

# Fremont Union High School District

## GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rosa Kim, Jeff Moe, Naomi Nakano-Matsumoto, Roy Rocklin and Bill Wilson

SUPERINTENDENT

Polly M. Bove

### VISION

Our youth become life-long learners, informed and active citizens of the world, knowledgeable and self-directed members of the workplace, and discerning participants in the arts.

### CORE VALUES

We believe...

- the family and community are partners with the District in Fostering the skills students need to be life long learners and contributing members of society.
- in respecting and honoring the many Unique, personal, cultural, social, ethnic, and religious aspects of our FUHSD community.
- each student in every school/program will experience the Highest levels of learning to reach his or her fullest potential.
- a safe, supportive, respectful, and productive learning environment is essential to all Students and staff.
- a highly skilled, Dedicated, and caring staff has a direct and powerful influence on students' lives and learning.
- being accountable is essential to promote continuous improvement and meet the needs of students in a changing economy and society.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective teams value and respect their essential functions, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the Board and Superintendent, and strive to operate within them. There are important distinctions to be made between the Board's role and that of the Superintendent and staff.

- School Board "Trustees" are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure a community's schools educate the community's children in accordance with the wishes of the local community.
- The role of the School Board is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are well run.
- Board members have collective, not individual authority. Authority to make decisions is only granted to the Board as a whole. The full Board gives direction to the Superintendent through decisions made at Board meetings.

### MEETING GUIDELINES — We agree to the following:

- We will stay focused on our goals, with student achievement as our priority.
- Each member of the team will take responsibility for the work of the team and for the success of the meeting, participating actively and equally.
- We will listen to all ideas and paraphrase to promote understanding.
- We will respect the differences on our team and in our community; we never dismiss or devalue others.
- We will give helpful feedback directly and openly.
- We will build upon the ideas of others and look for common ground.
- We will all work to make sure there are no hidden agendas and that all issues and concerns can be dealt with openly by all members.

### GOVERNANCE NORMS — We agree to the following:

- Keep from taking disagreements personally (individuality is embraced, respected).
- Show respect (never dismiss/devalue others).
- Make a commitment to effective deliberation, each listening openly while everyone is allowed to express his or her point of view.
- Make a commitment to open communication, honesty, no surprises.
- Commit the time necessary to govern effectively. This means being there, being knowledgeable, participating, understanding the full scope of being a Board member and being willing to take on all the responsibilities involved.
- Be collaborative (this is the way we operate!).
- Maintain confidentiality (builds trust).
- Look upon history as lessons learned; focus on the present and the future.
- Focus on students' best interests — on what's best for kids! This is what we do! And it is the touchstone that allows us to have our differences.

## Protocols • Protocols • Protocols • Protocols • Protocols • Protocols • Protocols • Protocols • Protocols

### Board Meeting Management

Seating at Board Meetings — From right to left:

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Executive Assistant to Superintendent | 5. Vice President   |
| 2. Superintendent                        | 6. Clerk            |
| 3. President                             | 7. Trustee          |
| 4. Student Representative                | 8. Past President * |

Placing items on agenda — Principle: The structure and content of the agenda can inform the community about District priorities, goals, and successes and help the Board focus its meetings and deliberations on the most important issues

- Any Trustee may request an item be placed on the agenda.
- Trustees submit the request to Board President or Superintendent.
- These requests may also be submitted during meetings under "Future Agenda Items."
- Board President meets with Superintendent to determine if and when the item is placed on the agenda.
- If the item cannot be placed on the agenda, the Board President will call the requesting Trustee directly to inform the Trustee of the decision.

Advance meeting preparation — Principle: We want to 1) honor staff by allowing them to prepare, 2) honor community by ensuring thorough discussion, 3) exercise Trustee responsibility of making informed decisions

- Trustees will read all information before the Board meeting (email, Board agenda & related materials).

- Any Board member may call the Superintendent to ask questions on agenda items prior to the meeting.
- Trustees inform Superintendent if they intend to ask questions during the Board meeting that might require additional research.
- Answers to questions are disseminated to all Board members.
- If Board members want to ask questions during a Board meeting for which the Superintendent or the staff have not been given prior notice, the Trustee will make this clear to the community before proceeding with the question.

### Voting

Principle: Trustees need to consider and respect all opinions, and feel free to vote their conscience.

- Trustees are careful not to vote before the vote; (i.e., not decide an issue until after deliberations)
- Deliberations will provide each member the opportunity to express his/her opinions.
- The Board President summarizes the key points of the deliberation to the satisfaction of the team so that each Trustee is assured that he/she has been heard.
- Each Trustee respects the right of other Trustees to vote "no" on an issue. But everyone agrees it is a courtesy to the team to explain the reasons for the "no" vote either during deliberation or before casting the vote.

### Closed Session

Principle: Trustees build trust by honoring confidentiality.

- Trustees hold all statements made in closed session in strict confidence.
- Trustees are encouraged to bring forward their concerns regarding possible violations of confidentiality in closed session.
- Trustees are encouraged to be proactive in addressing the perception of violations of confidentiality.

### Visiting Schools

- Trustees are encouraged to visit school sites. As a professional courtesy, Trustees will call the principal ahead of time to arrange the visit. Trustees will also be cautious about encroaching on the learning environment. To assist in this matter, the Superintendent will ensure principals and teachers know that a teacher does not need to interrupt his or her lesson when a Board member visits a classroom.

### Responding to Email Concerns from Community

Principle: Trustees keep Superintendent informed; Trustees are responsive to the community; Trustees have equitable access to information; Trustees read their email on a regular basis; and Trustees operate within the Brown Act.

When Trustees receive questions or requests via email:

- Thank them for the communication.
- Let them know you will forward the question to the Superintendent.
- Forward the email to the Superintendent.
- The Trustee may suggest the issue be agendized.
- Superintendent responds to community member and forwards original question and answer to all Trustees.

### Responding to Concerns of Community or Staff

Principle: The Board works through the Superintendent; the community has confidence that their concerns receive a response; the Board deals with concerns in uniform manner.

- Receive the information — listen to them, and thank them.
- Repeat the information — paraphrase to ensure understanding. (Maybe ask: "Do you believe that I understand?")
- Re-educate the individual — remind them that you have no authority as an individual.
- Re-direct — direct them back into the system at the appropriate level. (Maybe add, "Let me know if that does/does not work out.")
- Report — as soon as possible, inform the Superintendent.

Revised: 12/10/2018

\* Newly Elected Board Members Seated Left of Past President