

DUBLIN UNIFIED



School District

Governance Handbook 2017-2018

Board of Trustees

Megan Rouse, President
Amy Miller, Vice President
Dan Cunningham, Trustee
Joe Giannini, Trustee
Dan Cherrier, Trustee

Superintendent

Leslie Boozer, Ed.D., JD

The Dublin Unified School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent developed the DUSD Governance Handbook in 2006. The Governance Handbook outlines practices that build and sustain a positive Board-Superintendent relationship and define a culture of quality, equity, and respect.

In June 2007, the Board adopted the CSBA Professional Governance Standards as a companion to the DUSD Governance Handbook. The intent of the standards is to enhance the public's understanding about the critical responsibilities of local boards and to support boards in their efforts to govern effectively.

Annually the Board recommit to the Professional Governance Standards and reviews and updates their Governance Handbook.

Approved October 10, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Elements of Effective Governance	2
Mission, Belief Statements, Board Commitments	2
Goals for All Students	3
Strategic Initiatives 2015-2018	3
II. Governance Roles	
III. Governance Leadership Culture	4
Meeting Guidelines	4
Governance Protocols	4
Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools	4
Placing Items on the board agenda.....	5
Developing the board meeting agenda	5
Agenda questions answered before a meeting.....	6
Individual board member requests for information	6
Staff Reports	6
Board deliberation	6
Allowing the majority to set the direction.....	6
Electronic and Social media communication	7
Individual board member requests for action	7
Addressing conflict among board members.....	7
School Site Visitations	8
Role in public.....	8
Handling complaints from the community	8
Spokesperson for the Board	8
Self monitoring of governance team effectiveness.....	9
 Planning and Evaluation Processes	 10
 Appendices	
Appendix A – Effective Governance.....	11
Appendix B – Effective Governance Teams	12
Appendix C – Signature Page.....	13

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. The DUSD Governance Handbook documents the governance responsibilities within these three dimensions.

1. **Governing as a unified team with a shared vision to lead and serve the community.**
2. **Governing within a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.**
3. **Creating and sustaining a positive governance leadership culture.**

I. UNIFIED COMMITMENT TO LEAD AND SERVE

The foundation of effective governance is the common focus governing board members share that transcends individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose. A unity of purpose exists when the commitment to achieving these goals becomes the guiding principle for all trustees.

The focused efforts of Dublin Unified School District are reflected in the District vision, core values, mission, strategic initiatives and strategic plan adopted by the DUSD Board.

Dublin Unified School District Vision
“All Dublin Students Will Become Lifelong Learners”

CORE VALUES

We believe...

- Our most important goal is to maximize learning for every student.
- Every student deserves the best possible educational experience.
- Wellness and character development are critical components of student learning.
- Professional learning communities are essential for continuous improvement of student learning.
- Our most valuable resource is the skills, knowledge, and experience of our teachers, support staff, administrators, and parent community.
- Building resilience in students is essential to their success.
- Supportive relationships are vital to the success of every student.

MISSION

Our mission is to ensure that all students become lifelong learners by providing a rigorous and relevant 21st century education that builds resilience and prepares them for college and career or service to our country and for success in the global economy.

GOALS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Every student will...

- Demonstrate college and career readiness.
- Meet the District's rigorous and relevant 21st century standards for graduation.
- Meet literacy and math benchmarks at 3rd, 5th and 8th grade levels.
- Attend and actively engage in learning every day.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2015 – 2018

- Student Learning: We will maximize student learning and achievement.
- Learning Environment: We will provide an environment that enhances student learning.
- Resource Alignment: We will align resources in order to support student learning.
- Partnerships: We will establish and maintain productive partnerships that support student learning.

II. SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The second essential element of effective governance is defining roles and responsibilities and working with leadership, commitment and passion within those agreed upon roles.

Effective Governance Teams

- Communicate a common vision.
- Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for ALL students.
- Value, support and advocate for public education.
- Govern within board adopted policies and procedures.
- Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations.
- Periodically evaluate the governance team's effectiveness.

Effective Trustees

- Govern in a dignified, professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
- Operate openly, with trust and integrity.
- Take collective responsibility for the governance team's performance; agree on behavioral norms and operational protocols.
- Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.
- Understand the distinctions between board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the superintendent and staff.
- Understand that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individuals.
- Keep confidential matters confidential.
- Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be informed and effective leaders.

III. GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP CULTURE

Exceptional boards make governance intentional and invest in structures and practices that can be thoughtfully adapted to changing circumstances. Protocols are tools to strengthen the capacity of the board to engage in a constructive relationship with the superintendent and staff– one that is grounded in a mutual understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities. Explicit norms and protocols, agreed to and upheld by the board and superintendent provide transparency and stability in the governance relationship as the board carries out its role.

MEETING GUIDELINES/NORMS

- Focus on students’ best interests
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Listen openly
- Be open to ideas of others. Everyone’s opinion counts
- Work toward the future, learning from the past
- Promote a stable and consistent environment
- Be mindful of length of meetings, be brief with comments while avoiding repetition
- Share responsibility for the success of the board meeting.

PROTOCOLS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the trustees and the superintendent in their operations.

The following protocols were developed to support and promote the effectiveness of the governance team.

Protocol	Agreement
Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools	<p>All governance team members agree that the board meetings are opportunities to strategically move the district forward, and to communicate direction, district priorities and progress to the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the reorganization meeting, the board will review the annual board meeting calendar of proposed meeting topics. Ongoing review of the annual calendar will take place during the Friday Breakfast meetings. This will include review of the prior agendas, the current agenda and future agenda items. • The board agenda items will be linked to the Board Commitments, as possible and appropriate. • At the conclusion of each board meeting, the superintendent will review the calendar, including future topics.

Protocol	Agreement
<p>Placing Items on the Board Agenda</p>	<p>The following steps will be followed to place items on the board agenda.</p> <p>Step 1. Discuss a concern or issue at the Friday morning meeting. If a board member, not attending the Friday breakfast meeting wants to move an agenda item forward, that board member may contact the superintendent or the Board president. If the issue/concern is not resolved at the Friday meeting it moves to ‘Matters’ at the board meeting.</p> <p>Step 2. The board president and the superintendent will meet weekly to discuss: agenda development, ‘Matters’, and other issues as needed.</p> <p>Step 3. When an issue brought up under ‘Matters’ is affirmed by two other board members, staff time is allocated to research the issue.</p> <p>Step 4. If there is limited to no interest in an issue among the trustees, a trustee has ten minutes to convince others to bring this issue to a future board meeting.</p>
<p>Developing the Board Meeting Agenda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board president will meet with the superintendent to discuss the board meeting agenda the week before each board meeting. The planners will be mindful of time needed for staff to make any adjustments to the agenda or to prepare background information on issues/topics. Also, planners will include items in open session whenever possible. • Agreement will be reached at the agenda planning session on which items require: additional background information in the agenda packet; a thorough staff briefing at the board meeting or a special meeting or study session to discuss the item in greater depth. • The meeting agenda will include a section to inform the board and the community of upcoming agenda items, as well as District events and activities. • The Superintendent shall notify the Board President of any modifications or changes to the agenda prior to the Board meeting.

Protocol	Agreement
<p>Agenda questions answered before a meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board packet will be available to all board members by the end of the Friday prior to the board meeting. Whenever possible all relevant presentation materials, slides, analysis and information shall be made available the preceding Friday evening and posted on-line. Staff shall provide lengthy reports to the Board Members, in advance of the packet when possible, in effort to provide trustees additional review time. While from time to time additional information becomes available on the evening of the meeting this should be the exception rather than the rule. • Board members agree to email or call the superintendent with questions or clarification on items in the board-meeting packet prior to Monday at noon. The superintendent will use judgment as to whether this information will be distributed to all trustees. Occasionally, board members’ questions cannot be answered prior to the meeting, due to time constraints, and these questions will be addressed at the board meeting. • The superintendent may direct a trustee to the appropriate staff member for answers to questions. • To the best of each board member’s ability, they agree to provide staff with a ‘heads up’ about questions they plan to ask at a board meeting.
<p>Individual Board Member Requests for information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members requesting information will contact the Superintendent. A Board member will try to give a minimum of one day’s notice for information requests before the board meeting. • When board members are responding to stakeholder questions, they are encouraged to direct person to the employee closest to the topic, e.g. teacher, site administrator. If the question is not answered, the board member is encouraged to direct the person to district staff. Note: the board member is not contacting staff, rather they shall encourage the stakeholder to contact district staff. Board members will notify the Superintendent when this occurs. • The Superintendent may direct a trustee to the appropriate staff member or will work with staff to provide the information. • Board members will be mindful of the workload of staff and will self-monitor requests to ensure that one member’s requests will not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals. • Board members recognize the concept of “Nice to Know vs. Need to Know” information and will seek information only needed for effective decision-making.
<p>Staff Reports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to promote an efficient and effective use of board meetings, staff reports will be submitted in the board packet prior to the board meetings, whenever possible. At the board meetings, staff will present an executive summary of the report and clarify the direction the staff seeks from the Board. • Board members will review staff presentations prior to the board meeting, and call or e-mail in advance with questions as needed.

Protocol	Agreement
Board Deliberation	<p>Each board member brings unique skills, values and beliefs to the board table. The best possible decisions are likely when all members of the team have been part of the discussion and everyone is operating within the same parameters. This protocol promotes making the ‘best’ decision by welcoming all viewpoints, exploring all options, being efficient and avoiding repetition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board President introduces the item, explains how/when the public may comment, and how the board will deliberate. The agenda describes when and how the public may speak to any given item. • The staff makes the presentation, including the staff recommendation. The board asks clarification questions about the presentation. • The Board President acknowledges any member of the public who wishes to speak. • The board may ask for further clarification, following public comments. • The board deliberates and advocates. • The board votes.
Allowing the majority to set the direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board agrees there are multiple ‘right’ answers in addressing issues. Dissenting opinions are listened to respectfully. The final authority for board decisions rests with the board as a whole. • Prior to a board decision, if a member of the public asks a trustee about a future board decision, the trustee will clarify that he/she is voting as an individual (“I” message). • Following a board decision the trustee agrees to fully support the majority decision (“we” message). • Following the decision, if trustees are approached by the media about the decision, they will refer the media to the Board President for additional information.

Protocol	Agreement
Electronic and Social Media Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance team recognizes that electronic communication is an efficient and convenient way to communicate and expedite the exchange of information. • Board members shall exercise caution to ensure that electronic communications are not used as a means for the board to deliberate outside of an agenda board meeting. Board members will use the ‘reply all’ function in electronic communication cautiously. • It is each trustee’s right to use social media, however, they must clearly distinguish between their personal opinion and a board position; further they must be careful to not offer a personal opinion on a matter that will come before the board for action. • Electronically transmitted suggestions or issues will be sent to the superintendent for appropriate response and distribution. The Superintendent may handle the issue, forward on to staff, or add to the “Board Issues Bin” for future discussion. • A trustee may respond, as appropriate, to an electronic communication received from a member of the community and should make clear that his/her response does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board as a whole. • Any complaint or request for information should be forwarded to the superintendent in accordance with board bylaws and governance protocols so that the issue may be handled through the appropriate process. • Like other writings concerning school district business, a trustee’s electronic communication may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.
Individual Board Member Requests for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the board, by formal board action, may direct staff. No individual trustee has the authority to either direct staff to take action or to cause action to be taken by staff indirectly. • Individual trustees shall take great care to ensure that communication to staff not imply direction nor assume that staff should take action based upon individual trustees’ comments.
Addressing Conflict Among Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board values and supports differences of perspective from individual board members. • The board understands that conflict will exist and recognizes the importance of thoughtful and timely conflict resolution to effectiveness and the health of the board. The board and individual trustees will address issues as they arise, working together in a professional manner to prevent unresolved conflicts from undercutting the effectiveness of the board. • When conflicts arise, verbal communication is preferred to address conflicts rather than through email.

Protocol	Agreement
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing board is the unit of authority over the district and trustees understand that a board member has no individual authority or capacity to solve an issue or complaint, neither are they always prepared to offer all answers. However, board members should know where to direct complaints and questions, thoughts and community input. • When approached by a community member with an issue or concern, board members will listen openly and seek understanding of the issue or concern. • The trustee will explain that the district has complaint policies in place and if appropriate, will let the community member know what the complaint policy is and how they may access the process or procedure. • All complaints should be handled first at the level where the issue occurred. Board members will use judgment in responding, being mindful of their role in judicial review. • Trustees will call and/or email the superintendent when they direct a community member to contact her or district administration. • Board members will strive to encourage community members to direct questions, thoughts and input to the proper committee, task force or work group, e.g. directing a community member’s thoughts on nutrition to a district wellness committee. Thus, staff will strive to ensure all committees and work groups have point people responsible to accept this input.
Role in Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board understands the importance of being visible and accessible to the public. Trustees will demonstrate their dedication and commitment to the governance team by clarifying their authority as one of five in all board decisions and actions. • Trustees represent the board in what they say and do and will set an example of professionalism.
School Site Visitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board understands that periodic visitations to school sites are a valuable tool in understanding the culture of the school and increasing board member visibility. • Trustees wishing to visit a school site will inform the superintendent and contact the site principal in order to arrange a date/time for the visit. • The principal/designee may accompany the trustee when visiting classrooms and school/site departments. • Periodically, the superintendent will arrange for Trustees to accompany her to visit school sites. This may occur after “Friday Breakfast” meetings or at other times as calendars allow.

Protocol	Agreement
Spokesperson for the Board	<p>We believe it is essential that important information be communicated to members of the board, the staff and the community in as timely a fashion as possible. We recognize that some situations have legal or other considerations that may place restrictions on what may be told to the media or public. We believe it is important that we speak with one voice in order to maintain the trust of our community.</p> <p>The designated spokesperson will vary depending on the issue or situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis/Disaster: The superintendent will be the primary spokesperson and may involve the board president at his discretion. • Meeting Information (e.g. board meetings, agenda items, study sessions): The board president and the superintendent will serve as primary spokespersons. • Core Values /Vision / District Priorities / General District Information: All governance team members may serve as spokespersons utilizing developed and agreed upon key messages. • Board President Leadership When more than one trustee and/or board president and superintendent are at an event, if possible, the Board President will speak first before the others, as a matter of deference for the position.
Self Monitoring of Governance Team Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a governance self-evaluation demonstrates accountability to the community and the intention of the governance team to strengthen and improve governance practices. • Annually, during the organization meeting in December the board will schedule a conversation/study session meeting to reflect on governance practices, to review operating protocols and participate in a self-evaluation process.
Employee Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When employees contact board members, board members will seek to determine if the call is regarding a policy matter, which is a legitimate topic to discuss with a trustee, or an employment matter. When it is a policy matter, board members will listen, and, when possible, encourage the employee to share their thoughts with the proper committee or work group. If the topic is an employment matter, the board member will strongly encourage the employee to respect protocol and address the matter with the proper administrator.

PLANNING AND EVALUATION PROCESSES

Evaluation Process and Cycle

The following evaluation processes have been established to ensure that the district is working to accomplish established strategic goals.

District Goal Setting and Goal Evaluation Process

Given the challenges associated with overlapping planning cycles, the board has outlined the following annual calendar for strategic plan, initiative, and goal setting. Elements of the LCAP and/or District Strategic Plan are closely aligned with the budget development process.

Schedule	Current Year Goals	Next Year Goals	Budget Development Process	Superintendent Evaluation
January	Mid year goals check in and progress report. Superintendent provides the community with a “State-of-the-District” report.	The governance team initiates the goal setting for the next school year, including outreach and input gathering from staff and the community. Key issues are identified and prioritized.	Budget development begins.	Mid year check in and progress report. Opportunity to do mid year corrections or adjustments.
April	Quarterly check in and progress report.	Prioritized issues reviewed by the board with direction to staff for goal development.	Second interim report.	
May/June	Evaluation of current year Strategic Plan, Initiatives, Goals, Indicators, and Measures. Using current year Scorecards as a guide.	Board reviews and adopts Strategic Plan, Initiatives, Goals, Success Indicators and Measures. Sets expectations and defines key success indicators.	Budget is adopted.	End of year report, reflection and beginning of formal evaluation.
July/August		Staff develops action plans for current year goals.	45 day revise.	Complete written superintendent evaluation process per contract. Establish performance expectations for district goals and board, superintendent relations.

September	Strategic Plan revisions discussed and approved by Board.			
October	First quarter goals check in and progress report.		First interim report.	

Appendix A

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE¹

Utilizing effective governance techniques, private citizens, once elected to school boards, work with the superintendent to keep all district efforts focused on student 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.

Working as a group, board members and the superintendent leverage the efforts of the professional staff by setting a direction for the district reflective of the community’s wishes for its children, by creating a supportive framework for action in the district, by holding the system accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms, by providing support to students and staff through behaviors and actions, and by demonstrating community leadership on behalf of children, district schools and public education. When this is done effectively, the chances of a climate for excellence being created in which students thrive increases dramatically.

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.

¹Source: California School Boards Association

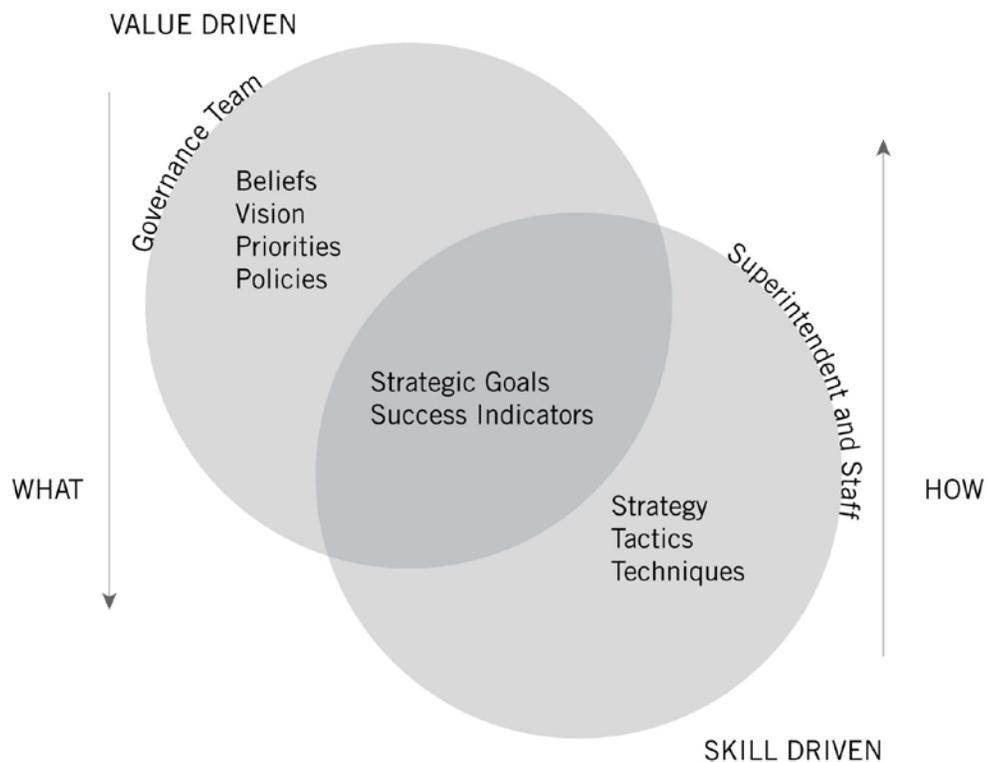
Appendix B

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE TEAMS ²

Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent, and strive to operate within them.

The community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, and the district superintendent will translate all efforts into action. Boards and superintendents work together to ensure a district has effective leadership. There are important distinctions to be made between the board's role and that of the superintendent and staff. The role of the school board is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are well run. It is therefore vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNANCE ROLES



² Source: California School Boards Association

Appendix C

Dublin Unified School District

GOVERNANCE TEAM PROTOCOLS

The Board of Trustees for the Dublin Unified School District 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.

To provide a high quality educational program for all students, to effectively plan for the future and to meet district challenges, the Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team. This is best accomplished by agreeing upon operating procedures, or protocols, as well as supporting consistent behaviors and actions among team members.

We have reviewed and agree to follow the governance team protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Dublin Unified School District Board of Trustees, the Superintendent, staff, students and the community. We shall renew this agreement following each Annual Governance Retreat.

Affirmed on this 10th day of October 2017

Megan Rouse, DUSD Board President

Amy Miller, DUSD Vice President

Dan Cunningham, DUSD Trustee

Joe Giannini, DUSD Trustee

Dan Cherrier, DUSD Trustee

Leslie Boozer, DUSD Superintendent