

MONITORING REPORT April, 2017
E-4, EL- 2, EL- 9
PREPARED FOR THE GUFFEY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
By Pam Moore, School Administrator

E-4 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.

Middle School teacher Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch writes:

4.1.1 POSSESS GOOD INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Five years ago I would have approached this topic a lot differently than I do today. The internet has drastically changed what we mean by interpersonal skills. With the introduction of a new information and communication age, methods of social interactions will continue to evolve.

Whether we rely on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or whatever is the next in the sequence of social media trends, most students appear to be connected to technology and the Internet at all times one way or another. Those who somehow manage to disconnect seem odd to their peers, when in fact it should be the other way around.

But what have we gained from the interconnectivity to the world around us? We don't have to be face-to-face any more. As a society, we seem to be losing our social abilities.

This loss of contact — actual, physical contact — needs to be addressed at a younger and younger age because we are imparting on the youth of society the idea they can do everything through their bits and pieces of technology. Most unfortunately, something that was supposed to bring us together ~ essentially has had just the opposite effect.

Middle School is a very important time to address the impact of our 'other' communication skills (verbal, written, and visual) with emphasis on our community and the world around us. Apart from putting forth the 'dire' warnings about the dangers of the current lack of face to face communications, I strive to reinforce the benefits of traditional (soon to be called old-fashioned) methods of communication and accomplish these goals through several academic applications:

- *In grammar, the study of formal and casual language usage ~ slang vs. formal English*
- *Through the multiple presentations, be it class, visual or one to one within the community or with faculty and administration, emphasize good posture, eye to eye contact, and being*

- *prepared with what you want to say (notes)*
- *Through acting skills, discussing what message your body language and vocal tones communicate*
- *Through discussions on our differences and conflict resolution, we discuss what you may think you are saying and in reality, what others may hear – and how to consider what you say may affect the hearer*
- *We have practiced how to write emails that say what you want to say and avoid misinterpretations, knowing that in personal and work situations, these can be the biggest obstacle*
- *We focus on written communication, determining how we should edit for the intended recipient,*

Communication requires listening as well as observing the other persons. Much of the time, middle school students (and adults) are so busy thinking about what THEY want to say in response that they forget to listen – not just hear – the messenger.

Good communication is a lifelong learning skill; one that is practiced on the playground, at lunchtime, and in the classroom. It is our goal to lay a solid foundation for all relationships, assuring a lifelong success.

3-5 teacher Lynda MacDonald writes:

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

This year we are studying Colorado history/geography. To help enhance our studies, I like to take advantage of all the wonderful places around where we live by going on field trips. For our geology unit, we went to Cave of the Winds to see first-hand how caves were formed and learn about different cave formations. We also went to Garden of the Gods to see how rock layers had been formed under the ocean, uplifted, and then weathered into the forms they are today. We also went to Florissant Fossil Beds to learn about the uniqueness of the Guffey Volcano, what life was like here 65 million years ago, and how these fossils were formed. Next, we went to the Dinosaur Resource Center (Woodland Park) to learn more about the different kinds of dinosaurs, their habitats, and how they are excavated today.

With our studies of Colorado history, we took a trip to the Mining and Mineral Museum in Colorado Springs. Here we learned and saw first-hand how some of the machinery worked back in the 1800's. We also got to see how the process of mining for gold had progressed from the different types of placer mining to underground hard rock mining. Soon my class will be going to Starsmore Visitor Center (Colorado Springs) to learn more about the Ute culture including setting up our very own tipi. At the end of the year we hope to go to Cripple Creek to see how open pit mining works and on the way, stop by to see a narrow-gauge train in action. On a more local level, we were able to visit the Wolf Rescue Center right here in Guffey.

To enhance our music program, we were able to go to the Pikes Peak Center and learn all about the orchestra. We also brought our own Veteran's Day show on the road to a Veteran's home in Florence. We are very fortunate to live where we live and have the resources available to be able to appreciate what we have.

3-5 teacher Lynda MacDonald writes:

4.1.3 HONOR DIVERSE ATTITUDE, VALUES, BELIEFS AND ABILITIES

Tolerance is a word thrown around a lot these days in regard to culture, religion, and sexuality, yet little attention is garnered with respect to those individuals we philosophically disagree with. We all want people to be tolerant of us – but draw the line when someone voices an opinion – even a seemingly intolerant one – yet still must allow each of them the freedom of speech (in the appropriate place) we are guaranteed in our Constitution.

Teaching in a classroom of differentiated learners, it has sometimes required that I step in and redress a comment made that has hurt a student's feelings. Sometimes it's a thoughtless comment about a fellow student's ability of a subject matter that comes easily to another student while another struggles. Other times it's sensitivity to a person's values or religious beliefs. Middle school students often hear generalizations at home or through the media that are unfair and hurtful. It's important to use that opportunity to reach out and remind the class that our differences are an opportunity to learn from other perspectives.

The misunderstanding that students often have is the idea that to honor diversity you have to agree with all thoughts. Tolerance of persons, what might be called "civility," can be equated with the word "respect." This is the classical definition of tolerance: the freedom to express one's ideas without fear of reprisal. We respect those who hold different beliefs than our own by treating them courteously and allowing their views a place in the public discourse. We may strongly disagree with their ideas and vigorously contend against them in the classroom, but we still show respect for the persons in spite of the differences.

We have had some wonderful discussions in my classroom around this subject as we have read great works of literature. From Shakespeare to Twain, and contemporary young adult fiction authors, we are always encounter the themes of tolerance. But most of what passes for tolerance today is not tolerance at all, but rather intellectual cowardice. Those who hide behind the myth of neutrality are often afraid of intelligent engagement. Unwilling to be challenged by alternate points of view, they don't engage contrary opinions or even consider them. It's easier to hurl an insult--"you intolerant bigot"--than to confront the idea and either refute it or be changed by it. "Tolerance" has become intolerance. Not in my class, I am proud to say. We welcome the free exchange of ideas and philosophies.

3-5 teacher Lynda MacDonald writes:

4.1.4 Students will work cooperatively in groups

Working cooperatively in groups takes on many forms in my classroom because I firmly believe in verbal processing as a learning style (especially with 9 boys and 2 girls in my classroom this year). In math for example, I may have the third-grade students working together to solve a problem. Or I might pair a third grader with an older student so one student can demonstrate for the other student how to solve a problem. In some instances, I might have a whole class activity where I present a problem. Then have the students show their understanding on a dry erase board. This way, I can easily see who gets it and who does not. I then have the students who get it pair up with a student who does not get it to reteach the concept to them. In writing, I had students take turns pairing up with other students evaluating each other's work using a rubric. Each student pair took one aspect of the rubric. Then we rotated so all students were paired with all students and each aspect of the rubric was covered one person at a time. In spelling, I have students working in pairs to help study their spelling words and give practice tests. In science, we often work with a partner or small group when conducting our science investigations. In social studies, I may have an older student work with a younger student to assist with reading or

writing. There are many opportunities in my classroom for students to work cooperatively in groups.

K-2 teacher Jenny Hartman writes:

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

Students at Guffey Community Charter School naturally feel both physically and emotionally safe. Our students are all very unique, yet they are so incredibly accepting of one another. We have students at our school who would likely stand out, not fit in very well, or not easily make friends if they were at a typical 'big box' school. Thanks to the community and caring students that we have at Guffey, no kid is ever left out, and everyone is accepted for who they are – no matter what. In addition, the students know that if they are having an issue with another student, they can talk to an adult. We have told the students over and over that if they have a problem that they cannot solve on their own, they need to tell an adult right away, which they usually do. Also, the K-2 class has middle school buddies. The buddy system encourages the middle school students to take on a leadership role in helping out and watching over the youngest students. Not only are they there to help watch the K-2 students on field trips and while walking to the library, but they are also there for them in the lunchroom, on the playground, and on the bus before and after school. The middle school students are available to the K-2's if they just want to talk, if they have a problem that they cannot solve on their own, and also to help keep the K-2's in check to make sure they are always exhibiting positive behavior.

4.1.6 Celebrate each other's growth and learning

The K-2 students do an outstanding job of celebrating each other's growth and learning! Partially due to the lack of filters for younger students, they will say whatever is on their minds, and oftentimes it comes out as complimenting or congratulating another student on even the smallest achievements. For example, we have one student in our class who (for a substantial amount of time) would mess around and not get her handwriting completed in time before lunch. Somehow, this turned into all of the other students encouraging her along the way – congratulating her as she completes each of the 4 lines of handwriting, and being so very excited for her if she finishes her work before lunch! Luckily, this added attention really works for her and lately she has been finishing her handwriting on time. Another example of celebrating each other's' achievements would be during math time. We take timed math fact tests almost every day. The majority of the students are now getting 100% (or close to 100%) regularly, however a couple of students are still struggling with memorizing their facts. Students who finish with 100% and time to spare are still so positive and supporting to those students who have a harder time with the tests. They will tell those students "Oh wow! You did really great!" even if he/she only got 70% because they know that this is an accomplishment for that particular student. The K-2 students also 'seek-out' the praise of their peers during writing time. They will frequently ask if they can read what they wrote to the rest of the class. Always, everyone is very proud of the person who reads his/her writing, and only positive comments are shared.

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 3-5 teacher Lynda MacDonald is the most familiar with the daily operations of our school, generally speaking. Short term, she would be capable of assuming some of the administrative responsibilities should the unexpected need arise. Longer than a couple of days, 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. Next school year, if the need arises, administrator Walker could rely on myself for assistance.

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.*

- *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's 2017 five-year building owner - lease agreement with the school district outlines what our school's responsibilities are, the owner's responsibilities, and, new to this lease, what the "shared" responsibilities are.

Our history is as follows:

The Park RE2 school district has always been supportive and fiscally responsible for any major maintenance and care of the Guffey Community School's building and campus. In 2014, when the school's original roof was compromised due to its age, District Superintendent Minnis immediately stepped in and obtained State of Colorado emergency grant funding to replace the school's original roof thus allowing our school's building to continue to flourish. This repair brought a new exterior roof with snow guards, new gutters, redesigned and improved roof pitch, wall and ceiling insulation, energy efficient classroom lights, and a large storage space in the ceiling. Several years ago, when the exterior of the school was sloughing off due to poor construction design and materials from the new addition in 1998, the school district paid for the repairs and materials to protect the building from further deterioration. And when the school's annex roof was leaking, the school district replaced it with a new metal one.

Since 1999, Guffey School has financed significant improvements to the campus and building. How was this done? The school successfully used our limited operational funds, preventive maintenance, leveraged the charter school capital construction grant funding from the state, applied for and received and over \$50,000 in Park County Conservation Trust grants for playground improvements, parking lot expansion, beautification landscaping, and excavating areas around the school to protect the building from further erosion. Examples of building improvements are: new energy efficient windows in the original building (middle school, art room, music room), replacement of floor covering throughout the entire school, hot water tank in the kitchen, and this year, new gutters on the Annex and an on-demand hot water tank in the staff's bathroom. We even used last year's PIE Palooza funds to purchase a new oven and range top for the school's kitchen.

In 2012, when then Superintendent Soper attended community meetings and asked for our support around the need for new buildings for both the Fairplay and Lake George campuses, our community was supportive of the successful mill levy vote. As reflected on our property taxes, the folks in our neighborhood support the school district with their tax dollars. I am very proud of our little community school and we have been exceptional tenants during the time that we have occupied this building. We are fiscally responsible for the building's insurance, water testing, fire protection, platform lift, and all minor repairs. A copy of the school's lease agreement is available upon request.

The care of our school's campus includes the treasured foliage as well. We recently had our school's evergreen trees assessed by Colorado State Forest Service. I was concerned about some of the natural parasites, for example the Bud Worm, that are affecting trees in the area. Good news is that our trees are currently healthy. See the school's Facebook page for a photo of the ranger talking with our school's students about this.

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 2016 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 a personal computer for school business and will have an improved policy around this for the 2017-2018 school year.*
- All student records are stored in a locked metal filing cabinet found in the school's office.*

Pam writes,

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 and in February of this year, reviewed the building by doing a training session on the school's campus.

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 EL-9.6 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.