

MONITORING REPORT
ENDS POLICY #4
EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS #11
PREPARED FOR THE GUFFEY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
November 2017
By Martine Walker, School Administrator

E-4 Social Skills

Students will be productive citizens participating actively in their community.

4.1 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.

Martine Walker writes:

I am in compliance with this Ends policy as shown by the policy reports from our school's teachers.

Written by Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch, 6-8 teacher

4.1.1 *Students will possess good interpersonal communication skills*

Even though the internet has drastically changed what we mean by "interpersonal skills" and it is constantly changing with the introduction of new informational technology, certain methods of social interactions will continue to remain steadfast.

Middle School is a very important time to address the impact of our 'traditional' communication skills (verbal, written, and visual) with emphasis on our community and family around us. I strive to reinforce the benefits of '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 discussed how to write emails that say what you want to say and avoid misinterpretations, knowing that in personal and work situations, these can be a big obstacle
- We focus on written communication, we shall be focusing on 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 life-long learning skill; one that is practiced on the playground, at lunchtime, field trips, and in the classroom. It is our goal to lay a solid foundation for all relationships, assuring a life-long success.

Despite reading a 2013 article in Psychology Today about how using courtesy words, like “please and thank-you” encourage a servant/master relationship, and are passé – we shall continue to celebrate good manners!

Martine Walker writes:

I am a firm believer in the importance of good communication and I realize that as we delve deeper into a world of technology, social media and text messaging that a certain amount of our interpersonal skills are at risk of being lost. As I listen to one of my favorite podcasts, “The Thomas Jefferson Hour”, I hear the host, Clay Jenkinson (who portrays Thomas Jefferson), speak often about the “art” of communication and how much time he devoted to this art, while still being somewhat of a hermit. Communication was learned and practiced as a fine art. As our attention spans decrease along with our in-person social time with others as does our knowledge and time to practice this “art”. However, I am continually impressed by Guffey Students. Not just by their good manners but by their ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings. By their desire to meaningfully contribute verbally, visually and through their writing. From what I see, Guffey kids are well on their way to learning this art of communication. Also, in a way, I think our rural location may even help since our kids don’t have constant access to wi-fi or cell signals and often have data-caps on their internet at home which implicitly places a limit on screen time. Thus, our kids are often outdoors, interacting with nature, reading books and using their imaginations through writing and play. All of this, I believe, contributes to our kids having many opportunities to build upon their already excellent interpersonal skills.

Written by Lynda MacDonald, 3-5 teacher

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

In science this term, we are currently learning about ecosystems. Specifically focusing on the ecosystems around Guffey. We are learning how ecosystems work and the importance of maintaining these ecosystems. We are learning about animal habitats, as well as the distinction of what a niche is. We are also learning the importance of diversity and how humans can play a role that is supportive or detrimental to the diversity of an ecosystem.

This fall the BLM put on a presentation for the students regarding Leave No Trace specifically in regards to the Guffey Gorge. We took a field trip out there where we did a variety of activities demonstrating the impact humans can have on a fragile ecosystem. The BLM also came to Guffey School to do additional work with the students. Their activities were quite impactful. One activity that really stood out was having the students walk through the grass all spread out, compared to walking in a straight line. It was quite a visual to see impact that just 20 kids could have on the environment depending on how they walked through a fragile ecosystem.

Written by Jenny Hartman, K-2 teacher

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

Guffey School does an excellent job of honoring the differences among all of the students. This year in particular, our school has a very diverse group of students, coming from different backgrounds and

requiring different needs. As far as honoring different abilities, I think our new sixth grade student said it best when he said "I am in all grades" when referring to his grade level at school. He, along with a couple other students, float back and forth between the K-2 and 3-5 classroom throughout the school day. Our school is meeting the needs of these students by placing them in different academic groups based on ability-level as opposed to grade-level. One of the greatest things to see is just how well the students are accepted in their non-grade-level learning groups. Not once have I heard comments about "why is he/she in this group". Instead, I hear students say "I want to be his/her partner today!" Without even being told to do so, Guffey students are so welcoming of any student, learning at any level, being in any classroom.

On the other hand though, we sometimes need to teach our students to accept that sometimes certain students have different needs and require different things in order to be successful. I have had to teach the students in my K-2 class that we are all individuals and they will all be treated as individuals and not everyone is treated the same. For example, I expect different behaviors out of certain students depending on what I know they are capable of. In addition, certain students may need things like sensory breaks or snacks in order to keep them going throughout the day. Not all of my students need this. At first, it was extremely challenging for my K-2 students to understand that the student sitting next to them was allowed to have an unlimited amount of snacks throughout the day when they couldn't have a snack. It was also hard to understand that a different student could get up and walk around or leave the classroom to take a break when they were not allowed to do that. Over time, the K-2 students have come to accept the fact that everyone is treated differently based on their own personal needs, and that we need to honor and accept the fact that they may require different things in order to be successful.

Written by Lynda MacDonald, 3-5 teacher

4.1.4 Students will work cooperatively in groups

I use group work a lot with in my classroom. In fact, I have chosen not to have desks in my classroom, but rather use tables, so working in groups is easily facilitated. I group students up for many different purposes. Sometimes I have same age groups so students of the same age can work problems out putting their minds together and challenging themselves. I use this for certain reading assignments as well as math assignments. Other times I have groups of mixed ages so the older students can model for the younger students, especially when we are learning something at the upper grade level. This often takes place for social studies or science assignments. Often times these groups are simple pairs. Other times students may be asked to work in teams. Other times students have the options to work with a partner of their choice or to work alone. This often occurs when we are studying for a test. Groups are mixed so students have the opportunity to work with different students. I do not allow the same kids to work together all the time. Working in groups helps to break up the day. It gives students the opportunity to move around and to talk through their work. In the "real world" students will need to work groups, so I believe it is important for them to get used to working this way sooner than later. For the most part students like working together.

Written by Hillevi Peterson-Hirsch, 6-8 teacher

4.1.5 Students will create an environment of emotional and physical safety for themselves and others

As with all schools, students mature at different levels than other students. In middle school it is a time of rapid growth and development with some students. On this particular Ends policy, I have asked 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 emotional and physical safety, we have more one on one time with teachers because we are a small school and feel comfortable being honest with them."

“We feel comfortable with each other’s parents because we are a small and close community. We even call our friend’s moms, ‘mom’.”

“We have a few issues at school this year, but we make adaptations for the needs of other students in order to keep them safe – like locking the art, music, and custodial rooms.”

“The teacher’s take ownership of the kids at school – in a way they protect us like we are their own kids.”

“Middle school students take leadership seriously. We have K-2 buddies, but really, we try to just look out for everyone. It’s what makes Guffey, Guffey.”

As their teacher, I talk with students about using their social media safely. We discuss privacy guidelines as well as how to identify online predators. As we share in class, students feel safe to express themselves. This class understands the difference between good-natured “kidding” and bullying.

A final quote from a past student: “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

Written by Jenny Hartman, K-2 teacher

4.1.6 Students will celebrate each other’s growth and learning

Students are naturally good at celebrating each other’s successes! In a multi-age classroom, it is always fun to see the older students seeing what the younger students are doing and talking about how they remember doing that when they were in kindergarten or 1st grade...and then talking about what they know how to do now. I also see younger students looking at what the older students are doing and talking in awe of how hard their work looks, with the older students commenting back that it isn’t too bad. Every single day, I have students sharing their work with each other – simply because they are proud of it, not because they were told to do so. They subject they always love to show each other is their handwriting. The students are so positive when they see each other’s handwriting. I am constantly hearing “good job!” or “that looks so good!” When they feel particularly proud of an assignment, they ask me if they can hang it up on the wall (which happens all the time)!

EL-11 Accomplishment Reporting to the Public

The Administrator shall not fail to prepare an annual progress report to the community.

Accordingly, the Administrator may not fail to include the following in the annual progress report:

1. Student achievement based on the attainment of established standards.
2. School strategies to improve student achievement.
3. Comparisons of school adopted content area.
4. Revenues, expenditures and costs of various segments of school operations.
5. The extent to which the school has achieved its ends.
6. Information regarding achievement of the state accreditation indicators.

Martine Walker writes:

I am in compliance with this Executive Limitation Policy which is shown in the annual report called: Guffey Community Charter School’s Annual Progress Report 2016-2017, which was prepared and submitted to the Board by previous administrator Pam Moore since the report reflects her last year at Guffey School. This document is available to the community and the general public on the school’s website.