

## Communication and Counsel to the Board

EL-3

**With respect to providing information and counsel to the Board, the Superintendent shall not fail to give the Board as much information as necessary to be informed.**

**Accordingly, the Superintendent may not:**

- 1. Fail to submit monitoring data required by the Board in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion, directly addressing provisions of the board policies being monitored;**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent, or designee, will submit monitoring reports for Board inspection in compliance with the board's annual monitoring cycle outlined in policy. Additionally, the monitoring reports will be correct, complete, truthful and specifically aligned to the components of each policy. The reports will also be clear and easy to understand.*

**In compliance.** All monitoring reports were submitted to the board on time over the last year.

All monitoring reports are aligned to the specifics of the board policy being monitored. Information is presented in a complete, user-friendly manner. The superintendent reviews the expectations, timelines and other information needed to ensure quality monitoring documents with the appropriate central office staff and any other district personnel charged with submitting monitoring report data. The superintendent provides feedback—in addition to the “response to monitoring” feedback provided by the board—to administrators charged with monitoring reports, and actively encourages administrators to share with the board their suggestions for improvements to -or modifications of- executive limitations and ends policies.

- 2. Fail to advise the Board in a timely manner of relevant trends, facts, information, and legal proceedings, anticipated significant media coverage, and changes in assumptions upon which Board policy has been established**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent or designee will provide necessary information and/or guidance to the board to help the Board make sound decisions and to perform its duties effectively and efficiently. Information will be provided at a time- and in a manner- that is useful and supportive of the board's needs.*

**In compliance.** The superintendent uses the ‘update’ portion of the board agenda, emails, board packets and, at times, phone calls to provide timely and relevant information that might impact board communications or decision-making. In addition, the Superintendent provides periodic, written board updates that contain pertinent and timely information about the district and/or issues impacting education broadly. Further, the superintendent routinely ensures that the board of directors receives a ‘heads up’ e-mail or other notification about any event that substantially impacts or might impact the district, or about anticipated media coverage. Information is also provided to the board of directors in study sessions throughout the year and in extensive board packets preceding each regular board meeting.

Over the last year, significant communication has been necessary to keep the Board informed on budget matters necessitating reductions. In addition to the annual budget presentations

provided to the Board to comply with law and policy, additional updates have been provided over time to explain the underlying causes of the reductions and the district's plan.

The board of directors is promptly advised of all significant legal proceedings (or potential liabilities) to which the district is a party. The board is advised, in Executive Session when appropriate, of any issues with potential legal implications. Legal opinions- written or verbal- are sought by the superintendent and shared with the board as appropriate when circumstances dictate that this approach is needed. The board is also kept informed of collective bargaining developments when the district is in negotiations with employee groups.

**3. Fail to advise the Board of changes which reasonably could be expected to substantially affect the district's financial condition.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the Board will be notified promptly whenever changes take place that may impact the district's fiscal health or condition in any significant way.*

**In compliance.** In addition to routine monthly budget status reports, preliminary budget and final budget hearings and end-of-year status reports, the board receives regular and comprehensive updates related to state funding and potential impact on district operations and/or fiscal standing. Over the last year, efforts have been made to inform the board of the substantial changes to the district's funding outlook due to several factors. These factors include expenditure pressures such as rising salary costs and inflation. They also include revenue issues related to temporary federal money (ESSER), diminishing state funding (Local Effort Assistance) and the revenue impacts of a slow enrollment decline.

**4. Fail to advise the Board if, in the Superintendent's opinion, the Board is not in compliance with its own policies on Governance Process and Board-Superintendent Relations;**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent is expected to notify the Board when he believes the board is violating its own governance policies to include board governance, board/superintendent relations policies and 1000 series board operating policies.*

**In compliance.** Real or potential violations of GP and BSR policies are reported via the superintendent's responses to the board's GP and BSR policy monitoring surveys. As needed, the superintendent also provides information to the board about real or potential violations of its own policies in meetings, updates, work sessions, etc.

**5. Fail to provide a mechanism for official Board or committee communications;**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent is responsible to manage a system whereby the board and its committees can communicate effectively and efficiently within the guidelines set forth by the Open Public Meetings Act and other relevant statutes and policies governing the work of the Board.*

**In compliance.** The superintendent's office works closely with the board president and other board members to facilitate official board communications, e.g., via linkage meeting notifications, use of school messenger and other forms of communication as appropriate. During the last year, the board gradually returned to "normal," pre-pandemic operating procedures.

Meetings at the start of the year included virtual options. Meetings at the end of the year were fully “in-person”.

Each board member also has access to an official school district email to ensure that all communications are appropriately archived and to allow for easy communication with stakeholders.

**6. Fail to work with the Board as a whole except when:**

- a. **Fulfilling individual requests for information as long as such requests do not require a material amount of staff time or resources or are not disruptive;**
- b. **Working with officers or committees duly charged by the Board;**
- c. **Communicating with the Chair**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that, in order for the board to function effectively, develop sound policy and make good decisions, all members of the board need access to the same information. To this end, it is the Superintendent’s responsibility to ensure that all board members are provided with information related to issues that may come before the board and/or are on the board agenda. Exceptions to this expectation include situations where a single board member seeks information that can be provided by district staff with little time and/or effort, work involving officers and/or committees appointed by the board to conduct specific work with district staff and communications between the Superintendent and the board chair as outlined in policy.*

**In compliance.** The superintendent - and other administrators designated by the superintendent to work closely with the board - are careful to communicate to the board as a whole. Inquiries, concerns or requests for information made by individual board members are routinely and purposefully made available to other board members to foster a board culture of openness and trust. Responses to such inquiries are also provided to all board members routinely for the same purpose. District administrators are encouraged to provide information and feedback to board members as requested, and to participate actively in board policy and monitoring discussions during board meetings and work sessions. Board members are invited to contact district administrators directly if clarification or more information is required for items in the board packet.

**7. Fail to report in a timely manner any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any Board Ends or Executive Limitations policy;**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent will notify the Board promptly if he believes that the district is not complying- or may fail to comply- with any Ends or Executive Limitations policy.*

**In compliance.** Any actions of the Superintendent, or conditions of the district, that are known and understood by the superintendent as not meeting full compliance with Ends and/or Executive Limitations policies are reported to the board, with appropriate clarification. When necessary, information concerning policy violations has been provided to the Board in a variety of ways such as Superintendent updates, written email updates and, sometimes, through the monitoring process itself.

**8. Fail to advise and include the Board in a timely manner of any anticipated formal mass communication with the public, such as the publishing of newsletters, district newspapers, news releases, community letters, parent surveys, etc.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the board of directors should be aware of, and/or directly informed about, mass communications sent to parents and/or the public. In most circumstances, when mass communications are routine and/or predictable (i.e., reminder of district or school events, operational reminders, basic mailings, notification of weather-related closure/delay, school-based operational notifications, etc.) I assume that the board is aware of the purpose and need for such basic communications and does not expect special notification. In other cases, however, the board should receive special notification when mass communications could result in media coverage, parent/community concerns, public controversy, board contact/questions or other attention. In these cases, additional board communication could include personal contacts, advance notice, elaborative detail/background or other information.*

**In compliance.** The board is advised via email, written update and/or phone call when mass communications to the general public are anticipated or made that may result in significant public response, attention or concern. Recent examples of these communications include a safety notice about weapon possession and an overview of the district's volunteer policies. These documents were shared with the Board in advance of distribution to parents. Board members are notified in the same manner regarding potential media coverage when such coverage is known or anticipated. Routine communications made to the general public via our website, district calendar, Dialog newsletter, calendar reminders etc. are made available to all board members in the same way they are made available to other citizens.

**9. Allow commercial entities to advertise or imply the endorsement of any product without Board approval.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean commercial entities cannot advertise on district property or to district staff in a manner that would imply district endorsement of the product without board approval.*

**In compliance.** All materials for distribution to students and families are reviewed and approved by the Superintendent or designee. Materials approved for distribution must include a disclaimer that the event or organization is not sponsored or endorsed by the University Place School District. Commercial entities are not permitted to distribute materials for the purpose of general advertising. Purveyors of textbooks, investment plans, and a range of other goods and services are not given access to the school communication or distribution systems. We do not advertise on or in buildings, buses or sports facilities without board approval. Advertising is not permitted in district communications such as our website, the UPSD school calendar, the Dialog, student handbooks and newsletters at this time.

Booster clubs and PTSA's are separate legal entities not directly affiliated with the district. They may sell advertisements/sponsorships for calendars, programs, etc. They must follow the guidelines in the district's "PTSA's and Booster Clubs" handbook that is posted on our website and available in our schools.

Detailed information about PTSA and Booster Club regulations can be found using this link:

- PTSA and Booster Club Handbook  
([https://www.upsd83.org/departments/athletics\\_\\_asb](https://www.upsd83.org/departments/athletics__asb))

**10. Failing to inform board members of opportunities for attendance at and/or participation in community events where the district is invited to be represented, or to redirect invitations to the board when the events will involve elected officials.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent or designee will notify the Board when community, district or school events are taking place that might be of interest to the Board. Additionally, when the district receives an invitation for one or more officials to attend an event, the invitation will be communicated to the Board.*

**In compliance.** Board members are routinely advised of significant community events. School events are listed on the printed district calendar, on the website calendar and also in Principal communications. Additional information is provided in Board meetings, as appropriate.

**11. Fail to report to the Board and provide sufficient advance notice to the public on significant changes to programs and courses of study.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret “report” to mean written or verbal updates. We interpret “significant changes to programs and courses of study” to be those adjustments that significantly impact the instructional core program. Further we interpret “programs” to be federal (i.e. Title I, Part A, Title III), state (LAP, TBIP, Highly Capable), or locally supported instruction (i.e. AP), and “courses of study” to be classes.*

**In compliance.** Descriptions of expansions to supports and programs associated with student recovery from pandemic-related school disruption have been provided to the Board within the Superintendent Update, E2 and EL8 reports, and as a small portion of the Budget Reports over the last year. These include, but are not limited to, program changes such as:

- Increased counselor support
- Increased support at the primary and intermediate level for direct math and ELA intervention by certificated teachers
- Math and ELA support classes at the secondary level
- Graduation specialist for last year and this year (ESSER funded)

Routine changes to the core and intervention curricula impact the instructional program. These changes come by means of the Instructional Materials Committee (IMC) and are typically included in the executive summaries related to curriculum adoptions or when substantive changes are made to the content of existing courses.

- The IMC meets at least four times per year and is made up of district- and school-level administrators, teachers, parents, and community members.

**Policy Type: Executive Limitations**

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- Each IMC member serves a three-year term. When there is an open seat on the committee, notice is posted on the district website and principals work to find additional parents, teachers, and/or community members for the IMC.
- Significant content changes within courses are described as curriculum adoptions and changes to maps that are approved as part of the effort to develop the existing curriculum to better reflect the experiences of diverse students. These are included in IMC approvals within executive summaries.

Each summer, as part of the executive summary related to IMC recommendations, the Teaching and Learning Department includes new or changed courses to inform the Board prior to the start of school. The last of these course descriptions, June of 2022, included the new courses for *Financial Literacy*, *Video Game Design* and *AP World History: Modern*.

Routine changes to course offerings are also communicated to parents and students, via publication of the secondary Course Catalogs at the 8-12 level. Other significant program changes are communicated to the Board in public meetings/study sessions and/or via email.

**12. Present the proposed policy to the board for review and approval, before implementation.**

**Interpretation:** *I interpret this requirement literally; no policy should be posted to the website prior to board review and adoption except in draft form so the public can see proposed language (or changes to language) in advance of a decision to allow for public comment/input.*

**In compliance.** All policies are brought to the board before implementation. Policies are provided in the board packet and appear on the consent agenda for Board approval. It should be noted that when policies are adopted for the purpose of codifying current practices, the practices themselves are in place before Board approval. However, no policy is noted as such without prior approval by the board. Furthermore, the district process for board adoption of policies includes a “public posting” period prior to meetings that allows citizens to see policy language changes before board adoption. This part of the process allows for stakeholders to provide input to the board related to specific policies prior to board action.

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