



Internal Monitoring Report  
September 12, 2017

Policy Title: **Dealings with Citizens of Poudre School District**  
Policy Type: Executive Limitation  
Policy No.: EL 2.9  
Period Monitored: July 2016 – August 2017

This report monitors the Board of Education's Executive Limitations Policy.

*The Superintendent shall not fail to actively engage with the citizens of Poudre School District, and the Superintendent's relationship with citizens of the District will neither violate the highest standards of transparency nor impede the Board's role as citizen representative.*

This report is presented in accordance with the Board's monitoring schedule. I certify that the information is true and complete.

Sandra Smyser, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

September 12, 2017

## **Executive Summary**

This report monitors Executive Limitation 2.9, Dealings with Citizens of Poudre School District, policy language as it deals with how the Superintendent's relationship with citizens of Poudre School District meets the highest standards of transparency and supports the Board's role as citizen representative.

The evidence included in this monitoring report suggests that the Superintendent engaged with the citizens of PSD, maintaining high standards of transparency through two-way communication with key stakeholders while supporting the role of the Board as citizen representatives.

The evidence included in this monitoring report indicates that the Superintendent complied with the policy by adequately communicating with:

- Community, students, and staff
- Principals and administrators
- Schools
- Teachers/Certified employees
- Board of Education
- Classified employees
- Specific education community
- Broader community and media

Additionally, the superintendent was

- Responsive to community, staff and student requests/complaints
- Involved in the community engagement process

**Policy Wording:**

*The Superintendent shall not fail to actively engage with the citizens of Poudre School District, and the Superintendent's relationship with citizens of the District will neither violate the highest standards of transparency nor impede the Board's role as citizen representative.*

**Interpretation:**

The district interprets the *superintendent's relationship with citizens of Poudre School District* to mean the professional meetings, correspondence, publications, and conversations conducted by the superintendent, whether through social media, by email, in person, or by phone.

This is reasonable since these are the means by which the superintendent engages in citizen relationships.

The district interprets *impede the Board's role as citizen representative* as prohibiting or limiting citizens of PSD from contacting Board members. Withholding information so that Board members cannot have answers to questions or information that may assist them when discussing the district with other citizens.

The two standards of permitting citizens of PSD to contact Board members and providing information to Board members are reasonable since to function as citizen representatives, Board members need to hear and read information so they can make well-informed decisions as representatives. The Superintendent facilitates the Board's interactions with citizens through weekly updates, email, district ends and outreach/engagement sessions.

**Evidence:**

The superintendent has engaged with citizens of PSD and maintained the highest standards of transparency through 2016-2017. This includes the following two-way interaction with stakeholder groups:

**Community and Staff Communication.**

- Attended various school, community, and networking events, meetings, and activities, some of which included the PASE annual networking reception, weekly Rotary meetings when able, Rotary Teacher of the Year luncheon, several scholarship and other student recognition ceremonies, quarterly meetings with Bohemian Foundation, Fort Collins City Manager, Coloradoan leadership, and the multi-agency liaison group and addressed staff at various staff meetings and retreats, Front Range and Aims Community College collaborative meetings, , PSD

Foundation Board and Executive Board meetings, met with Timnath town leaders and Colorado State University leaders, gave welcome remarks to District Advisory Board (DAB), new administrators, certified and classified staff, BASE Camp, and ESL Parent Academy attendees, and toured school construction sites

- Held outreach meetings with members of the faith and service community and local business leaders, Poudre Retired School Education Association (PRSEA), Fort Collins Human Relations Commission presented to PSD Insight group, spoke with citizens in Wellington as the guest of County Commissioner Gaiter,
- Published a back to school message on the PSD website and in the PSD newsletter to parents, staff, and the community and sent out a video messages to parents and staff.
- Submitted a monthly message to Poudre Retired School Employees Association (PRSEA) membership and to the Coloradoan.
- Shared district news through monthly website superintendent's messages and updates in monthly e-newsletters to over 3,700 employees and more than 35,000 parents and community members.
- Informally visited schools to observe learning, hear staff celebrations and concerns and discuss emerging topics.
- Attended meetings held by various PSD departments including principals' levels meetings, student achievement and professional development divisions to communicate about improvement efforts. This provided the opportunity for two-way communication with staff.
- Attended 2010 mill levy/bond oversight committee meeting with community members as a means of accountability for the 2010 mill/bond ballot issue.
- Presented to numerous organizations around Larimer County on topics ranging from poverty in schools, to the Long Range Plan, equity and diversity, to partnerships with non-profits and state funding for public education.
- Formed an equity and diversity leadership team.

Long Range Plan. The superintendent met with service and community organizations and local business leaders to present information on the status of the Long Range Plan. This work will continue through the 2017-2018 school year.

Principals and Administrators. The superintendent met with principals and administrators throughout the 2016-2017 school year to discuss emerging issues and long-term plans regarding improvement and the direction of the district. The superintendent also spoke to new administrators at the New Administrator Orientation and addressed administrators at the two Leadership retreats. Additionally, the superintendent attended and talked with principals at some of the monthly levels meetings, and held frequent cabinet meetings throughout the year. The superintendent also received regular updates from the nine administrators who reported directly to her.

Schools. The superintendent visited all PSD schools during the school year to see the learning process first-hand and to talk with students and staff.

Teachers. The superintendent worked with assistant superintendents and principals to talk with teachers about emerging issues as needed. Additionally, the superintendent continued working with her Profession of Teaching group, consisting of teachers from each school in PSD.

Board of Education. The superintendent communicated frequently with Board of Education members to support their roles as citizen representatives through personal phone calls, e-mail updates, electronic meeting agendas and information, as well as through work sessions, special meetings, and retreats. Weekly updates were sent to the Board to provide information related to district functioning so they were prepared for interactions with the community and timely information on issues of interest were provided.

The superintendent encouraged PSD staff to direct citizens to Board member contact information when asked. The superintendent met with Board leadership several times each month to plan Board business and work session meetings. The superintendent also met with several Board members monthly at their request.

Education/Community, Local, State, and National Activities. In order to listen and learn from stakeholders and gain strategic direction and best practices for the district, the superintendent was a member of/participated in a leadership role in local organizations such as the Poudre School District Foundation, Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), PSD/City of Fort Collins/Larimer County Liaison Committee, Northern Colorado Legislative Coalition, the Denver Area School Superintendent's Council (DASSC), State Council for Educator Effectiveness, National Association of School Superintendents

(NASS), and Colorado Association of School Executives.

Broader Community and Media. The superintendent utilized the PSD web site, social media, and the news media to convey and publish messages/updates to the community through weekly features in the Coloradoan, articles to staff, monthly columns for parents, realtors, retired educators, and other groups. The messages were also posted on the superintendent's web page. The superintendent met regularly with the publisher and editor of the Coloradoan to foster a positive relationship and encourage two-way communication.

Responsiveness to community requests. The superintendent modeled accessibility and honest, open communication with the public and news media. She responded to media requests and proactively met with reporters from local media outlets. In addition, the superintendent responded to and/or appropriately routed electronic mail and general correspondence from the public, staff, and students as appropriate in a timely manner.

Community Engagement Process. The superintendent's staff utilizes multiple communications mediums available to share information and involve stakeholders in major initiatives being considered by the district.

In general, the engagement process includes:

- Forming committees with representatives from stakeholder groups (parents, district and school staff, community, and students, when appropriate) to gather input through face to face meetings, focus groups and surveys, research options, and recommendations to the superintendent's cabinet and Board of Education.
- Information and updates are shared throughout the process utilizing the PSD website, social media, traditional media, school and district newsletters, staff and parent e-mail and e-newsletters, and face-to-face meetings with principals, administrators and staff.
- Public input meetings are held to gather feedback to inform decision-making.
- Decisions are shared widely with stakeholders, utilizing a variety of the communication vehicles named above.

Due to the evidence provided, the district meets the expectations described in Executive Limitation 2.9.