

MONITORING REPORT April, 2016

E4, EL 2, EL 9

PREPARED FOR THE GUFFEY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

By Pam Moore, School Administrator

ENDS

E4 Students will be productive citizens participating actively in their community.

Students will:

4.1.1 Possess good interpersonal communication skills

4.1.2 Be aware of the world around them and their place in it

4.1.3 Honor diverse attitudes, values, beliefs and abilities

4.1.4 Work cooperatively in groups

4.1.5 Create an environment of emotional and physical safety for themselves and others

4.1.6 Celebrate each other's growth and learning

Pam writes, as evidence of our school's compliance I've asked our school's three teachers to share some of their observations and perspectives.

K-2 Teacher Jenny Hartman writes:

4.1.1 Possess good interpersonal communication skills

After teaching for a few years, I have learned that children do not innately possess positive interpersonal communication skills. This is a skill that needs to be actively taught and modeled in order for children to be fully capable of communicating well with one another. In the K-2 class, I will frequently have students saying things in a rude way, yet they have no concept of the idea that it is not coming across well. For example, I might have a student say "(student name) give me that!" In this case, I would help the student to rephrase and model the words they should say, and have them repeat "(name) will you please hand xyz to me?" I also feel like possessing good interpersonal communication skills can translate into learning how to handle some of your own problems as a child instead of just 'tattling' to the teacher. For example, the other day I had one student tell me "Ms. Hartman, (name) keeps kicking the table and she won't stop!!" My response was "Did you ask (name) to stop kicking the table or did you just tell me?" The student replied "No, I just asked you." We then had the talk about how we can't expect someone to know that something is bothering us if we don't tell them or ask them to stop, and that the first step is to try to solve the problem yourself, and if that doesn't work, then you can ask the teacher. Overall, we are trying to teach interpersonal communication skills by practicing kindness towards others, trying to understand how what we say might affect another person, and by correcting and providing the language for students who forget to use good interpersonal communication skills.

K-2 teacher Jenny Hartman writes:

4.1.4 Work cooperatively in groups

We do a substantial amount of group work in the K-2 class. Sometimes the groups are based on ability level, and other times I will pair a kindergartener with a 2nd grader. Throughout the school year, the students have learned from each other what is expected of them when working in groups. They have learned from experience why it is important to cooperate with your group members. For example, there

was one time that I was paring up students and one student said “But Ms. Hartman! I don’t want to be with her! She always goofs off and never does her work!” Granted, this was not a good example of positive interpersonal communication skills, but the girl heard that and realized that people do not want to be her partner when she doesn’t do her work, and ever since then she has been a much more cooperative partner. Most of the time if we are working in groups that are not lead by an adult, we will discuss the ‘rules’ of how to work together before they start their assignment. One of the main ‘rules’ that they are aware of is that everyone has to be equally included, even if it might be more difficult or easier for certain students. Also, when we are doing groups that pair a kindergartener with a second grader, I always model how I would like for the 2nd grader to work with the kindergartener. I clearly explain what is expected of each group member based on their ability level, and how I want the older student to coach the younger one without giving away answers.

3-5 teacher Lynda MacDonald writes:

4.1.2 Students will be aware of the world around them and their place in it.

4.1.3 Students will honor diverse attitudes, values, beliefs and abilities

I am going to write to both of these ENDS together, because they tie very well with what we are studying and doing in class.

In Social Studies this year, we have been learning about the 1800's. This time period lends itself very well to looking at history from many different perspectives or points of view. We began the year learning about the Native American cultures of our country. We learned how the Native Americans viewed the earth and other values they carried. We then saw how the European viewpoint contrasted with that of the Native Americans, why this was the case, and how this affected our country. We saw the views of the Westward expansion from the point of view of the trappers, traders, explorers, settlers, and miners. We saw how this expansion ended the Native American way of life while expanding the American way of life. We also learned about the viewpoints of immigrants who came to America. We learned the various reasons our ancestors came to be in this country and how our country became the "melting pot" of the world.

This past term we focused on causes behind the Civil War. We were able to understand slavery from the Northern viewpoint versus the Southern viewpoint and why these views were held. We wrote persuasive letters to President Abraham Lincoln from the viewpoint of a Southern plantation owner pleading with him not abolish slavery and why. Next each student wrote a persuasive letter to President Abraham imploring him to abolish slavery and why. Then we connected how the Americans fighting for their way of life in the Revolutionary War compared to how the Southerners were fighting for their way of life in the Civil War. We learned how it is okay to have our own opinion about something while also being able to understand an issue from another point of view. With this in mind, on a more contemporary level, we learned about the different points of view of our two major political parties today and how they both shape our country.

At the classroom level, being in a multi-age classroom, our students are used working with others of different academic and social skills. I recently had a new student come to our classroom. I am so impressed with how my students embrace who he is and are so willing to help him out to be successful.

Middle School teacher Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch writes:

4.1.5 Students will:

Create an environment of emotional and physical safety for themselves and others

As with all schools, there is a pecking order in school and on the playground. It is human and animal

nature. This particular Ends policy, I decided to ask my middle school students to address this topic on what we do – individually and as a school. Here are some of the comments I received:

“To help create an environment of emotional and physical safety, we need to address any bullying and harassing that happens. As middle schoolers and leaders, when we see the beginning of bullying we always want to prevent it so we step in and help the students work it out.”

“We all know that when someone choses to bully it is because they are hurt emotionally. No when someone is harassing another and they won’t stop when the person who is being harassed says ‘NO!’ the it is time to ask a teacher or an adult and they will help you make it stop immediately. This doesn’t always apply to everything.”

“Sometimes you just have to talk it out.”

“When we have a new kid on the playground it is our responsibility to not let them be alone. You don’t leave them there, we are family at Guffey and we make each student welcome at our school.”

“Guffey School is and emotionally safe place as much as it is a physically safe place thanks to the help of teachers, students and our families.”

“I think all people need to be reminded to be kinder from time to time. We have to do that. We all know how it feels to be picked on. Guffey is a kind place.”

“Oh yeah. Keep your hands to yourself. That had been a Guffey rule since the beginning. The rules are not just there to be looked at like bad things, they are there to be USED. And trust me, they help!”

-- All quotes are from Guffey Middle School students

Middle School teacher Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch writes:

4.1.6 Students will:

Celebrate each other’s growth and learning

This year’s middle school has been an extraordinary class of only girls. The collaboration of like and unlike backgrounds has created a new understanding and compassion for one another in a way I have never experienced in my teaching career. Their commonality, all being young ladies, has presented the opportunity to speak, read, write and reflect on issues that are so pertinent to them – physically and emotionally. What we have discovered is that, at this age, they are more alike than different.

Here are their words:

“We celebrate, congratulate, and encourage each other. Everyone matures at a different level, but we have learned to support them where they are.”

“Lulu made flash cards and suddenly everybody made flashcards – for Latin, geography, spelling, whatever. We get to work in pairs and quiz each other and give each other hints. It really helps.”

“Teatime is a great time to talk about literature and topics that we collaborate on. It’s easier to discuss academic topics in a casual atmosphere.”

“The blog site allows us to examine each other’s writing and critique -- not just this is ‘good’ or is ‘dumb’. We have to use constructive criticism Mrs. P-H grades our ability to offer thoughtful reflections.”

“The students make sure the fellow classmates understand what we are doing in math. When one person ‘gets’ it, we help those who don’t without making them feel stupid. We know everyone doesn’t learn the same way.”

“When we have issues, we persuade each other to talk about and be kind and help each other learn the right way to treat people. We really need to help each other learn without making fun of them.”

“You should inspire someone in their growth and self-confidence...if we all work together, we stop all the nonsense that can happen and we are known for being a happy school. And we are.”

-- All quotes are from Guffey Middle School students

Policy Number: EL-2

Policy Type: Executive Limitations

Policy Title: Emergency Administrator Succession

In order to protect the Board in the event of sudden loss of Administrator services, the Administrator shall assure that no fewer than one other staff member is familiar with Board and Administrator issues and processes and is capable of assuming Administrator responsibilities on an interim basis, should the unexpected need arise.

Pam writes, evidence that I am in compliance of this policy is as follows:

Our school’s senior teacher Lynda MacDonald who would be capable, *short-term*, of assuming some of the administrative responsibilities should the unexpected need arise. I would suggest that another person be brought in to answer the phone, serve lunch and have a presence in the school’s office. This would help to keep classroom interruptions to a minimum and offer support to the staff and students. The school's bookkeeper would be able to continue to keep our building operational by paying our bills and making the monthly payroll.

Policy Number: EL-9

Policy Type: Executive Limitations

Policy Title: Asset Protection

The Administrator shall not allow assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, inappropriately used nor unnecessarily risked.

Accordingly, the Administrator may not:

1. Fail to obtain insurance coverage against theft and casualty losses to 100% of replacement value and against liability losses to Board members, staff or the school itself in an amount that is reasonable for schools of like size.

Pam writes, evidence that I am in compliance of this policy is as follows:

Insurance Coverage is as follows:

- Colorado School District Self Insurance Pool for: Property, Liability, Bond, and Errors and Omissions for staff and board. (NEW and starting in 2016, our school will be paying for this policy)
- Auto-Owners Insurance policy with a Colorado Tailored Protection Policy for our vacant land and leased land. Additionally, a rider for additional “pollution protection” from the Colorado School District Self Insurance Pool on the vacant land.
- Pinnacle Assurance for workman’s compensation policy, covering staff and school board members in accordance with the Workers’ Compensation Law.

2. Allow unbonded personnel access to funds in excess of \$50.

Pam writes, our school is protected by the Colorado Self Insurance Pool which covers staff members in

the unlikely event that there would be any unauthorized use of our limited funds. We also have several “checks & balances” in place which would protect our school from fraudulent behavior. One of the biggest safeguards is that all U.S. Mail is opened by myself and all invoices and bank statements, which come monthly electronically, are reviewed and then approved by me. Also, all of our accounts are reconciled monthly, reviewed by myself, and are part of the monthly consent agenda. Additionally, the annual financial audit keeps everything “above board” as an outside set of eyes delves deep into the school's accounting practices and procedures.

3. Fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that the facilities and equipment are not subject to improper wear and tear or insufficient maintenance.

Pam writes, our school has a building owner - lease agreement with our school district which clearly outlines what our school's responsibilities are, which is for the most part, the normal maintenance of our school's building and campus. Examples of maintenance are: septic cleaning, snow removal and parking lot care, water monitoring, water and furnace filters, light bulbs, interior painting/staining, carpet and floor cleaning. NEW and starting in the 2016 school year our school will be responsible for a few added responsibilities which are: the annual elevator inspections, fire alarm system and extinguisher tanks service. Major electrical, plumbing, furnace, or structural issues would still be the responsibility of the building's owner, the district.

4. Expose the school, its Board or staff to legal liability.

Pam writes, I have not exposed our school, staff or board to any event that would put us in a position that would have legal ramifications.

5. Make any purchase:

- a. Wherein normally prudent protection has not been given against conflict of interest
- b. Without having obtained comparative prices based on items of similar quality
- c. Without considering a balance between long-term quality and cost

Pam writes, when making any purchase, I'm mindful of the cost, service, quality, perception and reputation of the service or product. There are not any “conflicts of interest” in our purchasing.

6. Fail to use a competitive bidding procedure for all contracted services (except professional services) and for purchases of supplies, materials and equipment in the amount of \$5,000 or more, unless this is unreasonable due to geographic limitations.

Pam writes, I use a competitive bidding process for contracted services above \$3,000, unless due to our geographic limitation, or the required specifications, this is impossible. All agreements are made for one year at a time.

7. Fail to protect intellectual property, information and files from loss or significant damage. Pam writes, protecting our school's intellectual property from loss or damage involves the following:

- Computer data is backed up and stored off campus.
- Accounting and payroll files are stored off campus and backed up in the cloud.
- Student data from the October count are on file with the school district and CDE.
- Board monitoring and school board meeting minutes are now on the school's website.
- Our school's computer network is password protected which helps to keep the student and employee files protected. We continue to evaluate the use of personal computers for school business.

- All student records are stored in a locked metal filing cabinet found in the school’s office.

Our school does our very best to protect all of our assets. For example, our school stays current with our state fire inspections and all fire extinguishers and alarms are inspected annually by CINTAS Fire Protection. Also, our local volunteer fire department is less than a mile away so we would hope that help could arrive in a timely manner.

8. Fail to preserve and dispose of all records related to affairs or business of the school in accordance with state and federal law.

Pam writes, our school disposes of student records in accordance with state and federal laws. The method we are using is paper shredding.

9. Receive, process or disburse funds under controls which are insufficient under generally accepted accounting procedures.

Pam writes, our school does operate within generally accepted governmental accounting procedures. The best example is our successful annual financial audit.

10. Invest funds in securities where contrary to state law.

Pam writes, Guffey School uses the Colotrust, an investment pool for schools and school districts. We have never invested in any funds that are contrary to state law.

11. Acquire, encumber or dispose of real property.

Pam writes, in 2014 our school acquired a unique 20-acre parcel of land which is located behind our school. This property has expanded the school's campus for instructional use and now hosts a high speed internet pole that provides this service to our school and community. This property was acquired according to policy and with full board approval.

12. Endanger the school’s public image or credibility, thereby jeopardizing the school’s ability to accomplish its mission.

Pam writes, I have not endangered our school or jeopardized our ability to accomplish the mission which is; “Students will have a life-long excitement for learning and be prepared academically, personally, socially and intellectually to achieve their personal goals and contribute actively to the betterment of their community.” I believe that our school is a “living school,” and that flexibility, communication, and a shared goal of working together to meet the varying needs of all our students and their families is imperative. The school's staff and I always do our best to offer clear, consistent communication with our school's students and their parents. We are connected with our caring community members. We have an informed and active board. We employ staff who are dedicated to our school's mission. We have community volunteers who support our school’s students and bring an important school-community connection to our classrooms. We share information with our school district by meeting monthly with the district superintendent. And most importantly, we always do our best to have our school’s students and their needs in the forefront of how we handle everything.

13. Allow the school to enter into a contract in which an employee of the school has an interest unless one or more of the following apply:

Pam writes, whenever our school enters into a contract for goods or services, I consider these points prior to engaging in the agreement.

a. The contract is awarded to the lowest responsible bidder based on competitive bidding procedures.

Pam writes, competitive bidding was covered in EL9.6 of this report.

b. The merchandise is sold to the highest bidder at a public auction.

Pam writes, the school's only opportunity for a public auction has been the annual PIE PALOOZA where each pie always goes to the highest bidder.

c. The transaction involves investing or depositing money in a financial institution which is in the business of loaning money or receiving money.

Pam writes, all school banking is done with Sunflower Bank, a member of FDIC, and in the business of receiving and loaning money. The school's employee payroll is managed by using Intuit, a well-known payroll service for small business.

d. If, because of geographic restrictions, the school could not otherwise reasonably afford the contract because the additional cost to the school would be greater than 10 percent of the contract with the interested employee or if the contract is for services that must be performed within a limited time period and no other contractor can perform the services.

Pam writes, Guffey area service providers are preferred, but for the repairs that require a plumber or electrician, we often have to pay an additional "trip-charge" because of our geographic location. This is just the price we all have to pay to live and work in paradise.