate that I have heard the stakeholder, share pertinent information so the constituent has access to this information and provide a response as to what next steps- if any- will be taken. The tone and tenor of these interactions- whether they be in person, by phone, in a virtual meeting or through email- is characterized by respect, open-mindedness and a genuine interest in a mutually favorable resolution. This approach to collaborative problem solving is also an expectation of all district leaders and staff members as they interact with constituents.

Interpretation: *Confidential information is interpreted as information that is both legally protected (i.e., for which formal confidentiality requirements exist in law, policy or contract), and also information that, while*

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not legally protected, requires sensitivity and discretion to protect a stakeholder's privacy, and prevent any unnecessary disclosure or embarrassment. We interpret this to require a generally "protective stance" toward the very large amount of personal information that becomes available to us, to the Board or other district employees in the course of our professional responsibilities.

In compliance. The district's expectations for protection of confidential information include that information covered by State and/or federal laws such as IDEA and FERPA. Additionally, other information is also deemed confidential. This information includes portions of employee personnel files, discipline records, background check /fingerprinting information, student records (excluding directory information as defined in policy), health records and investigatory files. Student records are carefully protected and are only released to identified biological parents or others who have been given written permission by parents or a court of law to receive such documents or information. No such records are provided without verification of the identity of the person requesting such records. Specific operating procedures govern the extent to which student records can be shared and identify "directory information" which can be legally shared outside our organization. These expectations and procedures are discussed on an annual basis with staff and training is provided as needed.

When student or staff confidentiality is violated by district staff and these violations are brought to the attention of leadership, immediate action is taken to, 1) limit any potential harmful impact, 2) notify individuals who are or might be affected, 3) investigate to determine the cause of the violation, 4) take appropriate action to discipline and/or direct the employee(s) responsible.

Confidentiality is also an important consideration in the district's response to public records requests. Extensive effort is made to protect private information in such requests to the extent that law allows with particular attention paid to student information and/or records. When necessary, the district uses the assistance of our attorneys to help protect confidential information that may be a part of a records request.

The board understands that certain legislative bodies may require the board to adopt policies that would be considered operational and therefore delegated to the Superintendent, under Policy Governance. In order to satisfy both these regulatory requirements and the board's desire to delegate operational issues to the Superintendent, the board adopts this policy. Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not fail to:

1. Create and implement policies as required by local, state and federal legislation.

Interpretation: *I interpret this to mean that the Board expects the Superintendent to ensure that the district remains in compliance with all legislatively mandated policies and their subsequent updates and changes with the exception of 1000 series policies that govern the board's work and decision-making processes.*

In compliance. The district has a system in place to regularly review and update policies to ensure they are current, comply with law and reflect actual district practices. Policy revision is an on-going process as laws change and requirements are added or deleted. All policies required by law are current and/or in the development or revision process. UPSD uses WSSDA's model policy service as a basis for notification of new/revised policies and as a starting point for language and legal references. However, not all language proposed by WSSDA is required and the district often amends proposed language, within the boundaries of law, to improve clarity, align policy with actual practices and avoid inclusion of unnecessary or potentially confusing information. Policies recommended to the Board are reviewed by the district's attorney when necessary.

District operating policies follow the established WSSDA numbering system and may be initiated in response to changes in state or federal laws, 'best practices' recommendations from WSSDA or the

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district's attorneys or by the need to codify and standardize specific district practices and procedures. The existence of a WSSDA policy does not equate to a legal requirement for a policy to be adopted by the Board of Directors.

During the 2022-23 school year, the district added or amended a number of required and recommended policies. These policies include:

- 2161 Special Education and Related Services for Eligible Students
- 3122 Excused and Unexcused Absences
- 3432 Emergencies
- 4218 Language Access
- 5011 Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited
- 6112 Rental of Lease of District Real Property
- 3515 Student Incentives
- 3520 Student Fees, Fines, Charges
- 1210 Annual Organizational Meeting
- 3231 Student Records
- 4311 School Safety and Security Services Program

2. These policies will be called district operating policies to distinguish them from the Board's governance policies.

Interpretation: *I interpret this to mean that the district operating policies (with the exception of 1000 series policies) are distinct from the board's policy governance policies. Operating policies are developed, maintained and amended by district administrators (i.e., the Superintendent or designee) for the purposes of district operation. Board governance policies and 1000 series policies are developed, maintained and amended by the Board of Directors and govern the work of the Board, specifically.*

In compliance. The district maintains two separate sets of policies and uses two distinct processes for adding or amending these policies. District operating policies are named and numbered as such on the district website for easy access by staff, administration, the Board and the public. 1000 series policies reside in the same location on our website as other operating policies but are clearly labeled with the title "The Board of Directors" to ensure they are understood as such.

Adopted: June 12, 2019
Monitoring Method: Internal Report
Monitoring Frequency: Annually in April