Facilities and Asset Protection

The Superintendent is expected to protect the district’s assets and limit exposure to risk and liability. Furthermore, the Superintendent shall not allow district facilities to be in a condition that is inadequate, unsafe, unclean, uninviting or is not conducive to teaching and learning.

Therefore, the Superintendent may not:

1. Fail to maintain a continual five-year plan for managing and developing facilities

   **Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean that the district will take a proactive approach to maintaining and improving facilities by regularly identifying facility needs and developing a schedule for the completion of improvements.

   **In compliance.** The district maintains a facility management and development plan that lists pending projects, repairs and renovations needed in the district. This plan is developed by our Maintenance Manager in collaboration with district staff and outside consultants, as needed. In 2019, the district contracted with McKinstry to complete an extensive facilities condition assessment (or FCA) of all district buildings and sites. This assessment also includes an extensive inventory of district systems and equipment and serves as a tool to guide the district’s long-term plan. That report is available to the board [here](note: large file over 400MB).

   The district’s five-year plan for managing and developing facilities requires ongoing adjustments as projects are prioritized and reprioritized through regular observation and inspection. New projects may replace planned projects on the district’s priority list as more urgent needs become apparent. For example, it recently became clear that the skybridge at Curtis High School was in need of repair to ensure ongoing safety and structural integrity. This project was prioritized requiring a change to our plan. Other factors such as the unexpected shutdown of schools last March also impact our ability to accurately predict which projects will be completed and on what exact timeline the work will get done.

   Each year, the district selects projects to complete in the upcoming school year. Next year’s (2020-21) list includes replacement of heat pumps and HVAC field device controls at NVI, rebuilding the sky bridges at CHS and various HVAC unit replacement around the district. These projects are selected from a longer list of important improvements. Pending projects we intend to complete over the next 5-years include, but are not limited to:

   - Replacement of HVAC field device controls at NVI and EP
   - Replacement of Heat Pump units at EP and NVI
   - Replacement of Boilers and Domestic Hot Water Tank at EP
   - Exterior painting at multiple sites
   - Roof replacement and repairs at Auxiliary Services
   - Rebuilding the Sky bridges at CHS
   - Resurfacing and painting of the CHS main gym floor
   - Replacement of Domestic Water riser at EP

   A list of projects completed in the prior year is included later in this report.

   In February 2018, the district placed an enhanced Capital Improvements Levy on the ballot for voter approval. With reductions planned for local enrichment levies at that time, the increase in capital projects funding was a way to ensure that ongoing facility repairs and improvements would be sustainable. The levy passed with over 62% of the vote and continues to provide revenue in the Capital Projects fund annually through 2022 for the purposes of completing a number of important
improvement projects. Since that time, enrichment levy authority has been increased but not restored to pre-McCleary levels. The capital projects levy will expire in 2023 unless renewed in 2022.

All major projects recommended by the Citizens’ Facilities Committee and approved by voters in 2006 have been completed. Additional analysis and planning will be needed for future, large capital projects using the McKinstry FCA as a starting point. Several buildings at Curtis High School, in addition to both Sunset and Chambers Primary Schools will need significant renovation or replacement in the next six to ten years. Plans to engage in this work last spring were put on hold when schools were closed due to the pandemic of 2020 and 2021. It will be important to revisit the long-term needs for capital improvements in the district as soon as possible.

2. Cause or allow actions that violate or materially deviate from voter-approved building and renovation projects, state law, state regulations, procurement code, or building codes.

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district must follow all state laws and regulations pertaining to the use of public funds for facility construction and maintenance. In addition, the district must follow all procurement procedures, building codes and guidelines set forth in any voter-approved building and renovation projects.

**In compliance.** All applicable laws related to capital projects management and acquisitions are being followed. In the past several years, there has been no complaint, legal notification or audit finding surrounding voter-approved capital bonds projects.

3. Name or memorialize school facilities without first referring the matter to the Board for action.

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean that only the Board has authority to name school facilities and that proposals of this nature must be provided to the Board for deliberation and, potentially, action.

**In compliance.** The district received no requests to name or rename facilities during the last calendar year.

4. Allow assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, inappropriately used, or unnecessarily risked by:

a. Failing to obtain insurance coverage against theft, casualty, and liability losses in accordance with Risk Management Pool directions;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district must maintain comprehensive insurance coverage.

**In compliance.** The district maintains comprehensive insurance with the Washington Schools Risk Management Pool (WSRMP). Our insurance was renewed for the 2020-21 school year. Insurance limits are based on WSRMP’s per-occurrence and aggregate limits for items such as theft, burglary, fraud, employee dishonesty, robbery, vandalism, fire, vehicle damage, cyber coverage, real and personal property, etc. Per occurrence limits for general, property, and auto liability are set at $1,000,000 each as recommended by WSRMP.

b. Allowing unbonded personnel access to funds in excess of $100,000;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district personnel with regular access to funds in excess of $100,000 are bonded.

**In compliance.** The Superintendent, Executive Director of Business Services, and the Assistant Director of Business Services are the only staff with regular access to funds in excess of...
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$100,000, and are all bonded.

The district’s depository accounts are used specifically to deposit district cash receipts and electronic transfers from state and federal agencies. This money must be transferred from the district accounts to Pierce County on a weekly basis. These checks require two signatures.

In the coming months the District will transition to a new banking institution. This change will eliminate the need for two signatures as fund transfers will occur electronically instead of by manual check and are restricted to only transfer into our Pierce County account.

The revolving checking account has a balance of $12,000 and is used for incidental payments when a procurement card (credit card) is not accepted. These checks only require one signature.

The Superintendent, Executive Director of Business Services, Assistant Director of Business Services, and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning can sign these checks for the district. The superintendent’s signature is printed on all warrants issued by the district through our Skyward accounting software. This software is also referred to as WISPC and WESPaC.

c. Failing to take steps to ensure that a program of preventive maintenance is in place for district facilities and equipment;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district will systematically identify actual and potential maintenance needs of all district facilities and grounds, as well as equipment. Additionally, the district will proactively respond to these needs while also addressing spontaneous problems as they arise.

**In compliance.** The district commits substantial resources each year toward the maintenance of school facilities and equipment. Funds are set aside in the budget for these purposes and the district employs two skilled maintenance workers, an electrician, HVAC technician, mechanic, district grounds and maintenance staff and building custodians at each site. When necessary, the district uses outside contractors to complete necessary projects or perform maintenance tasks.

Each year, multiple maintenance projects are completed. Some projects are part of the district’s maintenance budget in the general fund while others are funded through the capital projects fund. The district continually assesses the condition of our facilities, grounds, and equipment, as well as on-going maintenance needs to ensure that immediate issues are addressed and that deferred maintenance will have no adverse impact. A list of completed projects from the last year includes the following:

- Replacement of Boiler at DI
- Interior LED lighting upgrade at DI and NVI
- Sub-metering of irrigation at DI, NVI, EP, SP, CP
- CHS Chemistry Lab Renovations
- UPP chair lift code revisions
- Replacement of 16 split HVAC units at CP.
- Replacement of siding and painting of portables 6 and 7 at DI.
- Roof replacement of portables 4 and 5 at DI.
- Replacement of portable ramp on portables 8 and 9 at DI.
- Interior painting at EP, SP, CP, NVI, and DI.
- Camera upgrade at Aux.
- Roof repair and replacement for the large walk in freezer at Aux.
- CJH Cooling Tower VFD Replacement
- HVAC repairs on the Curtis Aquatics Desert Aire Unit
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- Painting of restroom floor in various restrooms at CHS.
- Installed Electric Vehicle Charging Station at Aux
- Replacement of Electrical panels at Tech.
- Replacement of Domestic water risers at NVI, DI, and CHS
- Upgraded sound systems in CHS main gym, and cafeteria
- Turf repairs, maintenance, and GMAX testing at CHS Stadium, and BB complex

The district continues to use the ML Work Order system. This software program is used to manage facilities, track work orders and maintenance costs, and schedule preventative maintenance projects. A summary report for the last 12 months (Closed Work Order Report) is evidence of the substantial work completed in the district over the last year to maintain our facilities and equipment. The full work order report is available for board review here. Preventative maintenance work orders are labeled as such in the report.

Regular facility condition assessments and observation/inspection of school facilities by district maintenance and administrative staff provide a detailed evaluation of all facilities so effective preventative maintenance programs can be implemented. In addition, in 2019, the district contracted with McKinstry to perform a more extensive facility condition assessment (FCA) of mechanical, plumbing, electrical and architectural systems at twelve (12) district sites. These sites included all eight (8) school buildings and four (4) district facilities. Multiple school portables were also assessed.

The results of the Facility Condition Assessment show that most district facilities fall in the fair to good range with approximately 62% to 90% of “life” remaining, respectively. The report states that most deficiencies in district equipment and systems is due to “age and not neglect.” The assessment results serve as a tool to support both capital and maintenance planning. This extensive assessment of all UPSD facilities is available for board review here.

During the 2014-15 school year, the district received a “mini study and survey” grant from OSPI to perform a comprehensive, in-depth review of our facilities. This report created a baseline for annual building assessments. The survey is required every five (5) years by OSPI to qualify for state matching funds when a building needs to be renovated or replaced. The next external survey was to be completed during the 2019/20 school year. The McKinstry survey (noted and linked above) serves this purpose. The next required survey will be during the 2024/25 year.

d. Failing to conduct energy assessments and to make cost effective modifications which result in energy savings;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean that the district’s plan for maintaining facilities will include regular efforts to assess energy use and, when feasible and prudent, make improvements that reduce utility costs and/or increase energy savings.

In compliance. The district partners with McKinstry, Tacoma Power & Utility (TPU), ATS and others to complete a range of energy assessments and projects on an ongoing basis.

The district utilizes Energy Star Portfolio Manager to track and benchmark our buildings energy consumption. Our Maintenance Manager reviews Energy Star Portfolio Manager monthly to ensure we are not wasting energy. In addition our Maintenance Manager and staff attend webinars and training from Energy Star and Tacoma Power & Utility on ways to audit our buildings and reduce energy consumption.

During the last year, the district completed several projects that will improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption. These projects include:
LED lighting upgrade at DI and NVI (grant-funded)
- Replacement of electric boiler at DI with high efficiency condensing gas boiler.
- LED upgrade of lights in lobby at UPP.
- Replacement of 16 more efficient split HVAC units at CP

e. Exposing the district, its Board, or staff to legal liability;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean that staff will take necessary precautions to reduce potential liabilities to the district and board.

**In compliance.** The district has multiple systems in place to protect the district from legal liability. These systems include extensive training of staff in the areas of child abuse reporting, nondiscrimination, HIB, boundary invasions, proper supervision, isolation and restraint, reasonable use of force, staff and student safety, prevention of abuse and others. Hiring practices include careful attention to background and reference checks to ensure that we hire ethical and professional staff. All staff members are trained in identifying (and communicating about) “red flag” allegations to ensure that the district responds promptly and thoroughly to all serious allegations with potential for liability risk.

The district also emphasizes the importance of monitoring and supervision. Leaders and managers are selected carefully to ensure that they are able and willing to hold others to high expectations and to intervene when staff are acting in ways that expose the district to potential legal liability.

District administrators confer regularly with both legal counsel and the Washington State Risk Management Pool (our insurer) to get advice and direction on how to best protect the district from liability. A safety committee regularly reviews accident and incident reports where staff or students are injured to determine what actions might be necessary to promote safety and decrease the likelihood of injury in the future.

Beginning in March, 2020, the district faced unprecedented new risk factors with the onset of the COVID19 pandemic. Schools were closed for many months to students, but district operations continued throughout this closure to some extent. Many staff continued to work from home, but others reported to school sites on a regular basis. Multiple actions were taken to ensure safety for staff working on site and procedures for working and learning were put in place using state, federal and local health department guidelines. Department of Labor and Industry guidelines were also a point of emphasis over the last year to ensure safe working conditions. Students were invited back into schools on a limited basis in October with increasing levels of in-person learning taking place in February and March, 2021. Strict, preventative safety measures have been put in place to protect both students and staff as part of this return to school. These safety measures were developed following guidelines from health experts. The risk pool has also provided ongoing guidance and their recommendations have also been used to guide our decision-making.

The district employs a designated Coordinator of Safety and Emergency Preparedness. This position focuses on keeping students and staff safe and on minimizing legal liability through risk management best practices. The Coordinator works in concert with the risk pool and other district staff and administration to protect the district. Routine inspections of multiple district systems are conducted on an annual basis. These inspections include formal external reviews such as health department and fire inspections, as well as district-driven reviews of playgrounds, emergency
preparedness containers, supervision practices, etc. The district also employs a number of other staff members who, as all or part of their work, provide guidance, training and supervision in an effort to limit exposure to legal liability. Examples include Civil Rights Compliance, HIB Compliance and Title IX Compliance (Lainey Mathews); Foster Care Liaison, McKinney Vento Compliance and Child Abuse Reporting (Becky Owens); 504 Compliance and Special Education Compliance (Kelly McClure); and Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (Alphonso Melton).

f. Approving any purchase in violation of the district’s procurement code;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district will establish procurement procedures and follow them.

**In compliance.** The district’s procurement procedures and policies follow state and federal laws as well as best practice purchasing guidelines. Those policies and procedures are posted on the district’s website and in procedure manuals. The Business Office provides on-going training to staff on procurement procedures to ensure they understand state and federal requirements that impact school operations.

The State Auditor’s Office (SAO) performs an annual accountability audit of the district’s finances, including a review of the district’s compliance with federal, state, and local laws, as well as compliance with our own policies and procedures. In recent audits the SAO found no issues with the district’s system of internal controls related to procurement, nor did they identify any purchases that were not in compliance with district procurement procedures. A copy of SAO’s most recent accountability audit can be found on SAO’s website [here](#).

g. Failing to implement procedures to protect information, records, and files from loss or damage;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district will establish procedures to protect the district’s information, records and files from loss or damage.

**In compliance.** The Executive Director of Business Services is designated as “district archivist” and the district follows the procedures outlined in the Washington State Records Management Guidelines and General Records Retention Schedules provided by the Secretary of State Archivist.

In addition to traditional paper records, the district maintains a significant amount of electronic data. The district technology department maintains servers in the University Place School District. All fiscal and student data is maintained by our partner organization WSIPC. WSIPC is responsible for the backup of all WSIPC databases for the entire state (275+ school districts).

Microfilm documents are being stored by the State Archivist, and the scanned digital documents are available on district servers so they can be easily accessed, indexed, and searched.

Retention and destruction of district records is done in compliance with the “School Districts and Educational Service Districts Records Retention Schedule.” All requests to destroy district records after their required retention period has expired are reviewed and approved by the
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“district archivist” prior to record destruction. The Business Office provides on-going training to staff to ensure that records are retained appropriately.

h. Receiving, processing, or disbursing funds under controls which are insufficient under generally accepted accounting principles for governments;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district will establish internal controls based on generally accepted accounting principles for receiving and disbursing funds.

**In compliance.** The State Auditor’s Office (SAO) performs an annual audit of the district’s internal controls. They have not identified any internal control weaknesses or internal controls that are insufficient under generally accepted accounting principles.

Procedures and controls for the receipt, processing and disbursement of the public’s money are a priority for the district’s business office. The district follows the accounting manual established by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for public school districts in Washington State. The State Auditor’s Office (SAO) completed their most recent audit in March 2020 for the 2018-19 school year. That audit resulted in no findings or management letters and determined that the district’s internal controls did not have any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses.

Over the last decade, extensive efforts have been made to improve these procedures and internal controls and to train staff. The district continuously looks for ways to streamline, improve, or implement processes that assist us in maintaining good internal controls over fiscal matters. The district maintains a number of systems to support this work including Follett Destiny, InTouch, RevTrak, Touchbase Light and MLS Work Orders. These systems are connected through the Skyward Data Management System. The Business Office provides on-going training on internal controls, receipts, and disbursements to ensure they understand district expectations.

i. Acquiring, encumbering, or disposing of real property without approval of Board;

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean the district may not acquire, buy or sell real property without Board approval.

**In compliance.** There have been no real property purchases or sales in the past year.

j. Allowing the district’s public image or credibility to be endangered, thereby jeopardizing the district’s ability to accomplish its mission.

**Interpretation:** I interpret this to mean that the Superintendent shall not knowingly allow any behavior or activities that are damaging to the positive public image and reputation of the University Place School District.

**In compliance.** University Place School District maintains a strong, positive and professional public image in the community and beyond. This public image results from extensive efforts by many individuals over many years to ensure safety, responsibly manage public funds, demonstrate transparency and responsiveness and provide students with an education of the highest quality. District staff at all levels of the organization understand that their effort and actions have a direct impact on the district’s image. When individual members of the district team make a decision (or behave in a manner) that is detrimental to the reputation of the district, administrators take immediate action within the guidelines of law and policy to respond in a way that is protective of the district’s image.
Ongoing efforts by district and building administrators to work with parents, build relationships with citizens and form partnerships in the community combine to strengthen the district's image. The visibility of staff and administration at building and community events also contributes to the protection of the district's reputation. Concerns, questions and complaints from citizens and parents are answered promptly by district staff in an effort to be responsive, build trust and confidence and to demonstrate the highest quality customer service.

An extensive system of mandatory employee training is in place. Many trainings are designed to reduce or eliminate the kinds of behaviors that would reflect poorly on the district. These trainings include both in-person and online (SafeSchools) training.

In addition, the district continues to use printed materials (The Dialog), technology and social media to share information with the community about the district's work and accomplishments. The Dialog is distributed to all district households four times per year. Facebook and Twitter accounts are active for the district and are vehicles to tell the district’s story, share initiatives and achievements and build support in the community. The district website also serves similar purposes.

Evidence of the district’s strong public image includes successful passage of levies (2018), strong and steady enrollment, consistent interest from out-of-district families in attending UP schools, efforts of realtors to use UP School District as a selling point and the many supportive and complimentary statements shared over the course of the year by parents and community.

Several factors over the last year have presented significant challenges to the public image of school districts all over the nation, including the University Place School District. Increased attention to issues of systemic racism in public institutions was created by the killing of George Floyd last spring. Other incidents—particularly other incidents of violence against black Americans—have contributed to a widespread sense of outrage and demand for action in this arena. In addition, the global COVID19 pandemic resulted in the forced closure of schools and the implementation of new “remote learning” systems for students. Our response to both of these significant developments impacts reputation and image. Because members of our community have been divided on how to respond to these (and other) issues, maintaining a quality public image has been challenging.

Substantial effort has been made to communicate with the public on our stance related to racial equity and the specific actions we plan to take (now and in the future) in response to calls from our community to eliminate systemic racism and racist practices. Efforts include changes to our curriculum, expanded professional development, community partnerships, diversifying our workforce and others. We have also made a commitment to listen to key stakeholders in efforts to build trust and understanding. While our citizens might not be uniform in their views, we have been diligent in listening to diverse views and opinions. We have also been intentional to provide opportunities for students and parents of color to share their experiences (inside and outside of school) and to hear their concerns, fears and hopes. Ongoing work and communication in this area has been, and will continue to be, essential. To be effective for all, we must ensure that UPSD is seen by all stakeholders—and particularly people of color—as an inclusive, anti-racist organization.

Efforts to implement an online learning program and to begin reopening schools to in-person learning over the last 12 months has also created significant public relations challenges. Many community members have opposed closures of any kind while many other citizens have communicated their desire to leave schools closed until more are vaccinated and/or until the pandemic subsides to a greater extent. Similarly, the move to a fully online program put significant pressure on parents and families to provide/support education for their students and thrust the district into a new role as “distance educators” relying upon unprecedented levels of
technology use for coordinating learning. Public perception over this time period was mixed. Many were impressed with the quality of our online programs and the remote instruction while others were frustrated by this required shift. Different students responded differently to this type of learning and this, too, created strong feelings.

Throughout this time period, we have increased our levels of communication with parents and the public about our reasons for closure and our plans for reopening in an effort to maintain our long-standing, positive public image as it pertains to safety and quality programming. While we have been unable to meet every need and expectation of our citizens, we have made extensive efforts to be transparent and responsive to everyone. In addition, we have been consistent in our communications around reopening and, to date, have delivered on our timeline. Our ability to avoid confusion, “false promises” or “false starts” has been beneficial although some remain critical about the pace of reopening.

We will continue to work closely with our parents and communicate often as we move forward in our transition back to “normal” schooling. We remain hopeful that this process will be consistent and positive. However, the state of the pandemic is still uncertain and we can not predict what new developments might create new challenges to how the district is perceived by constituents.

Adopted: June 12, 2019
Monitoring Method: Internal Report
Monitoring Frequency: Annually in March