

## Communication with the Public

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In developing relationships with the community/public, the Superintendent shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, condition, procedure or organizational circumstance that leads to any of the following:

1. A school community, influenced as it is by community support groups and key communicators, that is not predisposed to provide local support on critical district issues to include bond/levy needs, or that remains uninformed of:
  - a. Annual school and district progress, including information about school and district strategies intended to address achievement and to accomplish the Board's Ends policies;

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the community should be informed annually of the progress being made at specific schools -and in the district as a whole- in pursuit of the Board's three Ends Policies- Academic Competence, Health and Fitness and Contributing Citizens. In addition, the public should have regular access to the district's official Strategic Plan which outlines the general methods used to reach our goals. Furthermore, when conditions require substantial changes to basic operations as they did during the pandemic, the public should be informed of the district's new and/or temporary approach to accomplishing ends.*

**In compliance.** The district utilizes a wide range of methods to share school and district progress. These include the distribution of The Dialog newsletter to all UP citizens several times per year, public presentations at board meetings and to other groups, social media communications, regular informational emails to parents and the UPSD website. Data presented in formal E2, E3 and E4 reports are easily accessible by the public online. Basic district strategies are made explicit in the Strategic Plan which is also posted on the website. A central initiative over the last two years has been efforts to enhance compliance with existing "Ends" policies for all students by focusing on racial equity. Communication on the district's website on this topic has provided substantial detail to ensure that the public is informed on actual work in this arena.

Extensive information about district progress is also made available to the public through the state education website run by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Much of this information is directly related to the Board's Ends policies, while other progress data is not. OSPI requires extensive reporting by the district on a range of topics including student discipline, attendance, achievement, graduation, failure rates, and others. This information is provided to OSPI for public display and access. Progress data provided via OSPI helps the public to both trust and understand the data by placing information in context and allowing for comparisons with state averages and other districts. The significant changes to testing, attendance protocols, etc. caused by the pandemic disrupted collection of publicly available data during the last two years, but this issue is gradually resolving and we will begin to see more actionable and useful data emerge in the coming years. The return of student growth data will be particularly helpful and informative.

- b. The current strategic plan, describing district ends and major programs designed to achieve them, and how it is regularly used with regard to budgeting, professional development, etc.

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the district must inform the community about the most recent version of its Strategic Plan and include specific approaches utilized to achieve the Board's Ends goals. Additionally, the community should also be made aware of the way in which the Strategic Plan informs decisions related to the use of local, state and federal revenues, as well as the manner in which the Plan impacts staff training opportunities and initiatives.*

**In compliance.** The Strategic Plan is posted on the district's website along with extensive information about the district's Ends policies, curriculum materials and specific programs that support the Board's Ends goals. The connection between this plan and district budget priorities is evident in multiple reports

to the Board including the E2 Academic Competence reports and other updates. By explicitly identifying priorities, the Strategic Plan defines budget priorities. Over the course of the last year, the district's use of one-time federal ESSER funds was grounded in the same basic principles that form key elements of the Strategic Plan. Additional counselors and intervention teachers are examples of specific programming changes- aligned to our plan- that were communicated extensively to the community and board. To the extent possible and appropriate, parents and community are provided information/rationale explaining how the strategic plan was reflected in these decisions.

**2. Erosion or undermining of the role and public profile of the Board as the district's principal connection with the community, and the community's voice in governing the district, by:**

**a. Failing to publish via multiple media resources (including the district website with capacity to use instant online language translation service for text and web pages) of essential Board information, to include**

**(1) Contact information for board members**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the public should have access to contact information for all five elected school board members and the Superintendent. Furthermore, the public should be able to access this information in multiple languages.*

**In compliance.** Contact information for all five elected school board members and the Superintendent is available to the public on the district's website, in the annual district calendar sent to all families, in the Dialog (the district's quarterly newsletter) and in other locations. Contact information for other district staff is also available to the public. This information includes work address (if applicable), telephone number and email address.

**(2) The schedule and location of board meetings for the current year, meeting agendas prior to each meeting and approved board meeting minutes.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the public should be informed of the time and place for all board meetings and that agendas should be made available to the public in advance of meetings. Furthermore, the public should be able to access this information in multiple languages.*

**In compliance.** Annual calendars for board meetings and meeting agendas are posted on the UPSD website. Copies of the board calendar and agendas are also available at the Educational Service Center upon request. Online translation of website content into multiple languages is available including Arabic, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Korean and other languages. Documents such as agendas, minutes, etc. can also be translated using Google and other online tools.

**(3) Current governance and district operating policies/procedures**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the public should have access to all district policies, including basic district operating policies and board policies including Ends policies, Executive Limitations Policies, Board Governance Policies and Board/Superintendent Relations Policies. Furthermore, the public should be able to access this information in multiple languages.*

**In compliance.** All district and board policies are posted to the website. When policies are added, changed or updated, the public has access to the preliminary documents in advance of board approval should they have concerns or questions. When policies are changed, the public can view the specific changes in policy language prior to formal adoption by the Board. The documents created by the board to monitor policies are also made available to the public via the website. Copies of board policies and monitoring documents are available upon request and the documents can be translated into other languages including Arabic, Russian, Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog and others.

- b. Failing to publish and distribute a newsletter to the public at least twice a year, reserving a column on page one for a “From the Board of Directors” article;**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the district will create and distribute at least two informational publications for the public annually. In each issue of this publication, a message from the Board or the Board President will be included on the first page of the publication.*

**In compliance.** The Dialog newsletter is published three to four times annually and contains a written message from the board president and/or the board of directors on the first page of the publication in at least two editions. Issues are typically sent to homes in the fall (October/November), the winter (January/February), the spring (April/May) and in July. The July edition is focused on graduation and does not include a board message. Each edition of the Dialog is available on our website for review. During the last year, one less Dialog was published due to a transition in the contractors used for these purposes and associated timeline challenges. While this is still in line with Board expectations, we plan to return to four issues again next year.

- c. Failing to display board member names on all community-related print material,**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the names of board members should be included on publications developed by the district that are distributed to the public. Such publications would exclude those sent out exclusively to parents as a matter of regular school business or notifications that support basic district operations and are not intended for the broader community.*

**In compliance.** Board member names are printed on copies of programs from various school events, in the Dialog newsletter, on the website, in the annual school calendar and in other publications. Specific titles such as President, Vice President and Legislative Representative are included in multiple publications.

- d. Failing to display:**

- (1) Board member contact information;**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the public should be provided easy access to both identifying names of Board Members but also methods for contacting them.*

**In compliance.** Board member contact information such as email address and telephone number are available to the public on the district’s website and in publications.

- (2) The annual board agenda, including information on planned linkage meetings (purpose, date, and location).**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the annual board calendar- including all regular meetings, study sessions, linkage meetings and other scheduled events is available to the public at school sites so that the public can attend and/or monitor the board’s work. Additionally, the public will have access to board procedures for conducting meetings so that they are aware of how they can participate in this open, public process.*

**In compliance.** The annual calendar of board meetings is posted on the website. The website can be accessed at all school buildings and the ESC. It includes all regular meetings and study sessions scheduled for the year. Linkage meetings are specifically noted online. A link on the website explains linkage meetings and highlights their purpose and importance. Information about the Board’s procedures are posted online in specific policies such as the 1000 series District Operating Policies and in Board Governance and Board/Superintendent Relations policies. These policies detail the work of the board and explain how citizens can participate in meetings. Also, copies of the district calendar are available at all school sites for parents and/or community members to access. The public’s attendance at, and

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participation in, Board meetings has increased over the last year indicating that the public has access to information on how to be involved.

- e. Failing to provide orderly and appropriate public access to the Board; nor lack of timely and appropriate follow up in response to expressed public input.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that public contact with board members should be aided and encouraged. When the public engages with the Board in a way that requires some action or response on the part of the district, this action is taken promptly- as promised.*

**In compliance.** Contact information is made available to the public in multiple forms (see above). When the district receives inquiries about how to contact board members, this information is provided. When members of the public have questions or share concerns with board members, district administrators respond promptly as appropriate.

- 3. Failure to publish a financial condition statement annually as a part of the district's annual report to the public.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the district's financial statements must be made available to the public.*

**In compliance.** The F-196 (Annual Financial Statements) is the official financial report for the district and is filed and published in November, monitored by the ESD, and submitted to OSPI. The F-195 (Budget) is our adopted budget and is also a published document that reflects the financial condition of the district. Both reports are available on the OSPI website (link below) or in hard copy if requested from the district.

In addition, the State Auditor's Office (SAO) publishes the audited financial statements after the audit each year. The district's audited financial statements for the 2021-22 school year are in the final stages of development. The audited financial statements for the 2020-21 school year are available on the State Auditor's Office website (link below).

Detailed information about the 2021-22 budget, revenues, and expenditures and the 2020-21 audited financial statements are available to the board and the public by accessing these links:

- 2021-22 F-195 Annual Budget  
([https://www.upsd83.org/departments/business\\_services/budget](https://www.upsd83.org/departments/business_services/budget))
- 2021-22 F-196 Annual Financial Statements  
(<https://hostedreports.ospi.k12.wa.us/api/0/Document/Download/79155>)
- 2020-21 Audited Financial Statements  
(<https://portal.sao.wa.gov/ReportSearch/Home/ViewReportFile?arn=1030387&isFinding=false&sp=false>)

- 4. Failure to involve key stakeholders in the process of establishing attendance line adjustments.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean any change in established attendance lines must include input from key stakeholders.*

**In compliance.** No boundary line adjustments have been necessary in the past ten years. If boundary adjustments are needed, this would trigger the formation of a citizens' ad hoc committee to study and recommend adjustments to the board.

**5. Failure to effectively respond to complaints.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that all complaints from parents, students or other members of the public must receive a response from one or more district administrators or staff members and that all complaints must be handled effectively.*

**In compliance.** The district follows a series of subject-specific complaint protocols that outline basic expectations for reporting and responding to complaints - both formal and informal. The procedures are reviewed with administrators each year to provide training, set expectations and teach the protocols. The district uses a variety of grievance/complaint procedures established by law, policy, and collective bargaining agreements. Teachers, administrators and district leaders are expected to take all complaints seriously and to respond promptly and appropriately. Complaint procedures are displayed prominently on the district's web page and are available to all stakeholders. Multiple district policies and publications also reference our complaint procedures and identify designated staff who are responsible for particular types of complaints (i.e., district Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator, etc.). Staff have also been trained on the importance of directing parents to these procedures when concerns are brought forward. When complaints are received, district staff are also trained to involve other parties as necessary (i.e., district administration, district attorneys, building administrators, etc.) and to work with constituents toward a resolution.

**6. Failure to involve stakeholders in an advisory capacity on important issues that impact them.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that stakeholders who are impacted by a decision should have the opportunity to provide input as to their perceptions and preferences, where applicable and possible. Furthermore, when possible, necessary and appropriate, stakeholders deserve the opportunity to provide general input on the direction and performance of the district and/or particular schools. I interpret stakeholders as parents, students and community members.*

**In compliance.** Several formal advisory groups are in place in the district that allow stakeholders opportunities to provide input. These include, but are not limited to, the Instructional Materials Committee, the District Equity Advisory Committee, the District Safety Committee, the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee, and the District Health and Wellness Committee. Additional opportunities are also provided to parents, students and community members to give feedback and share preferences as necessary and appropriate.

The Superintendent continues to provide parents with regular updates via email inviting easy, direct response opportunities. Parents routinely respond to these notifications with questions, concerns and suggestions. The most recent example of this is the coordination of several gun safety projects that are a result of community notices provided by the Superintendent.

In addition, the Superintendent's communication methods/procedures provide other opportunities for feedback, input and dialogue in various forms and settings. These include the above-mentioned updates to parents, staff and community via email, attendance/presentation at meetings, face-to-face meetings, phone conversations or attendance at community events. While it is understood that 'communication' is not the same issue as 'involvement' as used here, it is a critical aspect of it. Other district and building administrators are also responsible for these same communication channels with stakeholders.

Students are also provided opportunities to share their views on specific topics at the school level. These opportunities are topic and grade-level dependent.

**7. Formation of advisory committees without knowing their purpose, organization, and functions.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that any formal advisory committee composed of members of the public should have a clearly defined purpose, a specific organizational structure and a set of procedures governing how the committee will conduct its business, make decisions, etc.*

**In compliance.** Each formal advisory group noted above that includes members of the public has a designated purpose and structure. In most cases, the groups are required by law, contract or policy. Informal parent and student advisory groups continue to contribute input and share experiences with district staff and leadership, as well.

**8. Failure to inform stakeholders of policies and procedures that affect them.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that parents, students and other members of the public should be notified when they are impacted by a policy or procedure in a timely fashion. By “notified”, I mean provided access to basic information about the policy or procedure. The nature and frequency of this notification will vary depending on the degree to which a group is impacted, the degree to which the policy or procedure is not already known or expected and other factors.*

**In compliance.** The district continues to act promptly to communicate with stakeholders on all issues that impact them. This is a high priority for district leaders. This includes general communications about routine policies and procedures such as student pick-up/drop off, student medication distribution, disciplinary rules and procedures, language access supports and many others. It also includes communication around incidents and/or safety concerns.

The district acts quickly and proactively to communicate with parents on health or safety-related issues, or any issues reasonably likely to cause rumor or disruption. The Superintendent makes conscious decisions regarding the most effective modes of communication demanded by the situation at hand. These modes include the district website, district auto-dialer calls, district email and district-wide letters as appropriate and necessary to notify stakeholders. The district also uses social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook and the FlashAlert system for school closures.

Teachers, building leaders and support staff (i.e., safety and nursing personnel) also communicate with stakeholders at the building level through building websites, parent newsletters, social media, reader boards and other methods. This is especially true at Curtis High School.

Lastly, policies and procedures are available on the district website and are provided to stakeholders upon request. Students at each school (and their parents) receive copies of school student handbooks that detail school policies and procedures annually.

**9. Failure to provide timely information to parents, students, staff and the public concerning the district’s annual calendar by:**

**a. Sharing guidelines for calendar planning**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the public should be given an opportunity to review the basic “formula” that is used to develop the calendar on an annual basis.*

**In compliance.** The basic formula for development of the calendar is included in the UPEA Collective Bargaining Agreement which is accessible on the district website. A special section on how the calendar is created is included on the calendar page of the website as well.

**b. Providing timely notification of any changes to the calendar**

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**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that parents and community should be given advance notice whenever the calendar is altered. I interpret "changes to the calendar" to include events or circumstances that require a change to the previously published calendar (i.e., snow make up days). Furthermore, I interpret these changes to include substantive changes to school start and/or release times, vacation days and days when school will be in session. I interpret timely to mean that notice will be provided as soon as accurate and definitive information is available and will allow time for planning.*

**In compliance.** Changes to the calendar are difficult for staff and families. Every effort is made to adhere to the planned annual calendar and to avoid such changes. When inclement weather, facility problems, safety concerns and/or other issues require that district or individual school calendars be changed, we recognize the vital role that communication plays in giving ample notice and explanation to our families. Notice of changes are shared with parents and the public via school messenger email, FlashAlert, social media, automated phone calls and on the district's website. The changes are communicated clearly and promptly whenever conditions allow for proactive communication. Over the last year, the district implemented a new schedule for Professional Learning Community work during Wednesday late starts. Because this decision was made in bargaining over the summer, the district postponed implementation by several weeks to give families additional time to adjust schedules and find day care. This year, the continuation of late start Wednesdays was communicated in January to provide substantial notice. This change is one example of the importance of clear and early communication related to calendar changes.

**c. Getting input from parents and staff on calendar development**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the district should gather and consider parent input on the first/last days of the year, the timing and length of annual vacations (i.e., winter break, spring break, etc.) and the placement of snow make-up and other scheduled work days for administrators, teachers, and parents prior to development of the calendar in the bargaining process.*

**In compliance.** The school calendar is a "mandatory subject to bargaining", which means that it must be negotiated with our employees as a matter of Washington law. As always, UPEA contract language is followed when developing the calendar. Input was last gathered from staff and parents in the spring of 2022 through a public survey. There were 378 responses.

**d. Publishing, on the district website, a calendar no later than February 1<sup>st</sup> for the upcoming school year.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the calendar for the upcoming school year will be viewable on the district website by February 1st each year.*

**In compliance.** The 2022/23 school calendar was published on the district website prior to February 1, 2022. Similarly, the 2023/24 calendar is now available on the website and was posted prior to February 1, 2023.

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