



Pacific Grove Unified School District Governance Handbook 2018

Board of Trustees

John Paff, President

Brian Swanson, Clerk

Debbie Crandell, Member

Cristy Dawson, Member

Bill Phillips, Member

Superintendent

Dr. Ralph Gomez Porras

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PREAMBLE

Representative government requires that public officeholders be competent, independent, impartial, and accountable. Therefore, the Board of Trustees of the Pacific Grove Unified School District (PGUSD) adopts this Governance Handbook, which is a companion to its policy manual, to promote and maintain best practices and the highest standards of professional conduct. Its norms and protocols flow from board bylaws, embody the principles promulgated by the California School Boards Association (CSBA), and are based on the collective experiences of school boards across the state. This ready resource formalizes the conventions used by the governance team in the conduct of its day-to-day business.

For newly elected or appointed board members, especially those who have not yet completed CSBA's *Masters in Governance* program, this handbook is particularly valuable as it sets forth a series of do's and don'ts to ensure that all board members are ready to undertake confidently the work of the district.

This handbook is adapted in part from CSBA's guide and other training materials. It is the result of the collaborative effort of the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent.

OUR PUBLIC SERVICE

Responsible, Effective Governance

The Board of Trustees is a corporate body that implements state legislative policy concerning public schools in its geographical boundaries, administers California’s system of public education, and provides leadership and lay oversight of the district. The board, a legal agency of the state, derives its power from the state's constitution, laws, and judicial decisions.

The PGUSD school board is entrusted with a solemn duty to uphold the constitutions of California and the United States, protect the public interest in schools, and provide high quality education to all students. To fulfill this mandate, the board and superintendent join together to become the district’s governance team without forsaking their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities. The school board sets and monitors the direction of the school district. The superintendent plays a dual role—first, he is the chief executive officer, responsible for managing the district consistent with the board’s direction; second, he is the subject matter expert for the board which is comprised, typically, of lay people who may not have specialized knowledge of public education. For the district’s blueprint for educational excellence to succeed, members of the governance team must have a shared understanding of their purpose, be well-informed contributors to the team, and interact professionally.

OUR COMMITMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Unity of Purpose

Unity of purpose is a commitment to transcend individual differences to focus upon the greater good.

Our Governance Team’s Unity of Purpose

Our unity of purpose is to accomplish our mission, fulfill our goals, and realize our vision as we operate under best practices as set forth in policy and exemplified in the California School Boards Association’s *Masters in Governance* program.

Please see the appendix to review our mission, vision, goals, and professional governance standards.

Governance Role and Responsibilities

Pursuant to Board Bylaw 9000, the Board of Trustees is to ensure that the school district is responsive to the values, beliefs, and priorities of its communities by fulfilling five major responsibilities:

1. Setting the direction for the district through a process that involves the community, parents/guardians, students, and staff and is focused on student learning and achievement.
2. Establishing an effective and efficient organizational structure for the district.
3. Providing support to the superintendent and staff as they carry out the board's direction.
4. Ensuring accountability to the public for the performance of the district's schools.
5. Providing community leadership and advocacy on behalf of students, the district's educational program, and public education in order to build support within the local community and at the state and national levels.

The board carries out these responsibilities in each of the following domains:

- Student Learning and Achievement
- Finance
- Facilities
- Human Resources
- Policy
- Judicial Review
- Collective Bargaining
- Community Relations and Advocacy

Limits of Board Member Authority

Board members are state officers who act under the auspices of state law when conducting official business. The exercise of the board's authority is predicated upon the delegation of authority from the legislature and must be justified under standards of reasonableness to avoid a judicial presumption of arbitrary or capricious action.

According to Board Bylaw 9200, the Board of Trustees has broad but clearly limited powers with respect to its operations. Please see the appendix for the full text.

- The board is the unit of authority over the district.
- The exercise of the board's authority is restricted by law and may only take place in a legally constituted meeting.
- Board members have no individual authority.
- Individually, board members may not commit the district to any policy, act, or expenditure.
- Board members hold the education of students above any partisan principle, group interest, or personal interest.
- Board members who visit schools have no more authority than any other citizen.
- Unless agreed to by the board, individual members do not exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee.
- A board member whose child is attending a district school is aware of his/her role as a board member when interacting with district employees about his/her child. Because his/her position as a board member may inhibit the performance of school personnel, the board member informs the superintendent or designee before volunteering in his/her child's classroom.
- The superintendent or designee provides a copy of the state's open meeting laws (Ralph M. Brown Act) to each board member and to anyone who is elected or appointed to the board but has not yet assumed office.
- Board members and persons elected to the board who have not yet assumed office are responsible for complying with the requirements of the Brown Act.

Being a High-Caliber Governance Team

First-rate teamwork is essential to every quality organization, but it is not guaranteed. It is not enough to have good intentions; there must be a commitment to building and maintaining a dynamic partnership that produces positive results. This is why we are obligated to adamantly guard our esprit de corps and preserve our unity of purpose. Our success as a high-caliber team will be made evident by how well we attain our vision to be the Monterey County's premier learning establishment and by how well we work together.

To uphold our unity of purpose, to be well-informed contributors to our team, and to interact professionally, we hereby establish these norms and protocols.

OUR NORMS

In the Day-to-Day

1. Accountability

- a. We take collective responsibility for the success of our governance team.

2. Competence and Judiciousness

- a. We are honest stewards of students' education and focus on what is best for them.
- b. We set clear direction for the district.
- c. We recognize each member is integral to the governance team.
- d. We operate within our respective roles and responsibilities.
- e. We collaborate constructively for the success of the team.
- f. We do not micromanage the district.
- g. We demonstrate through our conduct the differences between good intentions and good government.
- h. We do not supervise individual board members; we are publicly elected or appointed officials, not employees.
- i. We participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be informed and effective leaders.
- j. We model dignified behavior for our students, staff, and community.
- k. We maintain poise and decorum in the face of controversy, difficulty, or complexity.
- l. We are conversant in district matters and with trends in education.
- m. We live out the principles of good boardsmanship as promulgated by the California School Boards Association in its *Masters in Governance* program.
- n. We are mindful that every word spoken and every action taken contribute to the district's reputation, either for good or for bad.
- o. We devote our time and energy to important business issues, not to politics, pettiness, or ungraciousness.
- p. Board members, either individually or corporately, never suggest or recommend any employee or member of the public for a position in the district.
- q. Absent board direction, we do not observe or participate in the interviews of prospective employees.

- r. We resolve not to let differences in personality, perspective, style, and background threaten our unity of purpose.
- s. We do not withhold or obstruct the flow of important information that belongs with the governance team.
- t. We wear official badges when at the district office, when visiting schools, and when attending school or district functions.

3. Ethics and Integrity

- a. We advance the effectiveness of our governance team through the individual and collective demonstration of integrity, consistency, responsibility, accountability, fairness, and transparency.
- b. Board members do not unilaterally assign work to employees except as provided for in the executive assistant to the superintendent's job description.
- c. We do not solicit or accept offers of help from district employees, except as allowed by law, for political campaigns, personal business interests, or other personal purposes.
- d. We do not use our position on the board to further our personal business ventures, nor do we publicize them at any district or school function or on any district properties. We do not distribute non-district business cards or other promotional materials to employees, nor do we exploit interactions with the public to promote personal business interests.
- e. We do not proffer or consider information from anonymous sources.
- f. We do nothing to blindside fellow governance team members.
- g. We do not disclose confidential information acquired during a closed session to a person not entitled to receive such information, unless a majority of the board has authorized its disclosure. Confidential information means a communication made in a closed session that is specifically related to the basis for the Board to meet lawfully in closed session (Government Code 54963).
- h. We are willing to admit mistakes readily and do not seek to evade responsibility.
- i. We reserve judgment on every matter until all known facts are communicated to the full board.
- j. We do not participate in gossip or rumor-mongering.
- k. We do not form alliances within the team to carry out divergent goals or secret agendas.
- l. We do not speak ill of current or former governance team members.
- m. The superintendent is required to report to the board president egregious violations by board members of board bylaws, policies, or the agreements made herein. If the board president is the offending party, the superintendent is required to make his report to the board clerk. The board president or clerk, as the case may be, then reviews with the offending party the established practices to be observed and offers guidance and support.
- n. We use our titles only when conducting official district business, for informational purposes, or as an indication of background and expertise. We are careful not to exceed or appear to exceed our authority or use our position to influence others unduly.

4. Solidarity

- a. When working together, we look beyond our own individual contributions to the governance team and appreciate our collective achievements.
- b. If necessary, we discuss with an individual team member, privately and respectfully, any personal concern or issue we have with him or her for the good of the team. We do not burden the team with such matters.
- c. We are neither arbitrary nor capricious in our conduct, decision-making, or deliberations.

- d. We do not engage in or permit any ad hominem attacks against fellow board members or the superintendent.

5. How the Board Communicates

- a. We develop and maintain open, honest communication with each other.
- b. We do not criticize the reasoning, motives, or philosophies of fellow team members, whether in public or private settings.
- c. When we disagree, we do so in a reasonable and respectful manner and do not take differences of opinion personally.
- d. We speak with one voice in order to maintain the trust of our community.
- e. We make no unilateral, extemporaneous remarks regarding the job performance of the superintendent or any other employee, recognizing that employee performance reviews are conducted solely in accordance with established policy.

6. Support, Respect, and Consideration

- a. We check our egos at the proverbial door and treat fellow board members as the co-equals they are.
- b. We support each other and operate from positions of goodwill, good faith, and good motivations.
- c. We consistently treat fellow team members with respect, courtesy, and consideration.
- d. We demonstrate sensitivity and caring for fellow team members.
- e. We shield the superintendency from the politicking that sometimes beleaguers public office.
- f. We give one another the benefit of the doubt and arrive at negative conclusions only when necessary and when incontrovertible evidence supports doing so.
- g. We look to the strengths of our colleagues and do not participate in frivolous fault-finding missions.
- h. We appreciate when the superintendent does his best to treat board members equally as is expected.
- i. We do not burden the superintendent with personal complaints or disparaging remarks about fellow team members or district employees.
- j. We are considerate of one another's schedules.

During Board Meetings

- a. Board meetings are held in public to conduct the business of the district in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act; they are not to be regarded as town hall meetings.
- b. Board meetings are for gathering information, making decisions, and taking action.
- c. We are on time and prepared for meetings.
- d. We behave and dress in a manner worthy of a professional business meeting.
- e. We endeavor to ensure that all members of the team have the same information.
- f. We do not bring hidden agendas to board meetings.
- g. We do not use the privacy afforded in closed-session meetings as a cloak for unprofessional conduct or wrongdoing.
- h. Board members remain behind the dais or the board table, except for personal or medical necessity, and are attentive throughout board meetings in order to govern effectively and participate fully.
- i. We work cooperatively with the board chair to promote common courtesy and decorum.

- j. We observe the philosophy in *Rosenberg's Rules of Order, Revised 2011*, "Debate on policy is healthy, debate on personalities is not" and uphold the practice, "The chair has the right to cut off discussion that is too personal, is too loud, or is too crude."¹
- k. We speak only after first having been recognized by the chair and do not interrupt others.
- l. Board discussion shall be addressed to fellow board members, the superintendent, members of the executive cabinet, or scheduled speakers, and not to the audience.
- m. Board members accept the contributions and full participation of fellow board members and do not monopolize discussions.
- n. We do not use coarse or profane language.
- o. We have no side conversations.
- p. Use of the Internet—except to view the Board of Trustees' online meeting agenda and agenda presentations—, e-mail, texting, and other electronic messaging on any device or computer is prohibited by board members during board meetings. This includes reading, sending, or receiving data and messages.
- q. We do not make or answer personal telephone calls. Personal cellular telephones are to be silenced before meetings are called to order.
- r. We use wisely the time set aside in board meetings for board members' reports and announcements. We do not grandstand, evaluate employees, advocate action be taken on behalf of employees, or reargue a failed motion or position.

OUR PROTOCOLS

Gatherings and Communications

- a. We comply with the Brown Act and do not form unlawful meetings, regardless of the circumstances.
- b. A board meeting exists whenever a majority of board members gather at the same time and place to hear, discuss, or deliberate upon any item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board or district (Government Code 54952.2).
- c. A majority of the board does not, outside of an authorized meeting, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board. However, an employee or district official may engage in separate conversations with board members in order to answer questions or provide information regarding an item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board, as long as that employee or district official does not communicate the comments or position of any board members to other board members (Government Code 54952.2).
- d. Attendance by a majority of board members at events delineated below is not subject to the Brown Act provided that a majority of the board members do not discuss specific district business among themselves other than as part of the scheduled program (Government Code 54952.2).
 - 1. A conference or similar public gathering open to the public that involves a discussion of issues of general interest to the public or to school board members

¹ Rosenberg's Rules of Order, Revised 2011, page 7, Courtesy and Decorum

2. An open, publicized meeting organized by a person or organization other than the district to address a topic of local community concern
3. An open and noticed meeting of another body of the district
4. An open and noticed meeting of a legislative body of another local agency
5. A purely social or ceremonial occasion
6. An open and noticed meeting of a standing committee of the board, provided that the board members who are not members of the standing committee attend only as observers

(cf. 9130 - Board Committees)

Agenda Preparation and Distribution

- a. Agendas are to be set only with the approval of the board president, or clerk in the president's absence, and the superintendent.
- b. Agendas and all supporting materials for regular board meetings are made available online to the board, and general public, at least five days prior to the board meeting. Board members may request hard copies of the online information.
- c. Time set aside for the board president and the superintendent to plan meeting agendas is restricted to relevant matters and is not used to circumvent the normal procedure for the board to give direction to the superintendent.

Board Meeting Preparation and Attendance

- a. Consistent, punctual attendance at board meetings is expected. If a board member is unable to attend or will be late, the board president is to be notified as soon as possible.
- b. Board members limit their studies to the content of the agenda packets and/or other materials provided by the superintendent. Should board members require additional information, a request may be submitted to the superintendent, who will endeavor to provide a timely response. As appropriate, the superintendent ensures all trustees are privy to the information requested and given. Should the superintendent determine that more than thirty minutes are required to research and prepare a response, he informs the trustee who made the request that he will confer with the board president to determine the next steps. It could be that the agenda item should be postponed to a future date in order to gather additional information for the full board.
- c. Board members direct all questions regarding agendized matters to the superintendent.
- d. Board members may improve through independent learning their knowledge about general matters related to public education.
- e. Board members do not undertake independent inquiries or investigations that could create conflicts of interest or compromise the integrity of the board or district.
- f. Staff members who receive inquiries from board members may only redirect them to the superintendent.

Planning Special Board Meetings

- a. Special meetings of the board may be called at any time by the presiding officer or by a majority of the board members. However, a special meeting shall not be called regarding the salary, salary schedule, or other compensation of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or other management employee as described in Government Code 3511.1.

- b. In the interest of full attendance at special board meetings, priority is given by the board president to the proposed date and time which accommodates attendance by all board members. If that is not possible within the required timeframe, then priority is given to the date and time which accommodates attendance by four board members. If only a quorum can attend in the required timeframe, then the meeting is set for the soonest date and time.

Voting and Board Actions

- a. Board members respect each other's right to vote "no" on an issue.
- b. Though not required, it is courteous for a board member to explain during deliberations the rationale for an intended "no" vote.
- c. Members of the governance team who vote in the minority on an issue do nothing to undermine the will of the board.
- d. Authority to give direction to the superintendent resides with the board in a legally constituted meeting. Direction may come from a vote on an agenda item or from a consensus of the full board in response to information presented during a board meeting.

The Role of the Board President

- a. The board president provides leadership on behalf of the Board of Trustees and the educational community it serves (Board Bylaw 9121).
- b. The board president leads the business of the board and carries out the duties prescribed in Board Bylaw 9121. Please see the appendix.
- c. The board president has added leadership and administrative responsibilities but does not have greater power than other board members.

Requests for Information

- a. Questions and requests by board members for information related to district matters or programs or to matters that may come before the board are directed to the superintendent only. Staff members who receive such inquiries from board members may only redirect them to the superintendent.
- b. Should the superintendent determine that more than thirty minutes are required to research and prepare a response, then he informs the trustee who made the request that he will confer with the board president to determine the next steps. It may be that the matter should be placed on a future board meeting agenda.
- c. Board members do not undertake independent inquiries or investigations that could create conflicts of interest or compromise the integrity of the board or district.

New Ideas

- a. Board members are free to bring up new ideas provided they fall within the purview of the Board of Trustees.
- b. It is recommended that a board member wishing to present a new idea to the Board of Trustees first consult with the superintendent, who is the subject matter expert.
- c. In accordance with Board Bylaw 9322, should the board member decide to pursue the idea, then he or she may prepare an agenda item or request that one be prepared for placement on a future agenda.

- d. A board member may bring up a new idea during the *Board Members' Reports and Announcements* section of a board meeting. The board member uses this brief opportunity to mention the idea and state a benefit or two about it. The board member may not argue at length the merits of the idea or grandstand. No action will be taken.

Visiting Schools

- a. As a professional courtesy, board members must notify the superintendent of scheduled school visits at least one full day prior.
- b. It is preferable for board members to visit schools with the superintendent, or in the company of a site administrator.
- c. Should board members wish to visit schools, and in the interest of avoiding an imposition on busy schedules, they should contact the school principal ahead of time to arrange a workable date and time for the visit.
- d. Board members are to be careful not to encroach on the learning environment. As such, the superintendent shall instruct principals and teachers not to interrupt lessons when a board member is visiting.
- e. Board members shall not make unannounced visits to schools because this may cause significant disruption to the principal's work schedule and the priorities of the day.
- f. Board members may attend celebratory events on campuses but do not sit in on staff meetings, IEP meetings, or parent-teacher conferences, except as related to their own children, even if invited.

Handling Concerns or Complaints from the Public and Staff

- a. We assess, based on board policy, whether it is appropriate to hear a concern or complaint in view of our role in judicial review.
- b. We assess, based on board policy, whether it is appropriate to hear a concern or complaint in view of our need to protect confidentiality and due process rights of students and staff members.
- c. We respond to concerns or complaints in accordance with uniform procedures and policy to ensure not only that matters are handled expeditiously but also that everyone is treated fairly and without bias.
- d. We protect the confidentiality and due process rights of students and staff members.
- e. When listening to a concern or complaint, we are neutral in our position and fully aware that we are hearing only one side of the story.
- f. We are consistent in our responses and function within our roles, conveying that individual board members have no authority to resolve matters.
- g. We use the California School Boards Association's 6 R's to ensure we listen actively to members of the public and staff and that we abide by uniform procedures.
 - 1. **Receive** - listen to what the person has to say without preparing a response.
 - 2. **Repeat** - paraphrase or ask a question to clarify for understanding. We ask the person to identify those to whom s/he has spoken about the matter prior to contacting a board member.
 - 3. **Request** - ask what the person would like the board member to do with the information and/or what is seen as a solution to the problem.
 - 4. **Review** - go over the real options available to the person to remedy the situation.
 - 5. **Redirect** - put the person back into the system at the appropriate place—respecting district lines of authority and chains of command.

6. **Report** - maintain open lines of communication between the board and superintendent and notify the superintendent of the conversation as soon as possible:
 - so the superintendent can verify or clarify the situation and follow-through as necessary and/or appropriate
 - so that the superintendent knows first-hand what the board member said to the community or staff member
- h. We invite the public or staff member to follow up with us about the issue.
- i. Board members exercise the same level of care when responding to emails from staff and members of the community as is described for personal interactions.

Media Relations

- a. To maintain message consistency and discipline, board members and the superintendent are obligated to speak with a common voice about district issues to the staff and community.
- b. Some situations have legal or other considerations that may place restrictions on what may be told to the media or public.
- c. The board president and the superintendent work together as spokespersons for the district (Board Bylaw 9121).
- d. The superintendent or his designee prepares and distributes press releases.
- e. The superintendent or his designee, in collaboration with the board president, is responsible for contacting the media on behalf of the district.
- f. Media inquiries are directed to the superintendent or designee.
- g. With prior board approval, any board member may speak on behalf of the district or Board of Trustees.

Official Board Correspondence

- a. The superintendent conducts official correspondence for the board (Board Bylaw 9122).
- b. Official correspondence from the board is signed by the board president.

Vacancies on the Board of Trustees

- a. Vacancies on the Board of Trustees must be filled in accordance with state law.
- b. If a vacancy is to be filled by appointment, then barring official correspondence from the board president, all contact with prospective board members is restricted to the formal interview process in a public meeting.

Orientation for School Board Candidates

- a. The Board of Trustees desires to provide board candidates with information that will enable them to understand the responsibilities and expectations of board membership.
- b. Anyone whose name has been published on the Monterey County Registrar of Voters' official website as a qualified candidate may request to attend the candidate orientation meeting with the superintendent to receive general information about school programs, district operations, and board responsibilities. The superintendent or designee must provide the same information to all candidates who make the request (Board Bylaw 9230).
- c. Before Election Day, the superintendent is to advertise the date and time of the candidate orientation meeting on the PGUSD website with at least two weeks advance notice.

Welcoming New Members to the Board

- a. The board convenes an orientation meeting to provide information to incoming board members to assist them in understanding the board's functions, policies, procedures, protocols, and agreed-upon standards of conduct.
- b. Incoming board members receive the district's policy manual, governance handbook, and other materials related to the district and board member responsibilities.
- c. Upon their election, incoming board members are provided with a copy of the Brown Act and are informed that, pursuant to Government Code 54952.1, they must conform to the Act's requirements as if they had already assumed office.
- d. The superintendent provides incoming board members with additional background and information regarding the district's vision and goals, operations, and current challenges in areas that include, but are not limited to, student achievement, curriculum, finance, facilities, policy, human resources, and collective bargaining.
- e. Incoming members are encouraged to attend board meetings and review agenda materials available to the public in order to become familiar with current issues facing the district. Incoming members also may, at district expense and with approval of the board, attend workshops and conferences relevant to their individual needs or to the needs of the board as a whole or the district.
- f. Each new board member receives a new board member orientation packet that includes informational handouts about the district and governance team operations. Please see the appendix.

Avoiding Improprieties and Appearances Thereof

- a. Board members do not accept invitations from the superintendent, attorneys, or staff members to any non-district event unless all other members of the governance team are invited.
- b. Board members do not invite the superintendent, attorneys, or administrative staff members to any non-district event unless all other members of the governance team are invited.
- c. Board members do not sit in on collective bargaining meetings, even if invited.

OUR COMPACT

We have perused this Governance Handbook and approve it as an equally binding companion to the Pacific Grove Unified School District's Policy Manual. We agree to abide by the principles, norms, and protocols described herein to further responsible, effective governance and to promote a positive working relationship with staff, students, and the community. We shall review the Governance Handbook, revise it as necessary, and renew this agreement during the 2018 annual organizational meeting of the Board of Trustees and thereafter every two years at the annual organizational meeting. If needed, the title and signature pages shall be updated annually to reflect changes to the makeup of the Board of Trustees.

Affirmed on this _____ day of _____, 2018

John Paff, Board President

Brian Swanson, Board Clerk

Debbie Crandell, Board Member

Cristy Dawson, Board Member

Bill Phillips, Board Member

Dr. Ralph Porras, Superintendent

APPENDIX

I. Mission

Our mission is to prepare every student to be successful in high school, in college, in career, and in the 21st century global community.

II. Vision

Our vision is to be the Monterey County's premier learning establishment where dreams are awakened, academic achievement soars, and integrity leads the way to future success.

III. Goals

1. Faithfully implement the PGUSD's 2014-2017 Strategic Action Plan in order to accelerate learning for all students. Focus chiefly on the four foundational pillars of the District's "educational house."

Pillar 1: Equitable access to rigorous, effective instruction

Pillar 2: Effective teachers, leaders, and staff

Pillar 3: Safe climate and strong relationships with families and community

Pillar 4: Data-driven continuous improvement

2. Execute with fidelity the PGUSD's annual Local Control Accountability Plan.
3. Increase students' use of technology in the classroom in order to enrich their learning and better prepare them for 21st century demands.
4. Continue to develop administrative controls and written departmental procedures so that the work of the District may be accomplished more effectively and efficiently.
5. Exercise fiscal responsibility by aligning financial decisions with District priorities and by maintaining legally required reserves.

IV. Professional Governance Standards for the Board and Superintendent

A. Board Bylaw 9005 Governance Standards [for the Board of Trustees]

The Governing Board believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the District. The Board also has major commitments to parents/ guardians, all members of the community, employees, the state of California, laws pertaining to public education, and established policies of the District. To maximize Board effectiveness and public confidence in District governance, Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

The Board expects its members to work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. Each individual Board member shall:

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus
2. Value, support and advocate for public education
3. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community

4. Act with dignity, and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior
5. Keep confidential matters confidential
6. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader
7. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff
8. Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals

Board members also shall assume collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture. To operate effectively, the Board shall have a unity of purpose and:

1. Keep the District focused on learning and achievement for all students
2. Communicate a common vision
3. Operate openly, with trust and integrity
4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures
6. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance
7. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness
8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35010 Power of governing board to adopt rules for its own governance

35160 Board authority to act in any manner not conflicting with law

35164 Actions by majority vote

GOVERNMENT CODE:

1090 Financial interest in contract

1098 Disclosure of confidential information

1125-1129 Incompatible activities

54950-54962 The Ralph M. Brown Act

87300-87313 Conflict of interest code

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

CSBA Professional Governance Standards .2000

Maximizing School Board Leadership: Boardmanship, 1996

B. Superintendent Goals and Standards

The Board of Trustees recognizes that effective district governance requires strong collaboration and teamwork with the Superintendent. Because the Board and Superintendent each have their unique roles and responsibilities, both contribute to the responsible governance of the district and the quality of education provided to the community's students.

The Superintendent is expected to hold himself/herself to the highest standards of ethical conduct and professionalism.

To support the Board in the governance of the district, the Superintendent:

1. Promotes the success of all students and supports the efforts of the Board to keep the district focused on learning and achievement
2. Values, advocates and supports public education and all stakeholders
3. Recognizes and respects the differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents/guardians and the community and ensures that the diverse range of views inform Board decisions
4. Acts with dignity, treats everyone with civility and respect, and understands the implications of demeanor and behavior
5. Serves as a model for the value of lifelong learning and supports the Board's continuous professional development
6. Works with the Board as a "governance team" and assures collective responsibility for building a unity of purpose, communicating a common vision and creating a positive organizational culture
7. Recognizes that the Board/Superintendent governance relationship is supported by the management team in the district
8. Understands the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and respects the role of the Board as the representative of the community
9. Understands that authority rests with the Board as a whole; provides guidance to the Board to assist in decision-making; and provides leadership based on the direction of the Board as a whole
10. Communicates openly with trust and integrity, including providing all members of the Board with equal access to information and recognizing the importance of both responsive and anticipatory communications
11. Accepts leadership responsibility and accountability for implementing the vision, goals and policies of the district

V. The Role of the Board and Limits of Board Member Authority

A. Board Bylaw 9000 Role of the Board

The Governing Board has been elected by the community to provide leadership and citizen oversight of the district. The Board shall ensure that the district is responsive to the values, beliefs, and priorities of the community.

The Board shall work with the Superintendent to fulfill its major responsibilities, which include:

1. Setting the direction for the district through a process that involves the community, parents/guardians, students, and staff and is focused on student learning and achievement
2. Establishing an effective and efficient organizational structure for the district by:

- a. Employing the Superintendent and setting policy for hiring of other personnel
 - b. Overseeing the development and adoption of policies
 - c. Establishing academic expectations and adopting the curriculum and instructional materials
 - d. Establishing budget priorities and adopting the budget
 - e. Providing safe, adequate facilities that support the district's instructional program
 - f. Setting parameters for negotiations with employee organizations and ratifying collective bargaining agreements
3. Providing support to the Superintendent and staff as they carry out the Board's direction by:
- a. Establishing and adhering to standards of responsible governance
 - b. Making decisions and providing resources that support district priorities and goals
 - c. Upholding Board policies
 - d. Being knowledgeable about district programs and efforts in order to serve as effective spokespersons
4. Ensuring accountability to the public for the performance of the district's schools by:
- a. Evaluating the Superintendent and setting policy for the evaluation of other personnel
 - b. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies
 - c. Serving as a judicial (hearing) and appeals body in accordance with law, Board policies, and negotiated agreements
 - d. Monitoring student achievement and program effectiveness and requiring program changes as necessary
 - e. Monitoring and adjusting district finances
 - f. Monitoring the collective bargaining process
5. Providing community leadership and advocacy on behalf of students, the district's educational program, and public education in order to build support within the local community and at the state and national levels

The Board is authorized to establish and finance any program or activity that is not in conflict with, inconsistent with, or preempted by law. (Education Code 35160)

Vision

The Board shall set the direction for the district by adopting a vision statement which defines the district's goals and priorities. The Board shall carry out its vision setting role by identifying the strengths and needs of the district, developing and adopting a process for framing the vision, soliciting staff and community input as appropriate, ensuring that the adopted vision statement is implemented, and conducting a periodic review of the vision.

Superintendent Employment and Evaluation

The Board shall be solely responsible for employing the Superintendent and ensuring that he/she is the best match for the district based on needed abilities, traits and level of knowledge. When

selecting a new superintendent, the Board shall ensure a smooth transition period; evaluate the district's current and long-term needs; plan and conduct a process for recruitment, screening and selection; and approve the Superintendent's employment contract. The Board shall regularly evaluate the Superintendent based on an evaluation system and performance objectives established by the Board and Superintendent.

General Hiring and Personnel Accountability

The Board shall adopt wage and salary schedules, and elect or reject employees at the recommendation of the Superintendent or designee. In order to have the best qualified people working at their maximum effectiveness, the Board shall hold the Superintendent responsible for overseeing the district's personnel system, developing effective hiring practices, creating a climate supportive of personnel and providing an effective framework for staff accountability.

Policy Adoption and Monitoring

The Board shall govern the schools by adopting policies that reflect the district's vision and the mandates of law. The Board shall establish a clear policy development process through which it may deliberate on issues, identify priorities, assign responsibilities, identify goals and courses of action, and review policy decisions.

The Board shall also adopt bylaws that promote cooperation, trust and teamwork among its members, give parameters to the Board's operation as a governing body, and ensure that its meetings proceed efficiently and in compliance with law.

Curriculum Adoption and Program Accountability

While the design and implementation of curriculum is primarily a staff responsibility, the Board's role is to adopt overall educational goals and standards, define the curriculum development process, specify graduation requirements, adopt the developed curriculum and ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

To ensure accountability to the community, the Board shall establish measurable benchmarks to assess the effectiveness of the district's educational programs in producing desired student achievement results. Based on these assessments, the Board shall direct the Superintendent or designee to take corrective actions as needed.

Budget, Facilities and Fiscal Accountability

The Board shall adopt a sound, responsible budget that supports district goals and priorities. To guide the Superintendent or designee in development of the budget, the Board shall establish a budget calendar, budget process and spending priorities.

Recognizing that school facilities are a long-term obligation that impacts district budgets, the Board shall also ensure that a plan is in place to address the district's facility needs, including the funding, construction and maintenance of school facilities. The Board shall approve facility sites, funding sources and architectural and construction contracts.

The Board recognizes that it is accountable to the community for its budget and facilities decisions and for the district's fiscal integrity. The Board shall use accountability systems and processes in order to monitor the district's fiscal health.

Collective Bargaining

The Board is the legal representative of the district in negotiations with employee representatives. In carrying out the collective bargaining process, the Board shall set goals and guidelines for collective bargaining, select the bargaining team, maintain communications throughout the process and approve the negotiated contract.

Judicial and Appeals Body

In addition to establishing complaint procedures that ensure due process and facilitate the satisfactory resolution of issues, the Board may convene to serve as a judicial and appeals body in accordance with law, Board policies and negotiated agreements. The Board may delegate fact-finding or hearing responsibilities in appropriate cases but remains the final decision-maker in these proceedings.

Community Leadership

The Board shall build and maintain community awareness and support by actively involving parents/guardians, business and other community members in the schools and informing them about district programs, policies and issues.

Recognizing that the level of local, state and national support for education impacts the Board's ability to fulfill its responsibilities, the Board shall engage in advocacy on behalf of district schools. The Board shall ensure that the district has the capability to respond to emerging issues and a proactive communications plan for issues that are district priorities.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

5304 Duties of governing board (re school district elections)

12400-12405 Authority to participate in federal programs

17565-17592 Board duties re property maintenance and control

33319.5 Implementation of authority of local agencies

35000 District name

35010 Control of district; prescription and enforcement of rules

35020-35046 Officers and agents

35100-35351 Governing boards, especially:

35160-35185 Powers and duties

35291 Rules

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

Maximizing School Board Governance

Professional Governance Standards, November 2000

School Board Leadership: The Role and Function of California's School Boards, 1996

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS

The Key Work of School Boards, 2000

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

CSBA Governance Institute: <http://www.csba.org/gi>

National School Boards Association: <http://www.nsba.org>

**B. Board Bylaw 9200 Limits of Board Member Authority
Limits of Board Members Authority**

The Governing Board recognizes that the Board is the unit of authority over the district and that a Board member has no individual authority. Board members shall hold the education of students above any partisan principle, group interest, or personal interest. The Board member cannot do business with the District served, nor should the Board member have an interest in any contract with the school District.

Individual Board members do not have the authority to resolve complaints. Any Board member approached directly by a person with a complaint should refer the complainant to the Superintendent or designee so that the problem may receive proper consideration and be handled through the appropriate district process.

Unless agreed to by the Board as a whole, individual members of the Board shall not exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee. Individual Board members shall submit requests for information to the Superintendent. Board members shall refer Board-related correspondence to the Superintendent for forwarding to the Board or for placement on the Board's agenda, as appropriate.

Obligations of Board Members

Board members shall hold the education of all children and youth above any partisan principle, group interest, or personal interest.

Board members shall understand their role and the programs offered by the District. They shall study all agenda materials before the meeting, participate in the discussion of items that come before the Board, vote on motions and resolutions, and abstain only for compelling reasons.

Board members shall refer Board-related correspondence to the Superintendent or designee for forwarding to the Board or for placement on the Board's agenda.

Board members and persons elected to the Board are responsible for complying with the requirements of the state's open meeting laws. (GC 54952.1)

A Board member shall not use his/her position on the Board to influence school district personnel in matters concerning their child/ren.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide a copy of the state's open meeting laws (Brown Act) to each Board member and to anyone who is elected to the Board but has not yet assumed office.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

200-262.4 Prohibition of discrimination

7054 Use of district property

35010 Control of district; prescription and enforcement of rules

35100-35351 Governing boards, especially:

35160-35184 Powers and duties

35291 Rules

35292 Visits to schools (Board members)

51101 Rights of parents/guardians

GOVERNMENT CODE

54950-54962 The Ralph M. Brown Act, especially:

54952.1 Member of a legislative body of a local agency

54952.7 Copies of chapter to members of legislative body

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

CSBA Professional Governance Standards, 2000

Maximizing School Board Leadership: Boardsmanship, 1996

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

VI. The Role of the Board President

A. Board Bylaw 9121 President

The Governing Board shall elect a president from among its members to provide leadership on behalf of the Board and the educational community it serves.

The Board President shall preside at all Governing Board meetings. He/she shall:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time
2. Announce the business to come before the Board in its proper order
3. Enforce the Board's policies relating to the conduct of meetings and help ensure compliance with applicable requirements of the Brown Act
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if it is not clear to every member
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Board
7. Rule on parliamentary procedure, referring questions of procedure to the designated parliamentarian

8. Put motions to a vote, and state clearly the results of the vote
9. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Board meetings

The Board President shall have all the rights of any member of the Board, including the right to move, second, discuss, and vote on all questions before the Board.

The President shall perform other duties in accordance with law and Board policy including, but not limited to:

1. Sign all instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Board
2. Consult with the Superintendent (or designee) and the Vice-President/Clerk on the preparation of the Board's agendas
3. Work with the Superintendent to ensure that Board members have necessary materials and information
4. Appoint and disband all Board committees, subject to Board approval
5. Call such meetings of the Board as he/she may deem necessary, giving notice as prescribed by law
6. Confer with the Superintendent or designee on crucial matters which may occur between Board meetings
7. Share informational mail with other Board members
8. Establish a seating assignment of trustees and staff for regular trustee meetings
9. Assign trustees to graduation ceremonies with consideration given to individual trustee requests, and when relatives or close family friends are graduating
10. Act as a spokesperson for trustees at special ceremonies (such as students, employee resolutions, school dedications, etc.) and clarification of trustee direction
11. Represent the district as governance spokesperson, in conjunction with the Superintendent
12. Assign trustees to special visitations to other Districts as deemed appropriate by the trustees
13. Be an ex-officio member of all committees
14. Appoint Parliamentarian

If the Board President resigns, the Vice-President/Clerk shall perform the President's duties until a new president is elected at the first regular or special meeting following the vacancy. If the Board

President is absent or disabled, the Vice-President/Clerk shall perform the President's duties. When both the President and Vice-President/Clerk are absent or disabled, the Secretary shall convene the meeting and ask the Board to select a President-Pro Tem to perform the President's duties.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35022 President of the board

35143 Annual organizational meetings; dates and notice

GOVERNMENT CODE

54950-54963 Ralph M. Brown Act

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

Board Presidents' Handbook, revised 2002

CSBA Professional Governance Standards, 2000

Maximizing School Board Leadership: Boardsmanship, 1996

VII. New Board Member Orientation Packet

A. About the District²

1. District office address and phone number
2. Names and contact information for the superintendent, his assistant, and district office departments
3. Names and contact information for board members
4. The communities the district serves
5. School site names, addresses, contact information and other general information that includes grade levels and student enrollment figures
6. Student demographics, e.g., ethnic groups by percentages, English Language Learners, percentage of special education students, primary languages spoken other than English, percentage of students on free and reduced lunch
7. Number of square miles the district covers
8. Information about school transportation
9. District documents: Current budget, collective bargaining agreements, facilities plan, organizational chart, superintendent's contract, superintendent's most recent evaluation (marked as confidential)
10. Status of current district issues
11. A list of the commonly used acronyms and abbreviations used in education with their meaning

B. About Governance Team Operations³

1. Board meeting dates and times
2. Board officers' names and roles
3. A sample of a board meeting agenda
4. Purpose of the Public Comment Period

² Adapted from California School Boards Association's Board Presidents Workshop training manual, page 19, What Every New Board Member Needs to Know

³ Adapted from California School Boards Association's Board Presidents Workshop training manual, page 19, What Every New Board Member Needs to Know

5. Purpose of the Governing Board Members' Reports and Announcements section of the agenda
6. When and how the superintendent is evaluated
7. When and how the board conducts a self-evaluation
8. Governance documents: board bylaws, the Brown Act, governance handbook, *Rosenberg's Rules of Order, Revised 2011*, annual governance calendar
9. Information about board member budgets, stipends, and health benefits
10. Process for attending conferences and workshops
11. Policy on travel expenses and other reimbursements