



**SAN DIEGUITO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK**

Board of Trustees

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EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Unity of Purpose, Roles, Responsibilities, Norms and Protocols

This document reflects the governance team's commitment to the creation of a framework for effective governance. This process involves *ongoing* discussions and agreements about unity of purpose, roles, norms and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all students.

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INTRODUCTION

The members of the Board of Education and the superintendent are committed to working as an effective governance team. This handbook represents the beginning of a framework for effective governance and includes unity of purpose, roles, norms, and protocols that enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities in a way that best serves students. Contents of this handbook are based on a Governance Team model and establish agreed-upon and clearly understood operational and procedural practices for both the current and future Governance Teams, in order to support and maintain high functioning, effective and efficient teams that benefit the students, their families, the staff, and the community of the San Dieguito Union High School District. This Handbook supports and reinforces the practices of the Governance Team and is aligned with Board Bylaws, Board Policies, Administrative Regulations, CA Education Code, and Government Code.

This Handbook will assist and support the smooth transition of new board members and superintendents as effective members of the Governance Team as well as serve as a resource for reviewing protocols, policies, and Bylaws for the current Governance team.

An annual review of this handbook by the Governance Team is recommended to ensure that it remains a viable and useful document to the operation of the Governance Team (BB 9400).

UNITY OF PURPOSE

To provide a high quality education for each and every student to demonstrate academic growth and optimize individual potential.

Governance Standards

Governance team members are representatives of the entire community. We are committed to providing a superior public education and value the role that education plays in our society. We have a responsibility to act in the best interests of the District.

Each member of the Governance team will model the type of behavior we expect to see throughout the District.

The Governance Team also supports and operates under the CSBA Effective Governance System model.

When governing effectively, school boards work to ensure success for all students by making decisions that fulfill legal mandates and align district systems and resources to ensure the long-term fiscal stability of the district. Boards must act collectively and openly, be guided by community interests, and be informed by recommendations of the superintendent and professional staff.

Effective Governance

Whether in the boardroom, out in the community, or at home, board members are always trustees for the district. The integrity of the school district's educational program is dependent upon the responsible and professional manner in which each board member, and the board collectively, fulfills governance roles and responsibilities with the superintendent. The demeanor of governance team members sends an important message to the public.

Utilizing effective governance techniques, private citizens, once elected to school boards, work with the superintendent to keep all district efforts focused on students' learning. Effective governance tenets encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors that enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in a school district.

The role of the school board is to see that the schools are well run. The community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district. The district superintendent

will translate all efforts into action. It is therefore vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communication. Direction is given to the superintendent by the vote of a majority of the board, which can only take place at a properly noticed and properly agendaed meeting of the Board. Individual Board members do not have the authority to direct the superintendent.

Working as a group, board members and the superintendent leverage the efforts of the professional staff by setting a direction for the district, by creating a supportive framework for action in the district, by holding the system accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms, and by providing support to students and staff through behaviors and actions, thereby creating a climate for excellence in which all students can thrive.

Board Bylaws

The Board of Education adopts all board Policies (BP) and Administrative Regulations (AR). Adopted BPS along with ARs are maintained on the district website

[SDUHSD Policies](#). The BPs and ARs are divided into the following series:

- 0000 – Philosophy, Goals, Objectives, and Comprehensive Plans
- 1000 – Community Relations
- 2000 – Administration
- 3000 – Business and Non Instructional Operations
- 4000 – Personnel
- 5000 – Students
- 6000 – Instruction
- 7000 – Facilities
- 9000 – Board Bylaws

The policies that specify how the Board operates and conducts its business are outlined in the 9000 series and are referred to as Board Bylaws.

An Effective Team

The Board of Trustees is the policy-making body for the District. To meet the District's challenges effectively, the Board and Superintendent must function together as a leadership team. Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the Board and Superintendent, and are committed to operate within them. To ensure effective collaboration among team members, operating procedures or protocols must be in place. There are general protocols and those that are specific for the Board and for the Superintendent.

1. Effective Governance Teams:
 - a. Have a common purpose and demonstrate leadership

- b. Are loyal to the team and trust one another
 - c. Are honest, caring, and supportive
 - d. Create a safe environment for each other and never intentionally hurt one another
 - e. Self-correct when there is a problem; talk to one another when there are interpersonal issues or problems
 - f. Respectfully receive ideas from one another; learn to compromise; agree to disagree and move forward
 - g. Work well when there is adequate information to make wise decisions
 - h. Are present and attentive; are tenacious; put in the time needed to reach decisions
 - i. Support each other; care about each other; energize each other
 - j. Lead, inspire, risk, and strive to be effective.
2. The Board and Superintendent will: (*CSBA Governance Standards)
- a. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.
 - b. Value, support, and advocate for public education*
 - c. Operate openly with trust and integrity.*
 - d. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility, dignity, and respect, while honoring the right to disagree with each other.*
 - e. Define and respect the difference between administration and policy-making and respect the roles of each.
 - f. Keep confidential matters confidential.* Uphold the legal requirement for confidentiality on all matters arising from Board Meeting Executive Sessions; will keep all conversations taking place in Closed Session absolutely confidential.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Education play four major roles:

- Establishing a vision;
- Maintaining an effective and efficient structure;
- Ensuring accountability; and
- Providing community leadership as advocates for students, the school district and public schools.

These four roles represent the core functions that are fundamental to the district's accountability to the public that, in a democratic society, can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority for these roles is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a Governance Team with the Superintendent to make decisions that will best serve students.

The Role of the Superintendent

The superintendent is hired by the school board to provide professional expertise in the day-to-day operations of the district. The Superintendent:

- Works with the school board to develop an effective governance leadership team

- Serves as the chief administrative officer for the school district

What the Board Needs from the Superintendent

- Provide clear, timely, accurate information
- Maintain professional credibility
- Keep the board informed- no surprises
- Implement the district policies and goals
- Demonstrate good judgment, leadership, and creativity
- Demonstrate effective listening
- Demonstrate effective crisis management skills
- Interact effectively with the community, staff, students, and parents/families
- Be fiscally prudent with district funds
- Be updated on state and federal policies
- Continue to promote professional development for all staff and board members

The Superintendent will:

1. Work toward creating a team with the Board dedicated to students.
2. Respect and acknowledge the Board's role in setting policy and overseeing the performance of the Superintendent.
3. Work with the Board to establish a clear vision for the school District.
4. Communicate the common vision.
5. Understand the distinction between Board and staff roles, and respect the role of the Board as the representatives of the community and the governing body of the district.
6. Accept leadership responsibility and be accountable for implementing the vision, goals, and policies of the District.
7. Prepare preliminary goals annually for the Board's consideration.
8. Provide data to the Board members so data-driven decisions can be made.
9. Communicate with Board members promptly and effectively.
10. Inform the Board prior to critical information becoming public; apprise all Board members in a timely manner of any major incident or when they may be called on to answer or explain.
11. Distribute information fully and equally to all Board members.
12. Provide information requested by one Board member to every Board member.
13. Distribute the Board agenda in a timely fashion and with enough time for Board study and clarify information prior to scheduled meetings.
14. Never bring a matter to a public meeting that is a surprise to a Board member or cabinet member.
15. Provide requests for additional information through a Board up-date, special report, Board agenda items, or as a Board workshop.
16. Treat all Board members professionally.
17. Keep the Board informed regarding issues and/or situations that could possibly concern parents, students, staff or community.

18. Bring to the attention of the Board matters that affect relationships.
19. Visit school campuses regularly.
20. Represent the school District by being visible in the community.
21. Model the value of lifelong learning.

What the Superintendent Needs From the Board

- Be prepared for meetings and workshops
- Trust the superintendent to effectively address issues that have been shared
- Maintain confidentiality
- Provide clear direction
- Conduct annual evaluations in a timely manner
- Understand the role of the board versus the role of the superintendent and support adherence to these roles
- Provide questions/ concerns to the superintendent prior to discussing in public -no surprises
- Be representative of the community, not personal interests
- Be supportive of staff and understand staff roles and responsibilities
- Be able to agree to disagree and maintain civility in order to move forward

Board members will:

1. Work with all members of the Board and the Superintendent to become a team devoted to students; be dedicated to making all members of the team successful.
2. Act with dignity and understand the implication of demeanor and behavior.
3. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.*
4. Focus on student success.
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.
6. Communicate a common vision.*
7. Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals.
8. Recognize decisions are made only at properly scheduled meetings.*
9. As an individual Board member, not make a decision that appropriately should be made by the entire Board.
10. Abide by district Superintendent/Board protocols and agree to hold one another accountable when protocols are not followed.
11. Attend regularly scheduled Board meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible; cooperate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.*
12. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.

13. Acknowledge individual requests for additional information will be directed only to the superintendent.*
14. Understand that the Superintendent's role includes making personnel recommendations and changes in consultation with the board.
15. Understand the Board as a collective body must give clear signals to its professional staff through its Superintendent.
16. Participate in establishing annual expectations and goals for the Superintendent.
17. Objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance and provide appropriate feedback.
18. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness* by reviewing its protocols at least every two years.
19. Communicate directly with the Superintendent whenever a question or concern is raised by a staff member, student, parent, or community member.*
20. Contact the Superintendent whenever contacted by the media regarding an incident, event, or agenda item.
21. Communicate directly with the Superintendent prior to Board meetings to address questions and/or concerns about agenda items; honor the "no surprises" rule with the Superintendent.
22. Communicate one-on-one with the Superintendent when an individual concern arises; will not allow a matter to fester.
23. Recognize the individual role of constituents and special interest groups, while understanding the importance of using one's best judgment to represent all members of the community.
24. Represent the district, when possible, by attending community functions.
25. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.

Governance Team Norms

Board members agree to come together as individuals to form a Governance Team with the superintendent and pledge to adhere to these norms:

- Focus on the best interests of students
- Maintain confidentiality
- Listen openly, show respect and civility, and be open to ideas
- Respect the time of staff
- Work together for successful meetings
- Provide opportunities for all members to be heard
- Participate in continued professional development
- Use data whenever possible to drive decision-making

Governance Team Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that all members of the board are equal in governance and do not have individual authority.

We acknowledge that all members of the board play important roles in district governance as members of the school board, but that no individual board trustee has the authority to make any binding school-related decisions or require any action of staff (unless given that authority by the board) except through the proper collective action of the board majority, as evidenced by a valid vote taken during a proper and legal board meeting.

Protocols of the Governance Team

Members of the Board of Education need not be educational experts, but need to understand and be committed to effective governance. Establishing well-defined protocols that are agreed to and understood by all members of the Governance Team is critical to maintaining effectiveness and efficiency. In addition to the Board Bylaws, (BB), Board Policies (BP), Administrative Regulations (AR), Educations Code and Government Code, these protocols include the formal, agreed upon and understood operational procedures that will create an effective and efficient Governance Team. Establishing, reviewing, revising, and institutionalizing these protocols assures that each board member has a clear understanding of how the Governance Team conducts business and has an equal opportunity to affect the governing process.

Board Protocols

Boards operate in meetings. The only authority to direct action rests with the Board as a whole, and it takes a vote of the majority of Board Members to set direction.

Board Members acknowledge their duty to operate in the best interest of the district and its students.

The following protocols outline how individual Members of this Board agree to conduct both the public's business and themselves.

We have read and agreed to these norms and protocols.

We agree to:

- Review and renew these protocols and norms at least annually.
- Create and support effective and efficient governance leadership,
- Advocate, address and respond in a transparent, informed and truthful manner.

Goals and Expectations

Goal: To recognize that the integrity of the district's educational program is dependent upon the professional and responsible manner in which members of the Governance Team and the Governance team as a whole collectively fulfill the governance roles and responsibilities.

Expectations:

- Each member of the Governance Team accepts the responsibility to dedicate the necessary time and effort to be effective board members and fully participate in governance activities.
- Each member of the Governance Team commits to professional expectations including adherence to protocols and procedures and advanced preparation for meetings, including appropriate contact with staff for clarification prior to any meeting.

Board Meeting Preparation

Board members accept the responsibility to come to each board meeting or workshop prepared to discuss and vote on each agenda item.

I. Agenda Questions Asked Before a Meeting

- a. Board Members have an opportunity to meet with the Superintendent individually or in groups of two before each Board meeting to review the agenda. Within Brown Act guidelines and to the extent possible, Board Members should attempt to have the Superintendent answer questions and resolve concerns with items in the proposed agenda at this meeting for efficiency at a subsequent public meeting.
- b. Board Members will, insofar as possible, let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made public so that staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer.

II. Bringing New Agenda Items

- a. A Board Member or member of the public may request that a matter within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board be added to an upcoming regular meeting agenda by emailing the Board President and Superintendent their request. A Board Member may also request a matter be added during a Board meeting. Whenever feasible, Board Members should discuss proposed agenda items with the Superintendent prior to requesting that they be added during a Board meeting.
- b. If a proposed agenda item is requested by a Board Member by emailing the Superintendent and the Board President, the Superintendent will, within the guidelines of the Brown Act, determine if there is support from two or more Board Members to add the item to the agenda of an upcoming Board meeting. Any proposed item that is supported by two or more Board Members will be added to an upcoming Board agenda.

- c. If a proposed agenda item is requested by a Board Member during a Board meeting, the Board President will determine at that time if there is support from two or more Board Members to add the item to a future agenda. Any proposed item that is supported by two or more Board Members will be added to an upcoming Board agenda.
- d. Any proposed agenda item that is requested by a Board member and properly submitted according to this section that gains the support of at least two Board Members will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda, respecting that staff may need time to prepare necessary information for the Board's consideration.
- e. Any proposed agenda item that is properly submitted by a member of the public according to this section will be placed on an upcoming board meeting agenda, respecting that staff may need time to prepare necessary information for the Board's consideration. However, in accordance with Board Bylaw 9322 the Board President and the Superintendent will decide whether an agenda item is appropriate for discussion in open or closed session, and whether the item should be an action item subject to board vote or an information item that does not require immediate action.

III. Setting the Board Agenda

- a. Board meeting agendas will be developed by the Superintendent and Board President consistent with this section.
- b. The Board President has final approval of the published board meeting agendas.
- c. The Superintendent will be responsible for publishing the final agenda and all appropriate supporting materials, taking care to follow all legal requirements and policies and procedures adopted by the Board.

During the Board Meeting

I. Meeting Norms

- a. Focus on student achievement.
- b. Avoid stating assumptions about others' intentions.
- c. Make sure each Board Member's voice is heard, and protect the Member's right to speak when they have the floor without interruption.
- d. Be Prepared.
- e. Turn off cell phones or put them on vibrate.

- f. Be effective and efficient in conducting the Board's business.
- g. Be respectful of others and engage in civil discourse.
- h. Keep confidential items confidential.
- i. Stay on task.
- j. Avoid attacks on personal character.

Outside of a Board Meeting

I. Board Member Requests for Information

- a. When an individual Board Member requests information, when applicable and appropriate the information will be provided to all Board Members. Members will self-monitor to ensure requests for information do not place unnecessary or inordinate demands on the time and resources of District Staff, especially when it may impact their ability to complete their normally assigned duties.
- b. Board Members will not direct questions to the staff/teachers. Board Members should submit all questions directly to the Superintendent. At their discretion, the superintendent may involve staff members in the response. Appointments outside of public meetings are strongly advised for lengthy inquiries.

II. Board Member Sharing of Information

- a. A Board Member who wants to share documents/materials with the entire Board should forward them to the Superintendent for distribution

III. Self-monitoring

- a. Individual Board Members agree to review and adhere to meeting norms, goals and Board Member roles as defined by Board Bylaws.
- b. In order to conduct efficient and effective Board meetings, Board Members will come to the Board meetings prepared and ready to do business.
- c. Board Members agree to attend to fellow Board Members respectfully.
- d. When behavior by an individual board member detracts from effective governance, any board member may request a recess so that they may address the specific issue.

IV. Site Visits

- a. To best understand the programs and needs within the District, Board Members are encouraged to visit school sites on calendared visits as arranged with the Superintendent and are encouraged to attend school-sponsored regular and special events.
- b. If a Board Member wishes to visit a site for district business or observation, they will notify the Superintendent. If a Board Member wishes to attend a school-related event, they should notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent's office will assist with arrangements and notifications as necessary.
- c. "Drive-bys" and "drop-ins" on staff and schools are discouraged and should be coordinated with the Superintendent or their assistant.

Handling Complaints and Concerns

The Board and Superintendent are committed to having parent/staff complaints handled expeditiously and fairly. If a Board member receives a complaint they will forward the complaint to the Superintendent. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the [BP/AR 1312.1](#); [BP/AR 1312.3](#); [AR 1312.4](#) and [1312.4 E1](#).

Spokesperson

The Superintendent is the primary spokesperson in response to emails and communications addressed to the entire governance team. The Board President will work with the Superintendent to coordinate responses on instances where the Superintendent is not included in the request for response so that the Superintendent is apprised and responses may be crafted jointly before they are sent, maintaining the "no surprises" standard within the governance team and a united/coordinated response with the same talking points.

Legal Counsel

For matters necessitating legal advice, Board members will work with the Superintendent and avoid contacting counsel separately. Legal Counsel is employed on contract by the District to advise the District on legal matters, not to advise individual board members separately. The Superintendent will receive requests on legal matters from Board members and will seek the information and disseminate it to all Board members for matters pertaining to district business as appropriate.

We have reviewed and agreed to these governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the San Dieguito Union High School

District Board of Education, staff, students, and the community. We shall review these agreements annually.

Affirmed on this 23rd day of January, 2024.



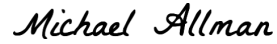
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