



# **SARATOGA UNION**

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK**

#### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Melissa Stanis, President  
Eric Cao, Clerk of the Board  
Scott Adler, Member  
Cynthia Miller, Member  
Vidya R. Vineet, Member

#### **SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Kenneth Geisick

This handbook reflects the governance team’s work on the creation of an effective framework for successful leadership and governance. This involves ongoing discussions about Unity of Purpose, Governance Team Goals and agreement on protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits each child. This handbook is our governance team’s agreement and is subsidiary to board policies. If there is a discrepancy between this handbook and current board policy, then board policy prevails.

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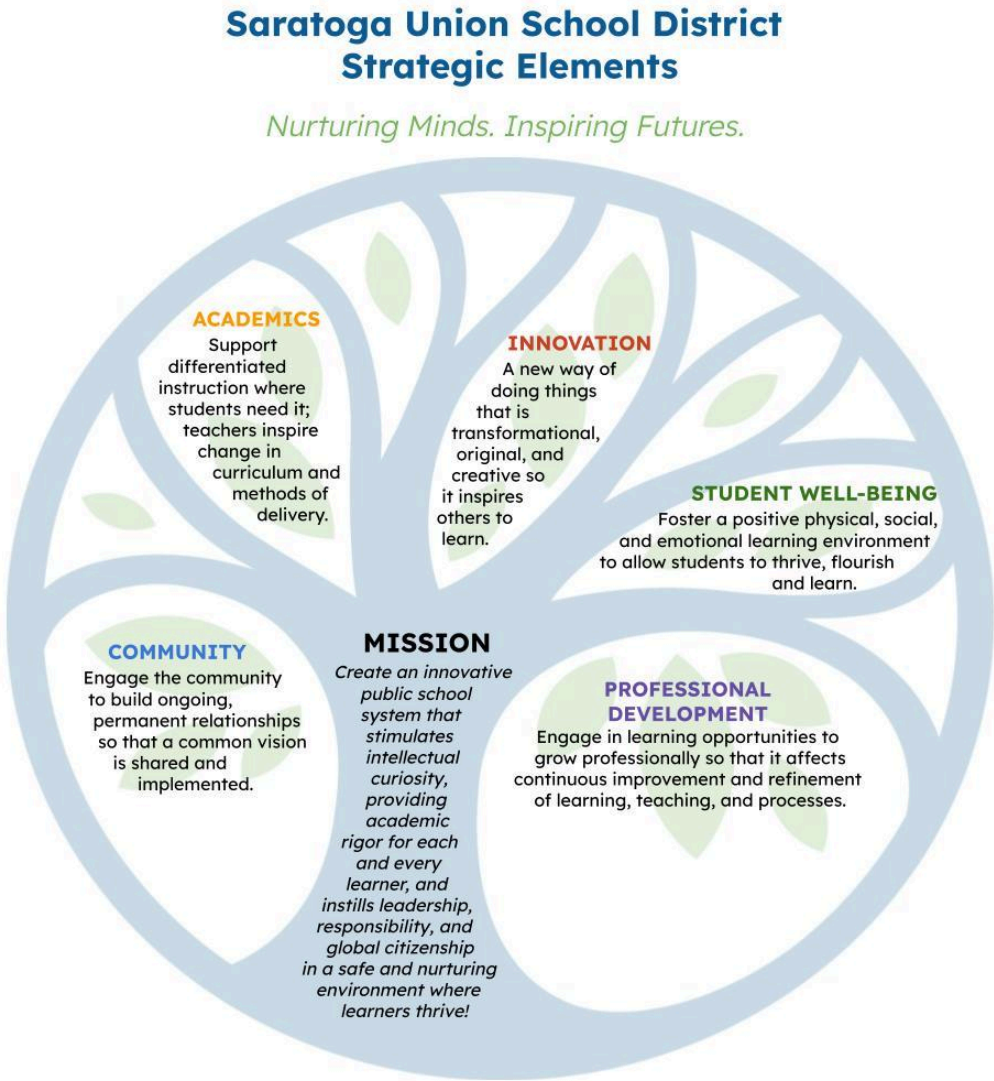
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## GOVERNANCE TEAM

The Governance Team is defined as the Saratoga Union School District Board of Trustees working in concert with the Superintendent.

## DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

Create an innovative public school system that stimulates intellectual curiosity, providing academic rigor for each and every learner, and instills leadership, responsibility, and global citizenship in a safe and nurturing environment where learners thrive.



## SUSD DISTRICT PRIORITIES 2023-24

Board approved 09.21.23

<b>Primary Goal</b> SUSD will align current and future initiatives with the district’s Strategic Plan elements: <b>Academics ♦ Community ♦ Innovation ♦ Professional Development ♦ Student Well-Being</b>	
Initiatives	Measurables
<b>Continue to drive multi-year student academic, behavioral, mental wellness, and social emotional success through the design and implementation of the Multi Tiered System of Support Framework (MTSS)</b>	
Create coherence system-wide through processes, procedures, and common experiences for parents, teachers, staff and students across all grade levels in SUSD while respecting that there is some uniqueness between the different school sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure consistent curriculum, instructional practices, and expectations across each grade level TK-8</li> <li>Assess academic and social emotional learning lag as a result of COVID-19 based on data, develop and implement a multi-year effort to address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> With administrators and data-leads now trained in our Data Management System eduCLIMBER (Illuminate), extend training and rollout to 100% of teachers and appropriate support staff. By June 7, 2024 all teachers will demonstrate proficiency with eduCLIMBER.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> By October 31, 2023, SUSD will adopt a universal SEL screener to establish baseline SEL data</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Refine practices to identify students who are not yet proficient</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement classroom practices to get students to proficiency level</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 100 % of TK-5 teachers will use Toolbox and Ruler weekly</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create coherence in articulation between 5th and 6th Grade for ELA, Math, Special Education, and 504s</li> </ul>
Strengthen Phase 2 of the MTSS framework on the Phase 1 foundation laid in 2021-2022 and built up in 2022-23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevate MTSS practices to all teachers through knowledge and coaching</li> <li>Implement quarterly MTSS Grant deliverables</li> <li>Set the 2023-24 action plan based on the Spring 2023 baseline data from LEA self assessment with the district leadership team</li> <li>Integrate systems and data to monitor and follow students longitudinally in academics, behavior, mental wellness, and social emotional learning (DRA, iReady, Kelvin, CAASPP/SBAC, SEL/Behavior Screener) to inform MTSS and COST interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The MTSS District Design Team will meet quarterly</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> District office staff, teacher leaders, and external grant facilitators will deliver monthly coaching to teachers and support staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify and implement appropriate training for staff in 2023-24</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Define teacher training to improve quality and appropriateness of referrals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers/staff will use eduCLIMBER during COST Meeting and Data Talks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate MTSS Tier 1 strategies into Tree House and Jump Start</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Further explore after school tutoring at RMS</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate eduCLIMBER and data metrics into current processes</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure just-in-time training and professional development for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish baseline metrics for district social work initiative</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain trend of reducing number of referrals to special education evaluation</li> </ul>
<p>Align programs with current laws and Education Code</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inform teaching staff about adopted changes, implement training as needed</li> </ul>

<b>Improve operations efficiency and mitigating risk and liability</b>	
<p>Continuously address, identify, and improve safety and liability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue positive partnerships with emergency services including Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff, Fire Department, and School Resource Officer</li> <li>• Annual completion of required safety trainings for students/staff</li> <li>• Annual campus safety inspections and collaboration with facilities, emergency services departments, and insurers to identify and address emerging safety concerns</li> <li>• Annual review and update of Comprehensive School Safety Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Migrate volunteer data to PowerSchool and integrate with VisitU</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> By November 17, 2023, complete campus safety walk throughs and safety trainings for staff and students (Run-Hide-Defend, Keenan Safe Schools, etc)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff training of appropriate boundaries and related board policy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collect baseline data on incidents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Integrate safety, harassment, and boundary training as part of new staff onboarding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> By January 30, 2024, update facility repair list and identify next phase of Summer 2024 facility repair projects with cost considerations for Board action</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term planning to address over a decade of declining enrollment including possible school consolidation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Annually, use attrition, TK-5 classroom placements, and development of Redwood schedule/electives to right size classes to match enrollment projections</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff to identify benefits and detriments to status quo versus school consolidation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> By June 30, 2024, the Board and district staff will identify considerations and metrics regarding potential decision of reduced campuses</li> </ul>
<p>Continuous improvement to run eco friendly schools within budgetary and staffing parameters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate interest for an environmental elective and/or club at schools</li> </ul>
<p>COVID-19 mitigation to keep our learning community healthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continued adherence to COVID-19 mitigation protocols per CA Department of Public Health and OSHA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide proctored on-campus testing for outbreaks and/or when students/staff become ill at school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Proactive communication to parents regarding COVID-19 cluster outbreaks</li> </ul>

**Effective communication between the district and the community**

<p>Strengthen communication with the community and with the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Superintendent as the leader, brings well-reasoned clear overviews of pros and cons to the Board. The Board will endeavor to stay out of the weeds, focusing on setting strategic direction, allocating resources, and setting policy - governance instead of management.</li> <li>● Continuous communication and implementation of best practices to ensure that everyone has the information they need to help students succeed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All SUSD schools will hold four Parent Advisory Committee Meetings,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At district level, continue ongoing communications forums: DELAC, SAC, parent workshops</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue quarterly Special Education Advisory Committee meetings, which was formed in Spring 2023</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff will attend CA public school communicators conference in 2023-24</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold Board Governance Workshop on February 1, 2024</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Annually survey parents on communication methods</li> </ul>
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**Turn attention back to driving innovation and learning improvements in our district**

<p>Identify these innovative and equitable practices, share across the district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduce 2 SEL strategies and 2 inclusionary practices that address peer-to-peer engagement and feedback in an effort to reduce pull-out services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify new or current high-interest, non-competitive Redwood electives. Build in new electives, possibly replacing low interest electives by February 29, 2024.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize and revamp/replace enrichment specials to meet needs and interest of TK-5 (examples: coding, robotics) during the school day</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work with Superintendent's Advisory Council, staff, and board to define prioritization and protocols to equalize access to after school enrichment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Align donation procedures across sites and booster groups</li> </ul>
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**Negotiations**

<p>Maintain our positive labor relations through negotiations with Certificated and Classified bargaining units</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Salary has been settled for 2023-24 and 2024-25. Establish the timeline for article reopeners based on discussion with STA and SCA.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold regular meetings with STA and SCA</li> </ul>
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## **GOVERNANCE TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

The governance team assumes collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively.

To operate effectively, the Board must have 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 effectiveness.
8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.

*Information obtained from the CSBA Professional Governance Standards for School Boards.*

## **THE BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The primary responsibilities of the Board are to:

1. Set direction for the district.
2. Provide a structure by establishing policies.
3. Create a supportive environment.
4. Ensure accountability.
5. Provide community leadership on behalf of the district and public education.
6. Maintain financial oversight in allocating resources and ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

To fulfill these responsibilities, there are a number of specific jobs that effective boards must carry out. These jobs include:

1. Involve the community, parents, students, and staff in developing a common vision for the district, focused on learning and achievement and responsive to the needs of all students.
2. Adopt, evaluate and update policies consistent with the law and the district's vision and goals.
3. Maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress.

4. Hire and support the superintendent so that the vision, goals and policies of the district can be implemented.
5. Conduct regular and timely evaluations of the superintendent based on the vision, goals and performance of the district, and ensure that the superintendent holds district personnel accountable.
6. Adopt a fiscally responsible budget based on the district's vision and goals, and regularly monitor the fiscal health of the district.
7. Ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.
8. Establish a framework for the district's collective bargaining process and adopt responsible agreements.
9. Provide community leadership on educational issues and advocate on behalf of students and public education at the local, state and federal levels.

*Information obtained from the CSBA Professional Governance Standards for School Boards.*

### **THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Promotes the success of all students and supports the efforts of the Board of Trustees 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 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 administration team.
8. Understand the distinctions between board and staff roles, and respect the role of the Board as the representative of the community.
9. Understand 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.



*Information obtained from the CSBA Professional Governance Standards for School Boards.*

## **BUILDING A GOVERNANCE TEAM UNITY OF PURPOSE**

Unity of Purpose is a common focus and the core values and beliefs governance team members share about children, the district and public education. Unity of Purpose helps them transcend their differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

### **What does our governance team want to accomplish? What do we stand for?**

1. Have the best learning environment for each student.
2. Build trust.
3. Become an effective team with a focused direction.
4. Understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
5. Become partners with staff and the community for positive change.
6. Make a commitment to continuous improvement.
7. Perpetuate a legacy of positive culture as new members join the team.

## **GOVERNANCE NORMS**

In addition to meeting the norms below, we agree to act in ways that will help us meet the CSBA Professional Governance Standards. This will help create a positive culture within the governance team.

### ***We agree to:***

- 1. Above all: Focus on what is best for students.**
2. Assume positive intent.
3. Respect individuality – Everyone’s opinions count; we will be open to the ideas of others.
4. Make a commitment to effective deliberation, each listening openly while everyone is allowed to express their point of view.
5. Make a commitment to open communications, honesty and no surprises.
6. Commit to governing effectively. This means being present, being knowledgeable, participating, and understanding and accepting the full scope of the responsibilities of a board member.
7. Be collaborative.
8. Maintain confidentiality.
9. Learn from the past, work in the present and focus on the future.
10. Constructively discuss the facts of a situation, taking multiple points of view and different opinions into consideration. Focus on addressing proofs and facts, not personalities.

## **BOARD PROTOCOLS**

Effective governance teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the Board and superintendent in their functioning as a team. These formal agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

Saratoga Union School District Board of Trustees has adopted the following protocols.

### **SELF-MONITORING OF GOVERNANCE TEAM EFFECTIVENESS**

(Amended July, 2014, Amended February 15, 2024)

We will schedule two workshops every year to review governance team agreements and processes.

### **VOTING NO**

(Adopted prior to 2010)

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.

### **VISITING SCHOOLS**

(Amended July 2014; December 2021)

Visits are encouraged and will be arranged by the district office throughout the year and by trustee request. 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 their lesson when a board member visits a classroom.

### **HANDLING CONCERNS FROM THE PUBLIC AND STAFF**

(Adopted prior to 2010)

When someone brings a concern to our attention, we will listen carefully, remembering we are only hearing one side of the story, and then we will direct that person to the person in the district most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. We will make sure they understand the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principal, then district staff) and we are aware of any formal forms or policies that might assist them (e.g., written complaint form). This procedure holds true as long as the issue is not one that will come before us as a part of the judicial review process. All information relating to our judicial review function must be heard during the hearing.

We will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, equally and expeditiously and that the process and procedures of the district are upheld. This protocol is also intended to clarify that one board member has no individual authority to fix a problem. As a representative of the public, it is important that the board member invites the person with the concern to ultimately get back to them if the issue is not resolved.

### **INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

(Adopted prior to 2010)

When an individual board member requests information, it will be provided to all board members. An individual board member will—insofar as possible—work to let the superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made public so the staff can be prepared to provide an answer. Individual board members will self-monitor to ensure one person’s request for information does not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals. If the superintendent feels that board members are not following this protocol, then he or she will discuss it with the board at the next board meeting either as part of “Update From The Superintendent” or as a separate agenda item.

### **INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR ACTION**

(Adopted prior to 2010)

The only authority to direct actions rests with the full board sitting at the board table. A majority vote sets such direction. Individuals can request action by bringing up a new idea, explaining their interest in a particular course of action and working to get a Board majority to support moving in that direction.

When a majority of the Board, sitting in a formal meeting, requests action, it should be done in the context of the intended results, not the methods used to achieve those results. The superintendent should let the Board know at that time, or as soon as possible, if such a request will impact efforts on the district’s priorities for the year.

### **BOARD MEETING MANAGEMENT**

(Adopted prior to 2010)

We understand that board meetings are meetings of the Board held in public, not open forum town hall meetings. We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted to ensure that 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 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, that all voices from our community are considered, and that we are consistently making decisions with the best interest of ALL our students at the forefront.

We will 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 as appropriate.

The Clerk of the Board will keep note of follow-up items and will share and review these items with the Superintendent and Board during the Future Agenda Items section of board meetings.

## DECIDING ON BOARD VS. STAFF ISSUES

We agree to use the CSBA “clock” to decide whether an issue is best taken up by the Board or left to the superintendent to prioritize and take action on as they determine is best.

### Responsibilities Related to Setting the Direction for the District



## **E-MAIL COMMUNICATION**

(Adopted November 27, 2007; Amended April 20, 2023; Amended February 15, 2024)

### PURPOSE OF PROTOCOL

The Board Members wish to ensure that their handling of constituent emails allows them to be responsive, respect the Brown Act, respect the Board as a whole, and be responsible to the entire community.

### PROTOCOL: Responding to emails directed to the Board as a whole

We agree that the Board President is our spokesperson and answers emails directed to the full Board. The Board President will answer the email with the words “On behalf of the SUSD Board” and copy the board members and the superintendent. In cases where the Board President feels that the superintendent is able to give a more thorough answer or is otherwise able to give a “better” answer, then the president may ask the superintendent to respond. In such a case, the superintendent will make it clear that he is answering at the request of the Board President and shall copy the rest of the Board so that they know the response. The Board agrees to go through the Superintendent with a staff issue, and not contact staff members directly. The Board agrees that all legal questions will be directed through the Superintendent.

### PROTOCOL: Responding to emails sent to one Board member

The Board agrees that when a Board member receives email with an issue or concern, that best practice is to notify the Superintendent of the concern while preserving the confidentiality of the constituent as appropriate. The Board member will acknowledge receipt of the email and, if needed, encourage a face-to-face meeting or a phone call. The Board member will help direct the constituent towards the individual best suited to address the concern, such as teacher or school principal, or administration.

### PROTOCOL: Digital Communication (Email, Social Media, e.g.: WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook, Text, Threads, TikTok, X, etc.)

The Board agrees that unlike a personal conversation, the Board has no control of where an email is forwarded, and that words can be cut/pasted out of context. Thus, we want to encourage personal and direct communications.

## **SPECIAL BOARD MEETINGS: STUDY SESSION MEETINGS**

(Adopted April 10, 2012)

The Governing Board recognizes the value in and outcomes of being able to discuss and explore specific subject areas or topics of special interest. We believe that greater understanding yields better decisions, which result in positive outcomes for students, staff and the district as a whole. Study session meetings are distinct from the Board’s twice-yearly Board Workshops and Community Workshops.

### PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL

- To allow the Board to discuss in-depth a specific topic or area of interest before Board action is required
- To enable the Board to participate in an in-depth study of a specific topic using the Study Session format
- To enable the Board to hear multiple viewpoints from key stakeholders as well as thorough information from staff

### PROTOCOL: When to Call a Study Session

We agree that the Board President and Superintendent can plan this type of meeting when it can be foreseen as part of the District's governance calendar. We also agree that situations will arise during the year that the Board may want to study or discuss further. These may also be externally driven, of district-wide significance, on a topic with budget impact, or of public concern. Any Board member can make a proposal to call for a Study Session or Discussion Meeting. Scheduling this type of meeting will be discussed during Future Agenda Items and should be determined by consensus.

Depending on the length of time required, the Board President and Superintendent will decide whether to schedule this type of meeting within a regularly scheduled Board Meeting agenda or have a separate Special board meeting. We agree that if these types of meetings are scheduled effectively we can be proactive on important issues facing the district. No Board action will be taken at these meetings.

### **ROLES OF BOARD, STAFF, AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

#### PROTOCOL: During a Study Session:

The Board agrees that when we ask to have a Study Session, it is because the Board wants to hear an in-depth presentation on a topic with the goal of greater understanding. In these meetings the superintendent will direct the appropriate staff to present the topic in greater detail than is feasible in a regular meeting staff report.

#### The Study Session Template will be used for the Study Session:

- Educational impact
- Fiscal impact
- Articulation implications between TK-5 and 6-8
- Challenges and opportunities
- Dissenting opinions

The Board members will receive materials in advance and have ample opportunity to ask questions of staff and have a discussion about the implications for the District. Members of the public are welcome to observe the Study Session, and there will be time for their comments.

#### Examples of Study Session Topics

- Common Core Standards

- Budget
- Transitional Kindergarten
- District Programs (i.e. Special Education)
- District Consolidation/Restructuring

### **SPECIAL BOARD MEETING REQUESTS**

(Adopted May 7, 2020)

Special meetings may be called at any time by the presiding officer or by a majority of the members of the Board.

#### PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL

- To define how a special board meeting may be requested by the majority of the board.

#### PROTOCOL

Before requesting a special meeting about a specific matter a Board member should first confer with the Superintendent so as to be fully briefed about the situation and what actions are already being taken. After that, if the board member believes that a special meeting is needed, the board member notifies the Superintendent of a request that a special meeting be held about a specific matter as soon as possible. The Superintendent will inform the other board members that a request for a special meeting on a specific matter has been made. The Superintendent may include brief information about the specific matter and some possible actions. If a majority of the board responds that they Agree with the request, then the Superintendent will notify the Board that a majority has called for a special meeting on the specific matter. If a majority of the board responds that they Disagree with the request, the Superintendent will notify the Board that no meeting will be called.

### **PLACING ITEMS ON THE BOARD AGENDA**

(Adopted prior to 2010; Amended December 2021; April 20, 2023)

#### PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL

- To permit the Board to legally conduct its business in accordance with CSBA governance standards concerning the proper role of the Board.
- To ensure the legal right of members of the public to place matters directly related to school business on the board agenda.
- To establish procedures and timelines for submitting agenda items.

### PROTOCOL

#### Process and timeline

##### *For members of the public:*

Members of the public are encouraged to first bring their issue to the attention of the Board during the *Community Comments* section of a regular board meeting or by emailing the Board at [board@saratogausd.org](mailto:board@saratogausd.org).

Members of the public shall submit a request to place an item on a future board meeting agenda in email or in writing to the Superintendent and/or the board. Alternatively, members of the public may make a verbal request to place an item on a future board meeting agenda during the public comments portion of a board meeting. Requests must be about matters which are within the jurisdiction of the Board and must be received at least one week in advance of a regularly scheduled board meeting to be considered for inclusion in that meeting's agenda; however, scheduling the item is at the discretion of the Board and there is no assurance that the item will be placed on any particular meeting's agenda. The request should include the name and contact information of the requester, whether the requester intends to attend the meeting in person, and a description of the item in sufficient detail so that staff and public can understand the topic. The superintendent or board president will acknowledge the request and will update the member of the public when/if the item will be agendaized for an upcoming board meeting.

##### *For district staff members:*

District staff may propose items to be addressed by the Board, excluding items that are subject to negotiations, and will submit these requests to the Superintendent for possible inclusion in a board meeting agenda. Scheduling the item is at the discretion of the Board and there is no assurance that the item will be placed on any particular meeting's agenda.

##### *For the Board:*

Board members may request that items be included in future board meetings during the "Future Agenda Items" section of a board meeting. These items will be placed on the matrix of future board business items maintained by the Superintendent's staff. Board members may also submit requests for agenda items to the Superintendent in writing or via email.

##### *Process for preparing board agendas:*

The Board President, Superintendent will meet prior to the legally required agenda posting date to consider items to place on the agenda for the upcoming meeting. They will consider requests from the public, staff, and Board; the meeting matrix; and any other items they determine should be brought to the Board for discussion or action. The President and Superintendent may defer any item to a future meeting at their discretion, and may allot a specific time period to each item.



The President and Superintendent will determine whether an item should be covered in a regular board meeting, a special board meeting, a board workshop, or a mini-workshop within a regular board meeting.

### Additional requirements and guidelines

Staff members and board members are also considered members of the public and have the same rights to request that items be placed on a board agenda.

In creating the agenda and scheduling agenda items, the President and Superintendent shall keep in mind the priorities tied to board goals and district budget. They should consider the limits of staff resources to implement board actions on agenda items, and the proper roles of the Board in accordance with CSBA guidelines.

Although the public may ask that any school related matter be put on the agenda, the Board can solely determine whether the item is appropriate to the role of the Board, and may decide to refer the item to the Superintendent.

Legally, the Board may determine reasonable procedures for board meetings, including deadlines, time allotted, and whether action will be taken. The Board President is designated as the Board's agent for making these determinations. The Board may, by majority vote at a regular board meeting, override the President and Superintendent's decisions on date and time, designate that an item be placed on the agenda for a specific future board meeting, and specify an amount of time to be allotted to it. The Board may also, by majority vote, decide to defer discussion or action on an agenda item to a specific future board meeting.

Persons who request that items be placed on the board agenda are encouraged to attend the meeting in person.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS**

(Adopted April 10, 2012)

### PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL

- To establish procedures to handle communication between the board, staff, and administration so that all board members have access to the same information while respecting the Brown Act.
- To establish procedures to formally acknowledge participants in Board Meeting Spotlights.
- To establish procedures to formally acknowledge work done by staff and administration that goes above and beyond the scope of normal duties.

### PROTOCOL

### Communication:

Requests for specific information made by a board member to staff or administrators should be made through the Superintendent. In order to ensure that the information is shared in a consistent manner, the Superintendent will distribute the information to all board members.

If a board member wishes to provide information to the other board members on a specific topic, the information should be sent to the Superintendent so that he/she can distribute it to the entire Board.

A board member who is a parent at a school has the ability to discuss any matters or concerns regarding their individual child. However, when a board member is present at a school site, it is important to remember that individual board members do not create directives on policy or budgetary matters. The Board, as a whole, makes those decisions.

### Acknowledgement:

If the Board determines that an individual or group has performed work that is above and beyond the scope of their normal duties, an acknowledgment in appreciation of this accomplishment can be sent to this individual or group. The Board President will make the decision and delegate it to the Clerk of the Board. The Clerk of the Board will send correspondence to convey outstanding effort on the part of staff or administration, on behalf of the Board. The Clerk of the Board will then inform the Board and Superintendent of the completed correspondence.

The Clerk of the Board will send an acknowledgement for all Spotlights that are done at board meetings. To the extent possible, this correspondence should be sent to the students directly or to the person in charge of the group of students that were part of that Spotlight. If appropriate, the site principal should receive a copy of the acknowledgment so that it may be shared with staff. The Clerk of the Board will then inform the Board and Superintendent of the completed correspondence.

## **BOARD OFFICE HOURS**

(Adopted December 2013; Amended September 2014; April 20, 2023; Amended February 15, 2024)

The Board recognizes the value to promote accessibility to the community. We believe that implementing regular, open-door meetings with community members will result in addressing our goal of building on our community of trust. The Brown Act recognizes that no more than two board members can be present at any given meeting and that no board decisions will be made. In this protocol the SUSD Board details the guidelines for the office hours and how they will be implemented.

### PURPOSE OF PROTOCOL

- To allow board members to engage with the community in a forum outside that of a Board Meeting
- To facilitate the communication of community input on the District's educational policy decisions

### PROTOCOL: Process/Timeline

- Board office hours is a tool the board has for communication with the public. The board will schedule board office hours when the need arises. Board office hour schedules may be set during the “Board Activities” agenda item.
- A designated room at a school site – with a rotation of each school site – as arranged by school site administration
- A calendar will be posted on the District website for the community to view, and communicated via eNews for each school site

### For the Board of Trustees

- Due to Brown Act restrictions, only two board members can attend a single meeting at the same time
- Board member participation is voluntary and can be modified at the discretion of the Board

### Additional Requirements and Guidelines

- To ensure compliance with the Brown Act, board members will not communicate the content of these meetings to other board members, but will report out to the Board as a whole during a duly agendized Board meeting.
- Please remember that the Board can only take action through a majority vote of its members. Therefore, statements made by individual board members represent the view of that board member, and not the Board as whole. Likewise, statements or information provided to individual Board members are also only made to the individual Board member, and not to the Board as a whole.
- Because of Brown Act restrictions, no decisions can or will be made during community member meetings. Decisions will only be made during a duly agendized board meeting.
- Since the Brown Act only allows the Board (or any subset of a quorum or greater) to meet in a duly agendized meeting, the best time to address the Board as a whole is at a public board meeting, or in writing addressed to the Board as a whole.
- Please remember that no one can guarantee that conversations with elected public officials will be confidential. Please do not request confidentiality as to any statements you make or information you provide during these meetings.
- Please be courteous and respectful. While we might not agree on every issue, we share the common goal of providing the best education possible to our children.
- District parents should be encouraged to start with their child’s teacher or principal if they have a question or concern.
- Board members will report at the next board meeting how many people attended, the general concerns raised and how the concerns were handled. (i.e. 3 people attended, topics included X, Y and Z. They were advised to contact the teacher/principal/administrator.)

## **BOARD MESSAGES**

(Adopted March, 2017; Amended April 20, 2023)

### **PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL**

The Board would like to promote open, transparent and informative communication by sending out email messages to the SUSD community on a regular basis.

### **PROTOCOL**

The Board agrees that an electronic message will be sent approximately monthly during the school year to all parents, guardians and staff who are on the District's electronic listserv. This update will be included in a district communication such as the district eNews or Superintendent Update. We also agree that the Board President will be responsible for facilitating the message. The Superintendent, the Assistant to the Superintendent and Board will have an opportunity to review the message before it is published. Other staff may be included in the review to ensure accuracy of content.

### Content of Board Messages

The Communications Committee, or the Board President, will prepare a semester long calendar with suggested content for each Board message. The Board, the Superintendent and the Assistant to the Superintendent and Board will all receive copies of the calendar. Board messages may include:

- Invitation to all public meetings held by the Board
- Invitation to Board Office Hours
- Highlights of public meetings
- Information about up-coming Board actions
- Informational articles written by Board Members
- Monthly Superintendent Letters to the Community
- Other information as deemed appropriate by the Board

The Board message is not intended to take the place of Meeting Minutes. The message will inform the community, in broad and general terms, of the important discussions and or/actions that took place during a Board Meeting.

### Format of Board Messages

- Clear, concise and easy to read.
- Bullet points should be used to enumerate topics of interest.
- Bold font on the topic title to ensure ease of readability.
- Parents may request translation in their primary language via the district's communication app or through their school office.

## WHAT EVERY NEW BOARD MEMBER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Saratoga Union School District  
20460 Forrest Hills Drive  
Saratoga, CA 95070  
(408) 867-3424  
www.saratogausd.org

### GOVERNANCE TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Position	Contact Information
Ken Geisick	Superintendent	kgeisick@saratogausd.org (408) 867-3424, x503
Grace Jens	Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Trustees	gjens@saratogausd.org (408) 867-3424, x503
Melissa Stanis	Board President	mstanis@saratogausd.org
Eric Cao	Clerk of the Board	ecao@saratogausd.org
Scott Adler	Member	sadler@saratogausd.org
Cynthia Miller	Member	cmiller@saratogausd.org
Vidya R. Vineet	Member	vvineet@saratogausd.org

**DISTRICT OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION**

<b>District Office Departments</b>	<b>Department Head Name and Title</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Business Services, Facilities, Maintenance, Child Nutrition	<b>Jean Aldrete</b> Chief Business Officer	(408) 867-3424 x507	jaldrete@saratogausd.org
Educational Services	<b>Moira Barker</b> Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services	(408) 867-3424 x506	mbarker@saratogausd.org
Extended Care and Learning Programs	<b>Jessica Baker</b> Director of Learning and Extended Care Programs	(408) 867-3424	jbaker@saratogausd.org
Human Resources	<b>Kym Imai</b> Director of Human Resources	(408) 867-342 x504	kimai@saratogausd.org
Special Education	<b>Erin Granger</b> Director of Special Education	(408) 867-3424 x512	egranger@saratogausd.org
Technology	<b>Cody Nez</b> Director of Technology	(408) 867-3424 x700	cnez@saratogausd.org

## DISTRICT SCHOOLS

School	Grades	Principal	Phone Number	E-mail
Argonaut Elementary School	K-5	Joe Bosco	(408) 867-4773	jbosco@saratogausd.org
Foothill Elementary School	TK-5	Kim Dinsdale	(408) 867-4036	kdinsdale@saratogausd.org
Saratoga Elementary School	TK-5	Kristin Murphy	(408) 867-3476	kmurphy@saratogausd.org
Redwood Middle School	6-8	Steve Hamm	(408) 867-3042	shamm@saratogausd.org

## DISTRICT INFORMATION

### Communities served by the district:

About two-thirds of the city of Saratoga and small portions of the cities of Monte Sereno and Los Gatos, as well as a portion of unincorporated Santa Clara County.

### Number of square miles covered by the district:

Eight

### Grade levels served by the district:

Transitional Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Special Day Preschool

### Number of Schools:

A total of four, three elementary schools and one middle school.

### Number of students enrolled:

1605 (Census Day, October 2023)

### Number of English Learners:

119

### Number of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch:

48

### Number of Employees in the District:

236

**REFERENCE LINKS:**

School Accountability Report Cards	<a href="http://www.saratogausd.org/sarc">www.saratogausd.org/sarc</a>
Local Control Accountability Plan	<a href="http://www.saratogausd.org/lcap">www.saratogausd.org/lcap</a>
Budget Information	<a href="http://www.saratogausd.org/budget">www.saratogausd.org/budget</a>
District Boundaries	<a href="http://www.saratogausd.org/districtlocator">www.saratogausd.org/districtlocator</a>

**EMPLOYEE GROUPS**

- Saratoga Teachers Association - Jen Vandenberg, President
- Saratoga Classified Employees Association - Debb Dallas, Vinh Pham
- Saratoga Confidential Employees - Grace Jens

**COMMITTEES AND BOARD OBSERVATIONS**

County Commission School District Organization Representative	Eric Cao, Clerk per Bylaw 9213
Santa Clara County School Boards Association Representative	Vidya R. Vineet (selected at December Organizational Meeting)
OBSERVATION - DELAC (English Language Acquisition)	Board Activity sign up
OBSERVATION - Saratoga Education Foundation (SEF)	Board Activity sign up
OBSERVATION - School site walkthroughs with Superintendent	Board Activity sign up
OBSERVATION - Special Education Advisory Committee	Board Activity sign up
OBSERVATION - Superintendent’s Advisory Council	Board Activity sign up

The Executive Assistant to the Board of Trustees will work with committee organizers representing these district groups to identify specific meetings that may be of interest to board members based on the meeting agenda.

**BOARD MEETING INFORMATION**

Board meetings are typically held at 6:00 pm monthly on Thursdays.

Board Agenda and materials are typically delivered electronically to board and community members on the Friday prior to any regular board meeting. Board agendas and archives can be found on the districts GAMUT website at: <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/index.aspx?S=36030439>

The order of items on the board meeting agenda is typically as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Closed Session – Personnel, Negotiations, Legal Matters
4. Open Session and Report Out
5. Spotlight
6. Action/Consent Items



7. Communications
8. Action/Discussion Items
9. Future Agenda Items
10. Board Activities
11. Adjournment

Board Trustees should familiarize themselves with these topics through board governance workshops, CSBA classes, board meeting presentations, and/or meeting with the Superintendent.

- District Policies and Administrative Regulations  
<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=36030439>
- Board Bylaws (9000 Series)  
<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=36030439>
- Annual Governance Calendar (posted to the agenda under Future Agenda Items)
- The Brown Act
- CSBA Professional Governance Standards
- District Budget  
<https://www.saratogausd.org/departments/business-services/district-budget>
- Saratoga Teachers Association (STA) and Saratoga Classified Association (SCA) contracts  
<https://www.saratogausd.org/departments/human-resources/sta-and-sca-contracts>

## **BOARD MEMBER BENEFITS**

### **STIPEND**

Each member of the governing board will receive a monthly compensation of \$200, for a total of \$2400 per calendar year.

### **HEALTH BENEFITS**

Board members can buy into the district health insurance policy. Contact Director of Human Resources at (408) 867-3424, x504.

### **ATTENDING CONFERENCES / EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS / COMMUNITY EVENTS**

A budget/fund is maintained for board members to attend conferences and educational meetings. Contact the Board's Executive Assistant at (408) 867-3424, x503 for more information.

### **MAKING RESERVATIONS FOR CONFERENCES / WORKSHOPS / DISTRICT BUSINESS TRIPS**

Contact the Board's Executive Assistant.

### **TRAVEL EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENTS**

Contact the board's Executive Assistant or Chief Business Official.