



Board Governance Handbook

The Board of Education is entrusted by the community to uphold the Constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public interest in schools, and to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student.

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Unity of Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities, Norms, Agreements

This handbook reflects the governance team’s work on creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, roles, norms and coming to agreement on protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.

Building a Governance Team

Unity of Purpose

School district governance is the act of transforming the needs, wishes, and desires of the community into policies that direct the community's schools.

In a school district, the Board and Superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work together effectively, members need to: Maintain a unity of purpose; agree on and govern within appropriate roles; create and sustain a positive governance culture and; create a supportive structure for effective governance.

What do we as a governance team want to accomplish?

What do we stand for?

- Our shared purpose is to have the best learning environment for all students.
- We want to build trust and move the District forward.
- We want to be an effective team.
- We want to understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
- We want to be a team with a common focused direction so we are not a distraction to the District or community but a catalyst for the focused efforts of employees, and the community can see evidence of this focused direction.
- We want to be partners with the staff in positive change.
- We want to oversee the putting together of a first-rate program and first-rate facilities, making sure we continue to improve – never resting on our laurels.
- We want to perpetuate a legacy of positive culture as people come and go.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Trustees is to stay focused on the big picture while fulfilling five responsibilities in a series of job areas. These five responsibilities are:

- We set the direction.
- We establish the structure.
- We provide support.
- We ensure accountability.
- We act as community leaders.

We carry out these responsibilities in each of the following job areas:

- Setting the District's Direction
- Student Learning and Achievement
- Finance
- Facilities
- Human Resources
- Policy
- Judicial Review
- Collective Bargaining
- Community Relations and Advocacy

The Superintendent assists the Board in carrying out its responsibilities in each of the job areas and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon District vision and goals.

Creating and Sustaining a Positive Governance Team Culture

Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave with each other and others. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

Governance Norms

In order to make meetings positive and productive experiences for all, we make the following collective commitments to each other.

WE AGREE TO –

- Keep from taking disagreements personally (individuality is embraced, respected).
- To show respect (never dismiss/devalue others).
- Make a commitment to effective deliberation, each listening openly while everyone is allowed to express his or her point of view.
- Make a commitment to open communication, honesty, no surprises.
- Commit the time necessary to govern effectively. This means being there, being knowledgeable, participating, understanding the full scope of being a Board Member and being willing to take on all the responsibilities involved.
- Be collaborative (this is the way we operate)!
- Maintain confidentiality (builds trust).
- Look upon history as lessons learned; focus on the present and the future.

AND – ABOVE ALL –

- Focus on students' best interest – on what's best for the students! This is what we do! And it is the touchstone that allows us to have our differences.

Board Governance Protocols

1. Leadership Responsibility and Roles of the Board

1.1. Board:

1. Board members carry authority only as Board, not as individuals. Individuals can request action by bringing up a new idea, explaining their interest in a particular course of action and working to get a Board majority to support moving in that direction. When a majority of the Board, sitting in a formal meeting, requests action, that request should be made in the context of the intended results (what is to be accomplished), not the methods used to achieve those results.
2. In order to be effective representatives of the Board and District, members will:
3. Refrain from obligating the Board and/or administration by actual speech or implication, unless authorized to do so by the Board.
4. Represent the Board at various school events.
5. Refer any concerns, questions, or comments to the Superintendent as specified in the protocol on Responding to Concerns.
6. Reinforce with the community the key messages agreed upon by the Board.
7. Attend all board and committee meetings and functions, such as special events.
8. Be informed about the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs.
9. Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings.
10. Serve on committees or task forces and offer to take on special assignments.
11. Inform others about the district.
12. Follow conflict-of-interest and confidentiality policies.
13. Refrain from making special requests of the staff.
14. Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the annual budget and audit.

2. Board Meetings and the Agenda

2.1. Meetings

2.1.1. Meetings of the Board are held in public, but are not open-forum town hall meetings. Meetings will be conducted in such a way as to allow the public to provide input in the time allotted to ensure that multiple voices of the community inform Board deliberations; however, when the Board deliberates, it will be a time for the Trustees to listen and learn from each other, taking public input into consideration without re-engaging the public.

2.1.2. Public Comment:

2.1.2.1. Time limits, generally three minutes per speaker, 20 minutes per subject will be imposed by the Board President. The Board president may rule on the appropriateness of a topic. If the topic would be more suitably addressed at a later time, the president may indicate the time and place when it should be presented.

2.1.2.2. Public comment will be summarized briefly at the end of the public comment period. This summary will include specific pros and cons raised during the period followed by a confirmation of accuracy by the Board President.

2.1.3. Board meetings will be on the Second Tuesday (unless required by law, i.e. organizational meeting timelines) of each month. Each Board meeting will begin with Closed Session (with dinner provided to the Board) at approximately 5:00 pm, depending on how many items need to be discussed. The Regular Public Meeting will begin at 6:00 pm. Study Sessions may be scheduled and shall be scheduled at the discretion of the Board.

2.1.4. The design of the Board agenda will follow the historical structure utilized by the Board. The design of the agenda may only be altered with the approval of the Board.

2.1.5. Board members will review the information provided to them and be open to ongoing professional development and training.

2.1.6. The Superintendent, with the support of staff, will create each Board Agenda. In advance of the preparation of the Board Agenda, Board members may request items to be placed on the agenda. The Board President and the Superintendent will discuss the contents of the agenda and the process that will be followed at the meeting, in advance of the Board Meeting.

2.1.7. The Superintendent and Board believe that the need for information and/or clarification on agenda items is best accomplished by the submission of questions/requests (either written, by meeting, or by phone) for such

ahead of meetings. This will allow for in-depth consideration of items without unduly lengthening the meeting time.

- 2.1.8. When an individual Board member requests information, that information will be provided to all Board members. If unforeseen questions arrive during the meeting, Trustees will acknowledge their question or comment as spontaneous and that they understand that staff may not have the information on hand to answer the question.
- 2.1.9. Any request of the staff by an individual Board Member, which will take more than 30 minutes to fulfill, must be made by the majority of the Board so as not to detract staff from focused efforts that are meant to move the district toward achieving the year's goals.
- 2.1.10. Individual Board members are expected to self-monitor compliance to Public Meeting laws, including limiting Closed Session to the legally appropriate agenda item(s).

2.2. Public Participation in Board meetings:

- 2.2.1. Since the Public Meeting Law (Brown Act) expressly prohibits discussion leading to action from being conducted unless agendized, Governance Team members are strongly encouraged to refrain from engaging members of the public in dialogue about issues not on the agenda.
- 2.2.2. In general, citizens and residents wishing to “dialogue” with members should be encouraged to contact individual members and discuss issues of importance with them or the Superintendent as appropriate.
- 2.2.3. As a result of a comment under public communication, a member may ask the Superintendent to briefly comment for clarity or correction. The member may also ask that a matter be investigated, with or without a follow-up report to the Board.
- 2.2.4. If a Governance Team member feels compelled to speak to the issue, the member must first be recognized by the Board President. The comments must be brief and only clarifying or correcting. Any further discussion should be agendized.

2.3. Board Presentation and Deliberations:

- 2.3.1. The governance team will strive for brevity in deliberations, keeping remarks brief and to the point so that all opinions can be expressed and meetings can be efficient. Addressing each agenda item the Board shall, normally, adhere to the following process:
- 2.3.2. Staff Presentation/addressing questions from the Board
- 2.3.3. Staff members and employee groups, when presenting items or updates to the Board, are to provide appropriate back-up material for the Board to

review prior to the Board meeting. If it is necessary to provide a presentation to the Board, presentations are to be limited to not more than 10 minutes, unless prior approval of the President is received.

2.3.4. Input from the Community

2.3.5. Board Discussion and Deliberation

2.4. Board members individually and collectively demonstrate confidentiality as appropriate and as outlined through the mandates of the California Education Code, the Brown Act, and other compliance criteria established by law or legislation. Respecting the confidentiality of information maintains the Board's judicial review role.

2.5. The use of email and social communication is subject to the Public Meeting Law. The Superintendent shall forward questions and answers to all Board members. Board members, when responding, may not "reply to all."

2.6. The Board wishes to maintain a culture of professionalism, stay focused, and respect the need of trustees to be available to their families:

2.6.1. Electronic devices will be set for 'silent' or vibrate.

2.6.2. Trustees will be discreet in checking electronic devices.

2.7. Abstentions

2.7.1. The Board believes that when no legal reason exists of a conflict of interest, its members have a duty to vote on issues before them. If a Board member abstains, they will explain the rationale for doing so.

2.7.2. When a member abstains, his/her abstention shall not be counted for purposes of determining whether a majority of the membership of the Board has taken action

2.7.3. Abstentions are most appropriate in cases where there is a personal relationship between a litigant and a member (perception of bias), a decision that financially impacts the member or his or her immediate family (legal conflict), or a personal connection to the member that may bias a decision on discipline.

2.7.4. When abstaining because there may be a perception of bias, the member is encouraged to so state.

2.7.5. Where an actual legal conflict of interest exists, the member must publicly declare the conflict and recuse him or herself from voting at all.

2.7.6. When a member abstains, his/her abstention shall not be counted for purposes of determining whether a majority of the membership of the Board has taken action

2.8. Board members will model professional behavior by being polite and respectful of the points of view held by their fellow Governance Team members. The Governance Team will address one another by their first name.

2.9. Each Board member respects the right of other Board member to vote in the minority position. In so doing, each Board member agrees, as a courtesy to the team, to explain the reason for their minority vote, either during deliberation or after casting the vote.

2.10. Decisions of the Board

2.10.1. Governance Team members are reminded that policy and decisions reserved to the Board must be made as a Board. Except where otherwise indicated in the Education or Government Codes, a majority consists of **4 of 7 members** of the Board voting for an item. Once the decision has been made, it becomes the decision of “the Board.”

2.10.2. Under the concept of majority rule, each member is compelled to support the successful implementation of a policy decision, program, or procedure even when he or she does not agree with the decision.

2.10.3. If a member of the Governance Team cannot support the decision of the Board because it offends a moral/personal code, the member is expected, at a minimum, to refrain from undermining the decision or directive.

2.11. Parliamentary procedures are to be utilized as a guide to ensure for the most effective and efficient Board meeting possible. Accordingly, the Board utilizes Rosenberg’s parliamentary procedures as its guide to managing the agenda of each Board meeting.

2.12. Voting

2.12.1. Upon the request of an individual Board member, a roll call vote will be provided.

2.12.2. The protocol for recording the votes of the individual Board members shall follow the rotation established by the Board.

2.13. Whenever Board members are appointed or elected to serve on the Board, the Superintendent shall administer the Oath Office at a meeting of the Board.

2.14. WARRANTS

(BP 3314) The Governing Board recognizes the importance of developing a system of internal control procedures in order to help fulfill its obligation to monitor and safeguard district resources. To facilitate warrant processing, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that purchasing, receiving, and payment functions are kept separate. The Board of Trustees desires to have invoices paid on time in order that the district may

take advantage of available discounts and avoid finance charges. The district shall not be responsible for unauthorized purchases.

The warrant process protocol is as follows:

2.14.1. Step 1 – All expenditures for services, materials, and supplies start with filling out an OSR (Outside Service Request) at the site level.

2.14.2. Step 2 – Each OSR requires the Title 1, LCAP, grant funding, or other detailed information tying the expenditure to the appropriate approved Goal and Action budget. The OSR with accompanying information must be signed by the Site Administrator and entered into the financial system for processing.

2.14.3. Step 3 – The District Business Office will check for accuracy, correct account information, and compare to the LCAP, Title 1, grant, or other site budgets and forward a Purchase Order to the vendor and a “blue” copy to the site.

2.14.4. Step 4 – When the vendor fulfills the purchase order, site staff will forward the “blue” to the Business Office who will mail the warrants to each vendor, in advance of the next Board meeting. Said register of paid warrants shall be placed and formally approved under the Consent Agenda of the next Board meeting.

2.14.5. As a general practice, any non-routine expense items, shall be approved by the Board in a separate agenda item from the warrants.

2.14.6 The Superintendent or designee may authorize an expenditure which exceeds the budget classification allowance against which the expenditure is the proper charge only if an amount sufficient to cover the purchase is available in the budget for transfer. (cf. 3100 - Budget) (cf. 3110 - Transfer of Funds)

2.14.7 The Superintendent or designee may purchase supplies, materials, equipment, and services up to the amounts specified (currently \$50,000 in 2021) in Public Contract Code 20111, beyond which a competitive bidding process is required.

2.14.8 All transactions entered into by the Superintendent or designee on behalf of the Board shall be reviewed by the Board every 60 days. (Education Code 17605)

2.14.9 No district funds shall be expended for the purchase of alcoholic beverages. (Education Code 32435)

2.14.10 The Board shall not recognize obligations incurred contrary to Board policy and administrative regulations.

2.15 Contracts:

2.15.1 (a) (1) The governing board of any school district, in accordance with any requirement established by that governing board pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section

2000 of the Public Contracts Code shall let any contracts involving an expenditure of more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for any of the following:

(A) The purchase of equipment, materials, or supplies to be furnished, sold, or leased to the district.

(B) Services, except construction services.

(C) Repairs, including maintenance as defined in Section 20115, that are not a public project as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 22002.

(2) The governing board shall let the contract to the lowest responsible bidder who shall give security as the board requires, or else reject all bids.

2.15.2 (b) (1) The governing board shall let any contract for a public project, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 22002 of the Public Contracts Code, involving an expenditure of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) or more, to the lowest responsible bidder who shall give security as the board requires, or else reject all bids. All bids for construction work shall be presented under sealed cover, and shall be accompanied by one of the following forms of bidder's security:

(A) Cash.

(B) A cashier's check made payable to the school district.

(C) A certified check made payable to the school district.

(D) A bidder's bond executed by an admitted surety insurer, made payable to the school district.

2.15.3 (2) Upon award to the lowest bidder, the security of an unsuccessful bidder shall be returned in a reasonable period of time, but in no event shall that security be held by the school district beyond 60 days from the time the award is made.

(c) Procurement bid solicitations and awards made by a school district approved to operate at least one federal nonprofit child nutrition program for purchases in support of those programs shall be consistent with the federal procurement standards in Sections 200.318 to 200.326, inclusive, of Part 200 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These awards shall be let to the most responsive and responsible party. The price shall be the primary consideration, but not the only determining factor.

(d) This section applies to all equipment, materials, or supplies, whether patented or otherwise, and to contracts awarded pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 2000. This section shall not apply to professional services or advice, insurance services, or any other purchase or service otherwise exempt from this section, or to any work done by day labor or by force account pursuant to Section 20114.

(e) Commencing January 1, 1997, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall annually adjust the dollar amounts specified in subdivision (a) to reflect the percentage change in the annual average value of the Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government Purchases of Goods and Services for the United States, as published by the United States Department of Commerce for the 12-month period ending in the prior fiscal year. The annual adjustments shall be rounded to the nearest one hundred dollars (\$100).

2.15.4 Property maintenance control; contracts:

The governing board by majority vote may adopt a rule, delegating to any officer or employee of the district as the board may designate, the authority to purchase supplies, materials, apparatus, equipment, and services. No rule shall authorize any officer or employee to make any purchases involving an expenditure by the district in excess of the amount specified by Section 20111 of the Public Contract Code. The rule shall prescribe the limits of the delegation as to time, money, and subject matter. All transactions entered into by the officer or employee shall be reviewed by the governing board every 60 days.

In the event of malfeasance in office, the school district officer or employee invested by the governing board with the power to contract shall be personally liable for any and all moneys of the district paid out as a result of the malfeasance.

1. Chart of Policy Revision Process

Step 1 - District Receives Policy Update Packet from CSBA

Step 2 - Superintendent or designee prints Policies for Superintendent Review and Comments

Step 3 - Superintendent Reviews Updated Recommended Policy Changes. Superintendent provides to the Board, at Board Meeting 1, appropriate comments and edits.

Step 4 – (Board Meeting 1) The Original Packet of Updated Policies, with comments from the Superintendent, is placed on the Board Agenda under Reports and Information, and is considered as **First Reading** by the Board

Step 5 – (Board Meeting 1) If a Board member or Community Member would like to discuss one or more of the policies provided, they will request specific said policies be pulled for discussion at the next Board Meeting (Board Meeting 2) and placed under the Action Section of the Agenda.

Step 6 – (Board Meeting 2) The policies presented to the Board, on which they have no concerns or questions, will be placed under the **Consent Agenda (Second Reading and for Approval)** at the next Board Meeting (Board Meeting 2) for action

The policies requested by individual Board members to be discussed shall be placed under the **Action Section** of the Board Agenda (**Second Reading and Approval**). Discussion will take place prior to a motion to approve said policies.

Step 6 – (Board Meeting 2) The policies requested by individual Board members to be discussed shall be placed under the **Action Section** of the Board Agenda (**Second Reading and Approval**) Discussion will take place prior to a motion to approve said policies.

3. The Board’s Role and Relationship with the Staff and Community

3.1. When interacting with the public and their constituents, Board members will hold to the highest level of professional and ethical conduct, including emphasizing the positive aspects of the District.

3.2. Visiting Schools

3.2.1. When individually visiting schools or departments in your capacity as a Board member, as a professional courtesy, Board members are encouraged to notify the Superintendent that they will be visiting a school or department, and may provide input to the Superintendent on issues or concerns that may arise from such a visit.

3.2.2. At no time, while visiting schools shall a member make promises, either overt or implied, interfere with administration, or involve him or herself in personnel issues, student records, or union activities.

3.2.3. To assist in this matter, the Superintendent will ensure that principals and teachers know that a teacher does not need to interrupt his/her lesson when a visitor is in his/her classroom.

3.3. Board members shall not request any information from staff beyond that which would be provided to any regular community member. Staff members are directed to relay requests from Board members to their supervisor to ensure that appropriate information is provided to all Board members.

3.3.1. Management staff are directed to relay requests from Board members to the Superintendent to ensure that appropriate information is provided to all Board members.

3.3.2. This protocol does not imply a censoring of any private and informal conversations.

4. The Board’s Role in Collective Bargaining

4.1. Board members will be actively involved in the collective bargaining process to ensure that the District is represented well by those selected to negotiate on behalf of the Board and the Community. The involvement of the Board will be to:

4.1.1. Ensure the ethical, fiscal and educational goals of the Community are represented in the actions taken throughout the collective bargaining process;

- 4.1.2. Participate by providing direction and guidance to those selected to represent the Board (District Negotiation Team). Board members do not attend at-the-table negotiations. AND The Board believes that the collective bargaining process shall be as transparent as possible. Accordingly, the Board recommends the district and the associations agree to broadcast negotiations, via virtual technology, for both the Board and the association members.
- 4.1.3. Establish the bargaining approach to be utilized by its negotiation team;
- 4.1.4. Set the District's collective bargaining parameters for its negotiation team;
- 4.1.5. Expect, as the representative of the Board, that the Superintendent will ensure that the Board, collectively and individually, is informed on the issues and strategies implemented within the collective bargaining process.
- 4.1.6. The Superintendent is the Collective Bargaining Spokesperson for the Board.

5. The Board's Relationship with the Superintendent

- 5.1. The Board will commit to work through and with the Superintendent on issues regarding the running of the District. The Superintendent will inform the Board as soon as possible of:
 - 5.1.1. Serious safety concerns
 - 5.1.2. Serious disciplinary action
 - 5.1.3. Serious / unexpected personnel changes or disciplinary issues
 - 5.1.4. Serious illness or death of a student, a staff member or members of the staff member's immediate family
 - 5.1.5. legal or liability concerns
 - 5.1.6. Notable achievements
- 5.2. In all matters, the Board and Superintendent are expected to protect confidential information.
- 5.3. It is the Superintendent's responsibility to organize the staff in the manner that best serves the needs of the District. As a professional courtesy, the Superintendent shall provide appropriate notice to the Board in advance of action being taken.
- 5.4. As the norm, the Superintendent speaks on behalf of the Board. The Board President is authorized to speak on behalf of the Board, when necessary.

- 5.5. The Superintendent will inform the Board when media contacts the Superintendent.
- 5.6. All conflicts between the Superintendent and the Board will be handled in Closed Session, with the Superintendent being in attendance, when appropriate and necessary.
- 5.7. Conflicts between individual Board members and/or the Superintendent will be addressed privately between those who hold the conflict and will not involve other members of the Board or the public (community, staff, media etc.).
- 5.8. The Board commits to complete an annual evaluation of the Superintendent. The Board will set aside at least one special meeting in ~~November~~ August for the purpose of completing the annual evaluation of the Superintendent. In consultation with the Superintendent, the evaluation process and associated documents will be developed and approved by the Board, not later than the first Board meeting in September. The evaluation process and instrument is designed to bring about the collective view of the Board. Thus, the evaluation will reflect the majority view of the Board, as a whole.

6. The Ongoing Implementation of Board Approved Protocols

6.1.1. Principles/Assumptions

- 6.1.1.1. We should expect that we will make mistakes.
- 6.1.1.2. Self-monitoring our own behavior can be very difficult.
- 6.1.1.3. Behavior in conflict with agreements erodes trust.
- 6.1.1.4. Behavior that is not challenged is condoned.
- 6.1.1.5. Confronting another team member can:
 - 6.1.1.5.1. Be difficult. If done poorly, it can be damaging.
 - 6.1.1.5.2. If done correctly, it demonstrates that the Board is a highly functional team!

6.1.2. Within 90 days of the election/appointment of a new Board member or appointment of a new superintendent, a Study Session of the whole Board will be held for the purpose of reviewing/updating the governance protocols of the Board.

6.1.3. Upon the request of two or more Board members, a special study session will be called for the purpose of reviewing/updating of the governance protocols of the Board.