



Internal Monitoring Report  
September 10, 2019

Policy Title: **Dealings with Citizens of Poudre School District**  
Policy Type: Executive Limitation  
Policy No.: EL 2.9  
Period Monitored: July 2018 – August 2019

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 10, 2019

## **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, parents 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.

### **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 2018-2019. 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. Attended Rotary Teacher of the Year luncheon, several scholarship and other student recognition ceremonies, met regularly with the Fort Collins City Manager and Larimer County Manager, met with Coloradoan leadership, the multi-agency liaison group, and addressed staff at various staff meetings and retreats. Attended PSD Foundation Board and Executive Board meetings, met with Timnath town leaders, Wellington town leaders and Colorado State University leaders, and made remarks to the District Advisory Board (DAB), new administrators, and certified and classified staff. Additional community and staff communication activities for

the 2018-2019 school year include:

- 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.
- 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 many PSD departments including transportation, purchasing, child nutrition, information technology, human resources, office managers and facilities. Also attended principals' levels meetings and student achievement and professional development divisions to communicate about improvement efforts. This provided the opportunity for two-way communication with staff across the district.
- 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.

Long Range Plan-New Construction. The superintendent met with the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, 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 2019-2020 school year.

Additionally, during the 2018-2019 school year, staff coordinated with the building architects to hold community engagement sessions at school locations to preview draft drawings of new buildings. These drawings were also shown to the Board of Education and were posted in the JSSC lobby for public viewing for several days.

School Start Times. The superintendent's staff conducted extensive research and

robust community outreach opportunities at the direction of the Board of Education who was contemplating change school start times. The community engagement program consisted of forming a community committee, sending out surveys to the community, PSD staff, parents/guardians, and students. Staff also conducted community engagement sessions and various school locations. All were designed to solicit vast amounts of input in a variety of ways regarding the possibility of shifting school start times.

Principals and Administrators. The superintendent met with principals and administrators throughout the 2018-2019 school year to discuss emerging issues and long-term plans regarding improvement, leadership 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 had dialogue with principals at some of their 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 many schools 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, and timely e-mail updates, electronic meeting agendas, as well as through work sessions, special meetings, and retreats. Weekly updates were sent to the Board to provide information related to district functioning and issues of interest so they would be prepared for interactions with the community.

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 routinely 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 and national organizations such as the Poudre School District Foundation, Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), PSD/City of Fort Collins/Larimer County Liaison Committee, the Denver Area School Superintendent's Council (DASSC), Institute of Education Innovation (IEI), District Administrator Leadership Institute, 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, email, and the news media to convey and publish messages/updates to the community through, articles to staff, monthly columns for parents, realtors, retired educators, and other groups. The messages were also posted on the superintendent's web page.

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 and her staff 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, community members 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.

A specific example of community engagement and outreach efforts includes Equity, Culture, and Diversity department staff interacting with members of the faith community, local non-profits, and service community members to further develop relationships and partnerships during the 2018-2019 school year.

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