

Small Schools Commitment

The Yakima School District Board of Directors supports the concept of small schools as one mechanism to improve student achievement, including the systemic reorganization of school staffs, students, and community, in order to develop small school units within larger school units, which at times may be called small personalized learning communities (SPLCs). This effort has been supported by the district at the elementary level, as a part of team development in middle school, and as a small school commitment at the high school level.

1. Intervention Strategies

The goal of movement to SPLCs is to provide the support necessary for a learning environment where every student thrives. Research supporting smaller school entities indicates that they can raise the level of student involvement and student academic achievement when implemented in tandem with other reforms that change how teaching and learning happen at the classroom level. Small schools are particularly effective in serving predominately underserved students and those performing below grade level.

Research indicates that SPLCs work best when the following conditions are met as closely as possible:

- 1.1 limitation/regulation of the numbers of students in a small school or team;
- 1.2 commitment to prepare students to meet district and state requirements;
- 1.3 students directed toward careers and a variety of post-high school educational opportunities;
- 1.4 structured autonomy in accordance with the vision, goals, and focus of the district;
- 1.5 commitment to the *Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*; see exhibit 2017X;
- 1.6 public engagement with parents, community, and students; and
- 1.7 planning for clearly defined school and student progress.

2. Board of Direction

The superintendent is directed to develop procedures which guide schools in the process of creating small personalized learning communities. The superintendent will annually present to the board the school's progress toward expected outcomes of Yakima School District small schools, including the following:

- 2.1 reduction of ninth (9th) grade dropouts;
- 2.2 reduction in number of ninth (9th) grade students receiving more than one (1) F in a grading period;
- 2.3 reduction in student absenteeism;
- 2.4 increase in student achievement; and
- 2.5 increase in cohort promotion and graduation rates.

The data will be disaggregated by school and ethnicity.

The board directs the superintendent to prepare appropriate procedures to implement this policy.

Cross Reference:

- (cf.: 2001 – Academic Standards)
- (cf.: 2002 – Assessment of Academic Standards)
- (cf.: 2013 – Priority Schools)
- (cf.: 2014 – School Improvement Plans)
- (cf.: 2168 – Categorical Programs)
- (cf.: 2170 – Alternative Schools/Enrichment Programs)
- (cf.: 2255 – Alternative Experience Learning Programs)

Legal References:

RCW 28A.150.230 Basic Education Act of 1977

Adoption Date:

030225