

Staff Hiring, Treatment, Compensation and Evaluation

EL-4

With respect to treatment of staff, the superintendent shall ensure that staff members are treated with respect and dignity.

a. *Interpretation: All UPSD employees deserve a working environment where they are treated with respect and dignity by parents, students, colleagues and supervisors. Respectful treatment of staff is characterized by fair, consistent, polite, civil and honest interactions. Dignified treatment includes showing appreciation and recognition for the work done by employees, seeking feedback and input from employees on important issues, communicating with employees and ensuring that employees are given support and encouragement in their work.*

In compliance.

Numerous policies are in place and enforced to protect employees from disrespectful, or undignified, conduct by others. Formal district operating policies that serve this end are available here: https://www.upsd83.org/about_upsd/district_operating_policies. The policies include protections from harassment, intimidation, bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination, threats and other disrespectful conduct. Labor agreements contain additional protections for employees in certificated and classified associations pertaining to respectful and dignified treatment. Importantly, these contracts ensure fair and consistent treatment in evaluations, hiring, job transfers, discipline, due process, freedom of expression and other areas.

Procedures are in place for employees who feel that they have been treated unfairly or with disrespect. These procedures include informal and formal methods. Multiple policies contain specific complaint procedures that offer protections, process and response to employees. All employee contracts contain specific provisions for grievances and their resolution. Building administrators and district office leaders including the Executive Director of Human Resources, the Title IX/Civil Rights/HIB Compliance Coordinators and other supervisors receive ongoing training, are well-versed in these procedures and follow required steps in responding to complaints.

Specific and extensive efforts are made on a regular basis to create environments of gratitude and appreciation for district employees. Principals at all schools call out staff in weekly memos to thank them for their efforts, skills and commitment. These weekly communications provide ongoing recognition for staff members in all roles. Other recognition efforts include staff appreciation days/weeks, the annual Teacher of the Year Award, acknowledgement of retirements and separation of employees when possible and celebrations throughout the year.

Communication to staff is also an organizational value and closely associated with feelings of respect and dignity. As key players in achieving our mission, staff need to have regular access to information that impacts what they do. Principals are expected to provide weekly memos to all staff at their site to communicate key information. Additionally, principals and supervisors meet with staff and subgroups of staff- both virtually and in person- to provide information. District level communications are also important and have been a priority over the last two years with so many ongoing changes. As a common principle of leadership, we expect that our employees will be the first people to possess information about our plans before the information is sent out to our parents and community. Not only is this an important component of treating staff with respect, but it is also important to organizational quality.

Extensive efforts are also made to involve staff in important decisions impacting their work and working conditions. District leaders meet monthly with labor leaders in all three bargaining units to discuss issues- both specific and general- related to staff treatment. At the site level, administrators and site representatives also meet regularly to review staff concerns and solve problems. Building and district committees such as positive behavior support committees, PLC leadership groups, the district equity advisory committee, the district instructional materials committee, curriculum mapping teams, counselor

groups, safety committee and others meet to discuss operational and improvement efforts. Regular staff meetings at schools and in departments also provide a forum for discussion, input and feedback. Many staff members (over 200) participated in a recent calendar survey that asked for preferences in this area of operations. While we are unable to collect staff input and feedback on all subjects that impact our employees, we do recognize the importance of collaborative decision-making as an element of respectful treatment in many circumstances.

Additional information relevant to this topic is provided in section 1 below concerning safe and civil work environments.

With respect to employment compensation and benefits for employees, the superintendent shall employ the highest quality staff at the most reasonable cost to the district and recommend for board approval, salary schedules that represent fair, competitive compensation for employees.

b. Interpretation: The Superintendent must seek board approval for salary schedules and wages for all employees in the district and for all district bargaining groups. Compensation levels proposed to the board must be appropriate and necessary to hire and retain qualified staff in numbers sufficient to meet the goals set for the organization by the Board. In pursuit of this end, the district must avoid the creation of any financial situation that is unsustainable or that will prevent the organization from reaching goals set by the Board in its Ends policies. "Reasonable cost" means the resources necessary to attract and retain qualified staff. Costs are unreasonable when they surpass the "market rate" for a given position and detract from student programs or when they fall short of this "market rate" and result in the inability to attract and retain staff. Similarly, the district will provide, beyond salary/wages, benefits to employees including establishing strong working conditions. In pursuit of compliance with this policy, the district will work collaboratively with labor groups and employees to balance the costs of providing the highest quality working conditions with the costs of competitive wages. Ongoing compliance in this area will only be possible so long as adequate resources are provided by external funding sources in a predictable and equitable manner.

In compliance.

The district collects data from regional districts and follows guidelines set forth by the state to determine what compensation, benefits and working conditions are necessary and appropriate for the attraction and retention of high quality staff at each position in the district. Data provided to the Board related to our fiscal status in addition to our high levels of employee retention are evidence of compliance in this area. Substantial salary increases have been provided to staff over the last several years to keep pace with regional compensation levels. Salary increases and incentives have targeted specific, hard-to-fill positions such as special education teachers, nurses, substitute teachers, etc. as appropriate.

- i. Salary schedules for all employees are presented for Board approval on the consent agenda annually, in accordance with law. In determining "fair and competitive compensation," the district uses multiple sources to determine parity for each group. The district uses SIRS (School Information and Research Service) Annual Salary Report as well as collecting information on specific positions from other districts in the surrounding area and/or of a similar size.
- ii. The Executive Director of Human Resources regularly conducts a salary comparison of certificated and classified staff in districts in Pierce County. Similar reviews are completed in preparation for bargaining with each of the local associations. Non-represented staff are reviewed periodically to ensure comparability. The results of these reviews are used to ensure our salary schedules are fair and competitive for all employees.

- iii. Ongoing compliance with this provision will require adequate and equitable funding from state, federal and local sources. Inequities in law and policy threaten our ability to provide competitive wages to some employees. State regionalization is one example of such a policy as it provides nearby districts (Tacoma, Fife, Sumner, Peninsula, Federal Way, etc.) with higher revenue levels for certificated, classified and administrative staff than UPSD and others. This built-in inequity poses challenges for the provision of competitive wages. Also, the state's recent decision to "rebase" annual revenue increases for employee salaries will pose additional challenges. Because new revenue is only provided for "state-funded" positions, the percentage increases are not adequate to provide all employees with the state increase. Additional revenues from local funding and/or other sources is required to maintain competitive salaries.

With respect to evaluation of employees, the superintendent shall implement an evaluation system that measures employee performance in terms of achieving and complying with the Board's policies.

Interpretation: Staff evaluation of teachers, building and district administrators and other staff must include measures of performance that are directly associated with the achievement of goals and expectations established by the board of directors in Ends and Executive Limitations policies.

In compliance

See section 6 below for specific information regarding compliance with this component of EL4.

Accordingly, the superintendent shall effect:

2. A working environment for staff that is safe, civil or otherwise conducive to teaching and learning.

a. *Interpretation: All employees of the district are physically safe in their work environment and, in addition to their physical safety, are treated with respect and dignity (i.e., with civility). Furthermore, I interpret this policy to require that working conditions support the central tasks of teaching and learning.*

b. In compliance.

c. All administrators and supervisors monitor for safety as a first priority. The district conducts multiple safety drills and plans for a variety of potential risks. Multiple district leaders and employees take responsibility to monitor compliance with safety requirements, the district's safety plan, multiple safety-related policies and general conditions. The district also operates a safety committee with representatives from all employee groups and various positions in the district to provide information about safety concerns around the district. When unsafe conditions are identified, immediate action is taken to remedy the concern. In addition, when accidents occur, district staff follow clear guidelines for accident and injury reporting. Investigations are conducted into the causes of injury so that steps can be taken to prevent additional problems from taking place. The safety committee monitors data collected through incident/accident reports to track workplace safety issues. This data is sorted by type and cause of injury so specific action steps can be taken to prevent future incidents from occurring.

d. The protection of staff against the novel coronavirus (COVID19) has been a consistent point of focus over the last two years and more. Substantial efforts have been made to minimize exposure to the virus for UPSD staff including a regular testing clinic, vaccination clinics, air purification technology, distancing, face coverings, etc. This commitment and careful focus will continue through the summer and into the fall.

e. The district has in place (and follows) numerous operating policies impacting the health and safety of staff. Such policies include, but are not limited to, general safety, active shooter preparedness (lockdown – run/hide/fight), fire & earthquake preparedness, safe use and storage of chemicals, use of pesticides, immunizations and others. Annual on-line and in-person training is provided to staff in multiple areas pertaining to safety that align with their job responsibilities.

f. For specific information related to district compliance related to respectful and civil treatment of staff, please see above on page one of this report.

g. The district also provides high quality working conditions for its employees with an emphasis on supporting and protecting classroom conditions to maximize the quality of teaching and learning. This commitment is seen in our daily operations and in our commitment of resources. The district commits substantial resources to keeping class sizes low, providing adequate planning time for teachers, purchasing adequate curricular materials and supplies, connecting staff to meaningful professional development, investing in quality facilities and providing sufficient support for students and staff that allows for high quality teaching and learning in each classroom. Measurable outcomes in student achievement (E2 results) and strong staff retention (staff mix/ experience factor data) have historically provided evidence that the working environment in UPSD is conducive to teaching and learning.

3. Hiring practices that implement the district's affirmative action plan and ensure reasonable background inquiries of employees and volunteers;

a. *Interpretation: Hiring practices must be aligned to the district's affirmative action plan and support the successful implementation of the plan. Additionally, these practices will include a thorough and appropriate review of the background, qualifications and past performance of new employees and volunteers.*

b.

c. In compliance.

d.

e. The district's affirmative action plan was revised in November 2018 and is subsequently updated each fall with new utilization analysis data by race/ethnicity and by sex. By monitoring our data each year we are able to measure growth towards the goal of a more diverse workforce. The current affirmative action plan identifies three specific strategies necessary for implementation: 1. Job Analysis, Recruitment, and Selection; 2. Education and Training; 3. Preventing Employment Discrimination.

f.

g. In the area of job analysis, recruitment and selection, the plan specifically identifies five areas of focus: the hiring process, recruitment procedures, diverse interview teams, awareness of commitment to equal opportunity employment and inclusion of the district's nondiscrimination statement and policy. Current practices align to these priorities with specific attention given in the last two years to including diverse staff on interview teams (as possible and appropriate to the position and stage of the hiring process) and also to the interview content (i.e., questions and expected answers). Working with the district equity advisory team, a set of equity/diversity focused questions have been added to the process to better assess the commitment level and knowledge of prospective employees around racial equity, social justice and anti-racism.

h. In the area of education and training, the plan specifically identifies two areas of focus: cultural competency training and promotion of equal opportunity. Current practices align to these priorities with extensive work completed in the last two years related to increasing cultural competency of staff.

i. In the area of preventing employee discrimination, the plan specifically identifies five areas of focus: credential requirements, compensation equity, assignment of duties, opportunities for advancement, and working conditions. Current practices in UPSD comply with these expectations. Not

only are these values of the organization, but they are also governed extensively by collective bargaining agreements and policies in place to protect the rights of all district employees.

Board members wishing to review the UPSD affirmative action plan may do so here:

https://www.upsd83.org/staff/human_resources

All new employees and volunteers must successfully pass a Washington State Patrol background check called WATCH. These checks monitor one's arrest record in the state of Washington to provide the district with the arrest history of any new employee or volunteer. All classified and certificated staff are run through the FBI's database to check additional crimes potentially committed out-of-state. Furthermore, significant emphasis is placed on the critical importance of reference checks for prospective employees. As part of the hiring process, district administrators are required to contact listed references and former supervisors, specifically. These reference checks involve a general inquiry into the skills and attributes of candidates, but also contain questions to identify staff that could pose a physical or emotional safety risk to our students.

4. Familiarity of the staff with this policy and personnel policies that, among other things, provide effective handling of grievances and protect against discrimination, harassment and other mistreatment;

a. *Interpretation: The district will ensure that all employees are made aware of EL-4 and personnel policies that outline our protocols for the effective handling of grievances and protect against discrimination, harassment and other mistreatment on an annual basis.*

b. In compliance.

i. All staff receive information on EL-4 as part of their safety and compliance training annually. EL-4 is provided to all district employees via the employee handbook on the district website. The district provides each employee with a designated email account. The link to the handbook, which references and/or includes EL-4 and many other policies, are included in the handbook to all employees at the start of each year.

The district's employee handbook includes personnel policies and grievance procedures as they relate to discrimination, harassment and other mistreatment. These sections in the employee handbook are reviewed by administrators at the start of the year and selected topics receive additional attention in training sessions throughout the year. New employees receive more detailed information related to the handbook during the district's induction process, including presentations by district administrators. The employee handbook is available on the district website for easy reference. As noted above, policies related to nondiscrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are also a part of ongoing, annual training for staff and are noted in numerous district publications made available to staff such as the Dialog, the district calendar, etc.

ii.

iii. All staff members sign statements to attest that they received information about these policies, and understand their legal, ethical and professional obligations. The district also uses Vector Solutions (formerly "Safe Schools") online trainings as a requirement for multiple employee groups to provide additional instruction related to discrimination, harassment and other mistreatment. Specific courses on diversity awareness, boundary invasion, youth suicide, bullying and sexual harassment are examples of recent, mandatory training for staff using this tool.

Lastly, employees also have access to their collective bargaining agreements which, among other things, clearly outline procedures for grievances. These documents are distributed to employees and are available on our website.

iv.

Board members wishing to review the UPSD bargaining agreements may do so here:
https://www.upsd83.org/staff/human_resources/bargaining_agreements

Board members wishing to review the UPSD employee handbook may do so here:
https://www.upsd83.org/staff/human_resources/handbooks

v.

5. Employee access to the Board when administrative grievance procedures are exhausted and the employee alleges that district policy has been violated;

a. *Interpretation: No staff member may knowingly keep or prohibit an employee from sharing concerns with the Board once appropriate efforts have been made to report concerns to immediate supervisors and/or district administrators in matters related to Board policy violations.*

b. In compliance.

c. Grievances filed by employees with the district are quite rare and are consistently resolved at the administrative level. Board involvement has not been necessary- nor has communication with the board about concerns been hindered in any way. Therefore, there has been no case where the conditions of this limitation were violated. Beyond the 'letter of the law,' the spirit of this limitation is also upheld, and employees are never prevented in any way from addressing concerns to board members, whether or not board policy is directly involved. Staff members are provided access to the Board in the same way as all other district stakeholders and at no time are employees told they cannot communicate with board members.

6. Safe handling of confidential information

a. *Interpretation: The district will protect confidential information pertaining to staff within the guidelines of relevant statutes including the Open Public Records Act.*

b. In compliance.

c. The district complies fully with all federal and state laws governing confidentiality. Records are kept secure and access is limited to those who need it. Extensive data about employees is now stored on servers and in electronic forms. It is essential that we guard against the growing threat of cyberattacks and computer hacking to protect this confidential data. In this way, protecting confidential information is synonymous with securing our technology systems. Over the last several years, we have provided training and ongoing reminders to staff about cybersecurity. We have also monitored our success by conducting regular audits or testing of the system to identify weaknesses and staff members in need of additional training. We've also added staffing to support our technology department. This additional staffing gives us more capacity to devote attention to network management and security. The problem of securing data in computer systems is becoming greater as we watch businesses, government agencies and other organizations struggle to prevent breaches of confidential information. We will continue to prioritize this as we develop systems and train personnel. At this time, we are not aware of any failures of this system in the district and we are confident that our data remains secure.

d. In addition, administrators are expected to guard confidential information from 'casual talk' in building offices, staff rooms, etc. This is particularly important for our many employees who are also residents of the district and/or have students in our schools. We stress with them the critical importance of separating their roles as district employees from their roles as community members, etc.

e. We discipline employees at the appropriate level when confidentiality rules are breached or when confidential information is shared by accident and/or unintentionally. Most importantly, we continue to provide training on our expectations around protecting confidential information.

f. It is also important to note that all employees of the school district, as public employees, must comply with the Open Public Records Act. At times, the district is required to make sensitive personnel information available to the public to comply with law. When this is necessary, we are careful to seek advice from legal counsel to help us limit the spread of this information when possible and we also notify those who will be impacted by legally required distribution of employee information.

7. Administration of an evaluation system that: improves instruction; accurately and completely measures and documents performance of all employees; encourages professional growth; and links employee performance with multiple measures of targeted outcomes.

a. *Interpretation: The district must establish and maintain a coordinated system of employee review for the purposes of systemic improvement, individual development and, most importantly, achievement of district goals as described by the board in its Ends policies. The system of evaluation must include methods to accurately measure performance in multiple ways.*

In compliance.

The development and maintenance of a high-quality system for the supervision and evaluation of instruction continues to be among the district's highest priorities. The district uses the Marzano Teaching Framework as its state-approved evaluation tool for certificated instructional staff. This model supports high quality instruction and is aligned to long-standing district expectations for research-based teaching strategies. Evaluators receive support, direction and training related to the effective supervision of teachers. All evaluators of teachers are also trained in the Marzano model, specifically, as well as in the district's "UPSD Basics of Instruction". Substantial time and resources are invested in training annually to ensure that implementation of the system is done efficiently, effectively and in compliance with all legal and contractual guidelines.

Employee performance is measured in UPSD using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures. Evaluators are expected to devote significant time and energy to the observation of teachers and staff as they carry out critical job functions. For teachers, extensive classroom observation is the preferred method for gathering data on performance. Student achievement outcomes and performance ratings are also used to measure performance and growth. The disruption of the last two years negatively impacts our ability to examine student growth data in the most effective way. With the resumption of "normal" school this fall, we will be able to reset this process to examine teacher impact over time.

The use of student achievement data as a critical measure of organizational and individual performance has been a priority in UPSD for many years. These components require that teachers and administrators learn to use measurable results of instruction as important assessment tools for quality teaching and leadership. Systems are in place in UPSD that require teachers and administrators to provide evidence that their efforts have led to improvements in student achievement. Significant data was collected this year for us to use for immediate and long-term examination of our practices. This is an improvement over the last two years. However, with interruptions to data collection in the prior two years, our assessment of *growth* is more limited. We will have two solid data points this year, however, to begin this work again. It will take time for these measures to adequately reflect teacher impact due to circumstances.

Student growth data is being used this year as part of teacher evaluation- just as it was before the pandemic. Teachers set goals for student growth at the beginning of the school year and monitor that growth using both formative and summative assessments. Teachers work with their evaluators and PLC teams to carry out this work. The work begins each September and culminates in conferences with evaluators in the spring.

Policy Type: Executive Limitations

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Evaluators are expected to provide specific feedback and direction to teachers in the evaluation process as a way to encourage each employee to improve and grow--particularly in the area of instruction. Evaluations include suggestions for improvement in one or more areas for all teachers, regardless of their level of proficiency. In addition, evaluators meet with individual teachers and teacher teams throughout the year to help promote and encourage professional growth. Required pre-and post-observation conferences, goal-setting conferences, data review conferences, final evaluation conferences and professional learning community meetings take place for all teachers throughout the year. The primary purpose of these meetings is to promote professional growth.

The state evaluation system mandates the use of a four-level rating system for teacher and principal performance. Teachers receive ratings of unsatisfactory (1), basic (2), proficient (3) or distinguished (4) in eight state performance criteria and five student growth criteria. Ratings are combined and applied to state-mandated "score bands" that determine a final summative rating at one of the four levels. This rating system allows for accurate and actionable measurement of performance in specific areas across the district.

Principals and assistant principals are evaluated annually using the AWSP Leadership Framework. The AWSP model is heavily focused on the administrator's ability to help teachers improve the quality of their instruction. Five out of eight criteria assess, either directly or indirectly, a school leader's ability to positively impact instruction in their building. The model also focuses heavily on student achievement and student growth results as evidence that strong instruction is taking place in classrooms. These five criteria that relate to instruction are emphasized in administrative evaluations. Executive Directors of Primary and Secondary Education routinely provide guidance and direct feedback to principals related to their supervision and evaluation of teachers. Other district office administrators do the same.

The measures of district performance are defined by the Boards' Ends Policies for student achievement and its Executive Limitations Policies governing sound management of the district. To the extent that these policies-which address all areas of district operation-adequately reflect desired outcomes for the district, and to the extent monthly policy monitoring determines that district administrators are in compliance, the responsible administrator meets the compliance standard for this indicator. At the central office level, the improvement (or lack thereof) of student achievement depends on the cumulative effect of the work done by each individual administrator. Ultimately, the superintendent is the central office administrator directly accountable for all measures of district performance as outlined in board policy and reflected in BSR 5.

Classified employees also receive feedback on their evaluations and are given suggestions and/or direction on how they can improve their performance as custodians, kitchen workers, bus drivers, etc. Evaluations are completed for all represented, unrepresented classified staff and administrators annually.

In sum, all UPSD employees received a completed evaluation this year that was the result of ongoing supervision by designated evaluators. The system in place this year was much closer to normal practice when compared to the last two years, but student growth data is less reliable and, in turn, emphasized to a lesser degree because of the many impacts brought on by a return to full-time, in-person learning for all.

Adopted: July 10, 2019
Monitoring Method: Internal Report
Monitoring Frequency: Annually in June