

**Portage Public Schools
Monitoring Report**

Policy Type: Executive Limitation
Policy Title: (2.10) Communication and Support to the Board

Global Board Policy

The Superintendent shall not permit the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.

Certification

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitation, 2.10, "Communication and Support to the Board" in accordance with the monitoring schedule established by the Board. I certify that the information provided in this report is true as of September 2, 2014.



Signature

9.2.14

Date

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2.10 GLOBAL POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not permit the board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.

Interpretation

I submit that the Board's Policy is comprehensively interpreted in the succeeding sections. My interpretations and data are presented with those sections below.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

2.10.1 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not neglect to submit monitoring data required by the Board (see Policy 4.4 on Monitoring Superintendent Performance) in a timely, accurate and understandable fashion, directly addressing provisions of board Policies being monitored.

Interpretation

I interpret this to mean that monitoring reports are to be submitted to the Board within the timelines and in a manner consistent with Policy 4.4 unless the Board approves a delayed submission.

Report

The Board and Superintendent are in the first year of creating, presenting and approving monitoring reports. Policy 4.4 was revised on June 23, 2014, to capture the process for submitting and evaluating monitoring reports. A schedule has been established for submitting reports during the 2014/15 school year. In addition, a "trial" monitoring report on Policy 2.9 was submitted to the Board at its March 10, 2014, Work Session which contained the elements and format for future Executive Limitation Monitoring Reports.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

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2.10.2 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not let the Board be unaware of an actual or anticipated noncompliance with any policy of the Board as soon as possible; in the case of noncompliance that could significantly impact the ability to meet organizational Ends, as soon as it is discovered.

Interpretation

I interpret actual violation to mean that a Board approved Policy has not been followed or that an action has caused a Policy to be violated. An anticipated violation means that a strong likelihood exists that an existing or planned practice will violate a Policy if the practice is initiated or continues.

Potential violations of Board Policy will be reported to the Board at the first available meeting after it has been discovered. Actual violations of Board Policy will be reported to the Board President as soon as possible.

Report

There has been a concerted effort this year to review and understand all Executive Limitation Policies. This work will continue through the 2014/15 school year as monitoring reports are assembled. Weekly meetings of the Executive Leadership Team allow for discussion and understanding of Board Policies and for the surfacing of any violations or anticipated violations moving forward.

Two situations have been brought to my attention – and subsequently to the attention of the Board President – which could be considered in violation of Global Constraint language in Policy 2.0... “not allow any practice... which is... in violation of commonly accepted business... practices.”

The Board approved two contracts with a stated not to exceed amount which were exceeded due to extenuating circumstances. In both cases it was believed that not authorizing the additional work and expense would cause interruption of the work schedule and possibly incur even more costs. These situations occurred during the summer of 2014 and once the work has been completed, the recommendation for revisions to the affected contacts will be brought to the Board for approval.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

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2.10.3 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not let the Board be unaware of potential non-compliance with its own policies on Governance Process and Board-Superintendent Linkage, particularly in the case of board behavior which is detrimental to the work relationship between the Board and the Superintendent.

Interpretation

I interpret this to mean that Board members, either individually or collectively, are informed in writing, electronically or verbally if patterns of Board or Board member behavior deviates from established Policies, Board Norms or the Board Code of Ethics.

Report

Neither the Board nor any of its members have been out of compliance during this monitoring cycle.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

2.10.4 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not let the Board be unaware of relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, threatened or pending lawsuits, material external and internal changes, particularly changes in the assumptions upon which any board policy has previously been established.

Interpretation

I interpret “relative trends” to be those most directly related to the Board Global Ends Policies. I interpret anticipated “adverse media coverage” to be a significant event or circumstance that is not routine in nature which could generate substantial negative news for the District.

I interpret “material external and internal changes” to mean those which adversely affect the financial stability of the District or the District’s ability to achieve its Global Ends.

Report

The Board receives periodic updates from the Superintendent via e-mail, phone calls, or through updates at Board meetings. Furthermore, the Board has three Committees: Policy, Facilities and Audit, which hear information and report to the Board.

Closed Session discussions have occurred with the Board this past year relative to negotiations and other attorney-client privileged information. Executive Team members have provided the Board with information about technology trends, Focus School designation and other educational trend information. Regular updates regarding the use of Bond funds and the Building and Site Sinking Fund are provided at Board meetings.

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Our voice messaging system, inserts in “The Portager” and periodic news releases convey additional information to the Board and greater school community.

I held individual meetings with each Board member at least twice this year to help keep the lines of communication open.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

2.10.5 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not deny the Board access to, or be uninformed by, a range of relevant perspectives, including staff and external viewpoints, as needed for fully informed board choices.

Interpretation

I interpret this to mean that before recommendations come before the Board for action, Administration consider diverse viewpoints on any given subject. These viewpoints will consider parental, student, staff and community perspectives, where appropriate.

Report

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) serves as the final sounding board for recommendations being brought before the Board. This allows for a wide variety of perspectives and thoughtful discussion. Because the ELT represents all aspects of operations, the impact of making recommendations in isolation is avoided. Going through this body also provides a checks and balances to make certain that appropriate input has been sought through advisory committees and other established groups such as CIC, subject area committees, DAC, PTO, etc.

Most recently, the Steering Committee for the Facility Master Planning process has been assembled bringing a broad range of perspectives.

Also, during the past year, I have met with many individuals and community groups in identifying the top priorities for the District which were brought to the Board for validation.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

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2.10.6 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not present information in unnecessarily complex or lengthy form or in a form that fails to differentiate among information of three types: monitoring, decision preparation, and other.

Interpretation

I interpret this wording to mean that information being presented is concise and easy to understand. Monitoring reports will be clearly labeled. Decision preparation information will be included with recommendations.

Report

Given that we are just beginning the monitoring process, feedback has not yet been provided.

Recommendations made to the Board have been well received and appear to contain the appropriate degree of information in an understandable format. There have been very few requests for clarification of other information provided to the Board.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

2.10.7 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not cause the Board to operate without appropriate mechanisms and support for official board, officer or committee communications.

Interpretation

I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent provides effective ways to communicate and support the work of the Board and its various work groups through the central office.

Report

Board members have a variety of communication vehicles which include:

- Periodic updates from the Superintendent
- Individual phone calls, meetings or e-mails
- Board packet information
- Board meetings, Work Sessions and Retreats
- Agenda Planning Meetings with the Board President
- Updates and alerts from the District's Communications Manager

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The Superintendents Administrative Assistant serves as the primary support person to assist the Board with communications and activities such as coordinating dates for meetings, arranging for meeting space, providing meeting materials, and other activities as requested.

Members of the Executive Leadership Team are available, whenever needed, to provide information and other resources to the Board and/or its Committees.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

2.10.8 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not communicate substantive governance information to an individual or segment of the board except when (a) fulfilling individual requests for information or (b) responding to officers or committees duly charged by the Board.

Interpretation

I interpret this to mean that the Board as a whole will be kept as fully informed as possible on matters of substance except as noted in (a) and (b) above.

Report

At various times throughout the year, work with the Facilities Committee and Policy Committee involved processing information at a Committee level. Much of that information was then reported out to the full Board via Committee Reports at Board meetings.

The Boards Committee structure eliminated the use of the Executive Committee which was felt by some to interfere with effective communications to all Board members.

While I did not track the number of individual requests for information this past year, I did not believe they were unreasonable. On a couple of occasions, I reviewed and discussed with the Board President how to best frame my response to requests. Responses, which I believed to be of interest to the entire Board, were copied to all Board members.

The Boards commitment to Policy Governance, its policies governing requests for information, and its Code of Ethics is appreciated.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

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2.10.9 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not allow the Board to be non-compliant with legal or contractual requirements for board approval on delegated activities of the organization or offer such items on the consent agenda without providing the relevant monitoring assurance pertaining thereto.

Interpretation

I interpret this to mean that the Board is provided sufficient background information on action items coming before the Board, whether they be required by Board Policy, local/State/federal law, or upon recommendation of legal counsel.

Report

Board agendas include a cover memo outlining some of the key issues facing the Board to assist with meeting flow and anticipated issues of concern. Each action item, including those on the consent agenda, contains the pertinent background information for that item.

Prior to the development of the agenda, the key items for the agenda are reviewed with the Board President and members of the Executive Leadership Team to verify validity and accurateness.

Appropriate staff are available to the Board at its meetings to clarify information and answer questions that arise.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.

2.10.10 POLICY LANGUAGE

The Superintendent shall not deny the Board access to requested incidental information which, while not part of the Board's work, will allow it to understand the context of that work. That information will include:

- a. A monthly summary of financial performance presented at the monthly board meeting.

Interpretation

I interpret "incidental information" to mean information that is not monitoring information or not relevant to decision preparation, but is nonetheless, of interest to the Board.

Report

On each monthly agenda there is a financial update with an opportunity for the Board to ask questions. These updates are provided by staff from the Business Office.

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During discussion of proposed action items there is an opportunity for Board members to ask questions which may be categorized as incidental information questions. These have been answered by the Superintendent and/or staff.

On each agenda the Superintendent provides an update which also contains mostly incidental information that may be of interest to the Board or community.

The Board should consider re-writing this Policy language as its formatting is awkward.

Conclusion Statement

The organization met expectations.