



Bellevue Union School District

Governance Handbook

September 12, 2023

Board of Trustees

Lisa Reyes, President
Adele Walker, Vice President, Clerk
Jamie Padilla, Trustee
Irene Rosario, Trustee
Nikigiovonie Rogers, Trustee

Superintendent

Michael Kellison

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

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Effective Governance

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. These include the actions of an individual, a group coming together to govern, and the performance of the governance by the group.

In a school district, the board and superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work effectively, members need to: 1) Maintain a unity of purpose, 2) Agree on and govern within appropriate roles, 3) Create and sustain a positive governance structure, and 4) Create a supportive structure for effective governance.

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 and maintain the focus on improved student achievement.

Governance – A Definition

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

Unity of Purpose

Unity of purpose is a common focus, overarching goals, and the values and beliefs governance team members share about children, the district and public education that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

Our District's Core Values

- all students will be academically successful
- all students will be socially responsible
- all students will be emotionally/physically healthy
- our schools will be the multi-cultural, ethnic centerpiece in the community

Our District's Mission

The mission of the Bellevue Union School District is:

To engage, value and care for our students, staff and families.

To empower our community.

To empower our students to be learners and leaders.

Our District's Vision

The vision of the Bellevue Union School District is:

To inspire learning.

Our Governance Team's Unity of Purpose

We believe that a high quality educational experience provides opportunity for students.

- Our shared purpose is to ensure the best learning environment for all students.
- We are an effective team continuing to build trust and move the district forward.
- We are a team with a common purpose, we serve as a catalyst for focused efforts for our employees and the community.
- We set fiscal priorities that reflect our goals and values while protecting our taxpayers' investments.
- We perpetuate a legacy of positive culture.

Governance Roles and Responsibilities

Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. The role of the trustees who sit on locally elected school boards is to ensure school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs, and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing six major responsibilities. These are: 1) setting direction, 2) establishing an effective and efficient structure, 3) providing support, 4) ensuring accountability, 5) providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district, and public schools, and 6) hiring, evaluating, and, if necessary, replacing the Superintendent.

These five responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public that they can only be performed by an elected governing body.

Authority is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, trustees fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the community.

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

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

The Superintendent assists the Board in carrying out its responsibilities in each of the job areas, and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon district vision and goals. The following page provides more detail on how the board performs its governance responsibilities in each job area. It is important to remember that boards who inadvertently get involved in staff responsibilities undercut their ability to hold the superintendent accountable for the results of those efforts.

Performing Governance Responsibilities

We agree with the responsibilities of School Boards as described below by the California School Boards Association (CSBA):

Set the direction for the community's schools

- Focus on student learning process and outcomes
- Assess needs/obtain baseline data
- Generate, review, or revise setting direction documents (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used
- Ensure these documents are the driving force for all district efforts

Establish an effective and efficient structure for the school district

- Employ and support the superintendent
- Establish a human resources framework that includes policies for hiring and evaluating other personnel
- Oversee the development of and adopt policies
- Set direction for and adopt curriculum and require data-producing assessment systems
- Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget, and oversee facilities issues
- Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

Provide support through our behavior and actions

- Act with professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and vision
- Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
- Uphold the board-approved district policies and support staff implementation of board directions
- Ensure that a positive working climate exists
- Be knowledgeable enough about district efforts to explain them to the public

Ensure accountability to the public

- Evaluate the superintendent
- Monitor, review, and revise policies
- Serve as a judicial and appeal body
- Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated
- Monitor and adjust district finances and periodically review facilities issues
- Monitor the collective bargaining process

Act as community leaders

- Speak with a common voice about district priorities, goals, and issues
- Engage and involve the community in district and school activities
- Communicate clear information about policies, programs, and fiscal condition of the district
- Educate the community and the media about issues facing students, the district, and public education
- Advocate for children, district programs, and public education to the general public, key community members, and local, state, and national leaders

Agreement to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Governance Team Norms and Protocols:

The Board of Education for the Bellevue Union 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.

The Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance team in order to effectively meet district challenges. Agreed upon behaviors, or norms, and operating procedures, or protocols, support consistent behaviors and actions among team members. The purpose of the Bellevue Union School District governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among trustees, the superintendent, district staff, students, and the community. The following norms and protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team, and may be modified over time as needed.

Our Agreements to Facilitate Governance Leadership:

- Norms: That address our behavior as we interact as a highly effective team.
- Protocols: That address our interactions and commitments as a highly effective team.

We have reviewed and agreed to the governance team norms and protocols as attached in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Bellevue Union School District Board of Education, staff, students, and the community. We shall renew these agreements at our annual governance workshop.

Affirmed on this 12th day of September, 2023

Lisa Reyes, Board President

Adele Walker, Board Vice-President/Clerk

Jamie Padilla, Board Trustee

Irene Rosario, Board Trustee

Nikigiovonie Rogers, Board Trustee

Michael Kellison, Superintendent

Positive Governance Team Culture

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

Because the community elects school trustees to set and monitor the direction of the school district, and the district superintendent translates all efforts into action, it is vital that the trustees and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

Our Governance Norms

We agree to:

- Focus on students' best interests
- Be informed and prepared
- Do our homework
- Stay on task
- Be on time
- Honor our commitments
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be respectful to others
- Maintain open communication
- Focus on the best interests of the students

Structure and Processes to Support Effective Governance

Effective governance teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and process used by the trustees and the superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., process or structures for agenda setting, set-up of board room and table, agenda structure, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how governance teams operate, how they do business. These agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

Our Protocols

Issue	Protocol
1. Board Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We support every decision made by the full Board, even if an individual trustee did not support the decision when voted upon. ● Each trustee respects the right of other trustees to vote ‘No’ on an issue. ● We agree it is a courtesy to the team to explain the reasons for the ‘No’ vote either during deliberations or before casting the vote. ● We state our support of an action by stating ‘Aye’ and state our opposition to an action by stating ‘No’.

Issue	Protocol
2. Visiting Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We contact the Principal ahead of time, with the exception of awards ceremonies. ● Trustees will identify themselves with name tags, whenever possible. ● Principals will introduce trustees at formal events. ● If we want to observe a specific classroom or program, we let the Principal know this. ● We check in at the office when arriving and out when leaving.

Issue	Protocol
3. Handling Concerns from the Public and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When someone complains to us, we listen carefully and then direct that person to the person in the district most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. ● We make sure they understand the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principals, then district staff). ● We then contact the Superintendent to make him aware of the complaint and to state what action we took.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally, and expeditiously and the process and procedures of the district are upheld. • It will also clarify that one trustee has no individual authority to fix a problem.
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Issue	Protocol
4. Individual Trustee Requests for Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees will contact the Superintendent when asking questions or requesting additional information. • When an individual trustee requests information, as appropriate, it may be provided to all trustees. • An individual trustee will, as possible, let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made in public so staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer. • Individual trustees will self-monitor to ensure requests are reasonable and do not divert an inordinate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals.

Issue	Protocol
5. Individual Trustee requests for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only authority to direct action rests with the full board at the board table. • A majority vote sets direction.

Issue	Protocol
6. Setting the Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual trustee requests for an agenda item are directed to the Board President. The President will then contact the Superintendent and discuss the request at the agenda setting meeting. • The President and the Superintendent shall agree to a protocol for finalizing the monthly agenda. • The Vice President/Clerk will be invited to attend the monthly agenda setting meeting.

Issue	Protocol
7. Board Meeting Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We understand board meetings are meetings of the board held in public, not open forum town hall meetings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted to ensure the multiple voices of the community inform board deliberations. ● However, when the Board deliberates, it will be a time for the Board to listen and learn from each other, taking the public input into consideration, not a time to re-engage with the public. ● We will consistently abide by our formal processes relating to this issue so that all persons are treated fairly and equally. ● We review our policies, bylaws, and protocols relating to board meeting management (e.g., time limits on input from members of the public), revising or reaffirming them as appropriate.
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Issue	Protocol
8. Bringing up New Ideas	<p>Trustees agree to a process that will support bringing forward new ideas while maintaining the focus on current District goals. When bringing forward a new idea, Trustees will proceed according to these guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce the concept/idea to the Superintendent, Board President or during board comments at a Board meeting. ● The Board will maintain a parking lot of new ideas. The parking lot will be reviewed quarterly at the Board Meeting to determine a course of action or whether the idea will be held for consideration during the District annual goal setting process.

Issue	Protocol
9. Board Discussion Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any trustee may request a Board study session or discussion meeting. The Board agrees that when a request for a study session is made, it is because the Board wants to hear an in-depth presentation on a topic with the goal of greater understanding. ● Study sessions and discussion meetings will be scheduled annually, or as needed, to gather representative perspectives and expand input on topics key to the educational quality of the District. ● Study sessions and discussion meetings are open to the public.

Issue	Protocol
10. LCAP Development -	The Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is a comprehensive planning tool for Districts to set three year goals, plan actions, and leverage resources to meet those goals to improve student outcomes.

Annual Goal Setting	<p>The LCAP plan must be updated annually with community feedback and Board approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The BUSD LCAP Committee will report regularly to the Board of Trustees. ● The Board is mindful of resources and the impact of decisions on the District and community resources. ● The LCAP goal setting process is directly linked to the evaluation of the Superintendent.
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Issue	Protocol
11. New Trustee Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Superintendent will meet with the new trustee to provide an orientation. ● New trustees may utilize fellow trustees as resources. ● New trustees may choose a veteran trustee as a mentor. ● The mentor and new trustee will meet to determine how best to enculturate the new trustee. ● The Board will schedule a governance discussion meeting to review, discuss and re-confirm the adopted governance protocols as documented in the Bellevue Union School District Governance Handbook.

Issue	Protocol
12. Rotation of Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board officers serve for one year, appointed and seated each December. ● The outgoing President becomes a Trustee; the Trustee becomes the Alternate Representative; the Alternate Representative becomes the Representative; the Representative becomes the Vice President/Clerk. The Vice President/Clerk becomes the President. ● Should any member decline the Presidency, the rotation skips to the next person. ● The Superintendent serves as the permanent Secretary. ● At Board meetings, the order of seating from right to left (facing the audience) is as follows: Secretary, President, Vice President/Clerk, Representative, Alternate Representative, Trustee.

Issue	Protocol
13. Professional Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The District and Board are committed to professional development locally and statewide.