

## **INTERNAL MONITORING REPORT**

June 18, 2014

**POLICY: 2.1 Treatment of Students Their Families and Community Members**

**POLICY CATEGORY: Operating Limitations**

**PERIOD MONITORED: 2013 – 2014 School Year**

This is my monitoring report on the Board of Education's Operating Limitations Policy Treatment of Students Their Families and Community Members. I certify that the information contained in this report is true and complete, and it is presented in accordance with the routine monitoring report schedule. This report begins by presenting the policy language in its entirety, and then continues with a narrative describing District performance.

Christopher E. Gdowski, Superintendent

June 12, 2014

## **Operating Limitations Policy 2.1**

### **Treatment of Students, Their Families and Community Members**

With respect to interactions with students, those applying to be students, their families and community members, the Superintendent shall not cause or allow conditions, practices, procedures, activities or decisions which are unsafe, undignified, uncaring or unnecessarily intrusive or restrictive.

Further, without limiting the scope of the foregoing by this enumeration, the Superintendent shall not:

1. Fail to provide reasonable, timely responses to inquiries and information to students and their families of what may be expected and what may not be expected from all services offered by the District, including academic courses and programs (especially specific course syllabi), sports and extracurricular programs, transportation and parking services, health and nutritional products and services, and special programs.
2. Fail to promptly inform students and their families of unsatisfactory work and/or performance in a timeframe that allows for corrective action. Unsatisfactory work or performance includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Students not meeting class/course objectives and expectations
  - b. Students not meeting their highest potential; and
  - c. Students not meeting Ends requirements.
3. Use any method of discipline for student behavior or dress that is unclear, untimely or inconsistently applied.
4. Allow assessments at the district or school levels or grading standard within an individual course or class that: (a) is inconsistently applied to students of similar demonstrated ability level; (b) has not provided for sufficient prior notice of weighting or importance, or preparation time; (c) is not based solely upon demonstrated student progress and achievement of reasonable and clear standards; (d) for group projects, does not separate group performance criteria from individual criteria; (e) is not provided in a timely manner to students and their parents/guardians; and (f) does not motivate students to persist in assignments.
5. Fail to operate facilities safely and with equitable internal and external accessibility to students, their families and community members.
6. Operate without written rules which: (a) reasonably specify district and building expectations, standards & procedures, (b) provide for effective resolution of complaints, concerns and grievances, and (c) protect against wrongful conditions and disparate treatment for inappropriate reasons.
7. Retaliate against any student or family member for non-disruptive expression of dissent or concern.
8. Prevent students, families or community members from being heard by the Board when internal hearing procedures have been exhausted and the person alleges that Board policy has been violated to his or her detriment.
9. Fail to establish an effective, efficient and user friendly ongoing communication system for families.
10. Fail to establish effective systems to address parental concerns.
11. Fail to meaningfully include students and families in the counseling process through an effective system of communication and engagement.

## **Interpretation, Data Reported, and Compliance Statement:**

I have not submitted a comprehensive monitoring report to the Board regarding Policy 2.1 since June 2012.

The June 2012 monitoring report totaled 40 pages and included data gathered from Adams 12 families in a Parent Engagement and Satisfaction Survey administered that spring in Adams 12, and in select school communities throughout the nation, by the National Center for School Leadership. The 2012 monitoring report also included student data obtained from the Adams County Student Survey administered by the Adams County Youth Initiative (ACYI), as well as more limited data regarding school syllabi, student accidents, and facility use gathered from the District's Learning Services, Risk Management and Business Services departments.

The June 2012 data showed that the District's performance was within a plus or minus five percentage point range of national school district performance in all of the matters sampled, with one exception: parental satisfaction with their child's guidance counselor. On that item, 42 percent of Adams 12 respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the services provided by their child's guidance counselor as compared to 60 percent of national respondents.

Given that the 2012 report identified this single area of significant underperformance compared to national data, and given the other District priorities in place for the 2013-14 school year, including but not limited to a) utilization of the Interest Based Strategies (IBS) process for certified negotiations, b) implementation of standards-based and standards-referenced grading practices at all levels in our system, c) redrafting of the District's policy regarding selection of instructional materials, d) systemic root cause analysis regarding the District's long-standing underperformance in student reading and writing achievement, as well as development of a responsive action plan for improved literacy instruction, e) planning for and implementation of the Instructional Technology Excellence (ITX) plan for improving District information technology infrastructure, including improved wireless access at all District schools, f) implementation of a new teacher and principal performance evaluation system consistent with state law, and g) analysis of District facility and operating needs to inform the Board in its decisionmaking regarding a possible bond and/or mill levy override election in November 2014, I concluded that comprehensive data collection and preparation of a lengthy monitoring report were imprudent uses of limited District human and financial resources.

District administration has taken six significant steps following the June 2012 report to improve parent satisfaction with guidance counselor services: 1) reduced student caseloads per counselor by allocating additional counselors to Northglenn, Thornton, Vantage Point and Pathways high schools through the Colorado Counselor Corps grant program, with these counseling resources to be maintained in the 2014-15 school year through general fund allocations; 2) reduced student caseloads at Legacy, Mountain Range, and Horizon High Schools through general fund allocations of an additional counselor at each of those schools starting in 2013-14; 3) implemented a comprehensive grades 6-12 counseling curriculum, beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, which supports student needs in career exploration, academic success, social development, and personal growth; 4) provided professional development to District counselors in the use of the Naviance system for college/career planning for students which in turn has resulted in significant increases in use of the Naviance tool by students staff and parents; 5) appointed a District coordinator for counseling services beginning in the 2014-15 school year to provide additional professional development and support for District counselors; and 6)

deployed five additional counselors at the middle school level beginning in the 2014-15 school year, with funding received through a Colorado Counselor Corps grant. We plan to monitor the impacts of these changes from both a parent and student perspective in the latter part of the 2014-15 school year to evaluate whether our performance has shown adequate improvement.

A significant component of the 2.1 policy concerns student and parent understanding of District grading practices, including perceptions regarding the fairness, consistency, and feedback provided in connection with grading practices. The District did not conduct a comprehensive survey of District students and parents regarding grading practices in the 2013-14 school year, but based on feedback provided by parents at Board of Education meetings, at meetings of the District School Improvement Team (DSIT), and at meetings held at District schools, the District's performance on this policy standard has declined since 2012 and does not meet the Board's policy expectation. The decline in parent and student satisfaction is the result of deficient implementation by District leadership of the standards-based and standards-referenced grading systems at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. Adjustments to the standards-referenced grading systems at Legacy High School and Mountain Range High School in Fall 2013 decreased student and parent dissatisfaction with grading practices as compared to the beginning of the school year, and similar improvements were noted in other schools as a result of school and District communication efforts. Nonetheless, I believe that student and parent satisfaction with District grading practices remains below the 2012 level of performance. We plan to monitor our performance on this policy standard as well in the latter part of 2014-15 to evaluate whether our performance has shown adequate improvement.

### **Suggestions re Future Monitoring of Policy 2.1**

The Board has discussed at previous meetings this year its interest in narrowing the scope of Board policies. Given the burdens posed by comprehensive monitoring and reporting on Policy 2.1, as well as the other significant work ongoing in the District during the 2014-15 school year, I encourage the Board to evaluate Policy 2.1 and determine if it can be narrowed. One possibility, for example, is to narrow 2.1 to require data collection and reporting to the Board for 2014-15 only on 1) guidance counselor satisfaction, and 2) grading practice satisfaction. Another possibility would be to keep existing policy language, but to split the monitoring requirements into smaller pieces that would be reported to the Board on a two or three year cycle.

**The Board acknowledged receipt of a monitoring report as of June 18, 2014, for the period June 21, 2012 through June 18, 2014, of the Superintendent concerning Operating Limitations Policy 2.1, Treatment of Students, Their Families and Community Members and found the superintendent's interpretations were reasonable and supported by data that was relevant, justified and complete.**