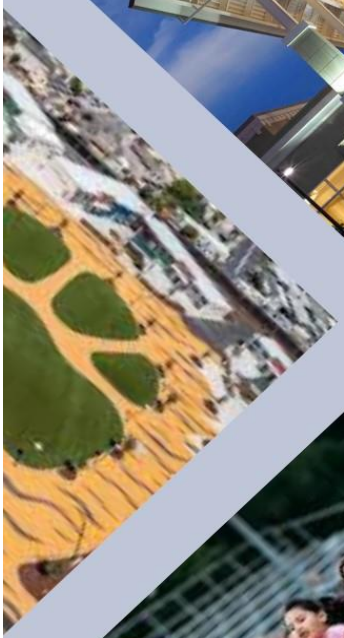




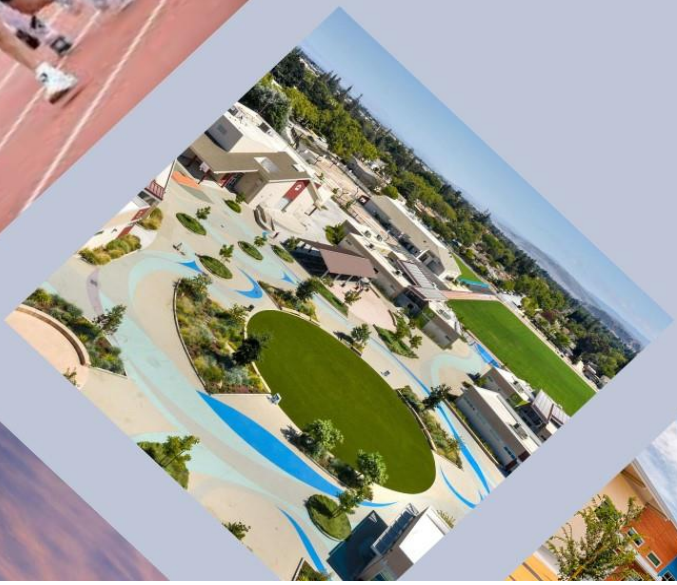


GUSD

GILROY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD HANDBOOK











Governance Handbook

The Board of Education 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. School districts and county offices of education are governed by boards, not by individual trustees. While understanding their separate roles, the Board and Superintendent work together as a "governance team." This team assumes collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively. To operate effectively, the Board and Superintendent must have a unity of purpose, an understanding of roles and responsibilities, governance standards and protocols.

2025 Board of Trustees

Tuyen Fiack,
President
Linda Piceno,
Vice President
Jennifer Del Bono
Gabriela Kim
Kenny Moreno
Michelle Nelson
Hyon Chu Yi-Baker

Superintendent

Dr. Anisha Munshi

This handbook outlines the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, governance standards, roles, and protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best serves all students.

Created by the Governance Team

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About California school boards

School boards govern California's nearly 1,000 school districts serving 6.2 million students

1. School board trustees are individually elected by the community they serve

- Each school district is governed by a school board that is accountable for -the performance of schools in their district.
- They represent the community's diverse beliefs and values.
- School board trustees are residents of the school district they serve and come from all walks of life- doctors, lawmakers, teachers, architects, truck drivers, professors, business owners, real estate agents and more.

2. School boards govern at board meetings

- Hiring and evaluating the Superintendent
- Adopting district policies
- Approving Local Control Accountability Plans
- Adopting and monitoring budgets
- Monitoring district performance and student achievement
- Actively listening to public comments

3. School boards serve the community

- Listening to their ideas
- Engaging them in setting the district mission and goals
- Making student achievement a priority
- Advocating on important K-12 policy issues for all students
- Representing the district at community events
- Ensuring accountability for student and district performance

4. School board trustees give the gift of time

- Preparing for and attending board meetings
- Responding to constituents
- Participating in board training and development
- Attending community events

The Busy Life of a GUSD Board Trustee

School board trustees are a diverse group united by a common goal: supporting students and improving their academic and social outcomes. A trustee is called to public service with the intention of making a difference in the lives of children and families in their community. They are responsible for the continuous improvement and effectiveness of educational programs, the district's fiscal health, and providing opportunities for student growth and achievement. Below is a description of the GUSD Trustee's commitment:

1. **There are typically two Board Meetings per month,** on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays with several months having only one meeting. The December meeting includes the Annual Organizational Meeting. Special Board Meetings may be scheduled as needed. Generally, Board meetings begin with closed session, at 5:30pm, and open session at 7:00pm and end by 9:30pm or later. Depending on the Trustee, Board meeting material can take anywhere from two to eight hours to review and prepare for the meeting.

2. **Trustee comments and comments regarding the Board Agenda are due** to the Executive Committee, composed of the Superintendent, the Board President, and the Board Vice President, by the Monday prior to a Board meeting. The Superintendent will make every effort to ensure questions are addressed in a timely manner before the meeting.

3. **Board Education Workshops** are scheduled regularly to enhance the Board's knowledge and ability to work as a successful governance team. For example, the Superintendent may ask legal counsel to meet with new Board Trustees to review the legal obligations of the Trustee. Other opportunities for learning and growth are offered by the California School Boards Association (CSBA).

4. **A Board Retreat** is scheduled at least once per year. This meeting has been traditionally scheduled in the month of January on a Saturday. The intent of this annual meeting is to review the District's Vision and Mission Statements, along with the Board's Goals. Along with these topics, the Board also engages in a professional learning of a topic that aligns with the District's and Board's goals.

5. **The CSBA Annual Education Conference** is held in the first week of December from Wednesday through Saturday. Trustees are strongly encouraged to attend in an effort to improve the understanding of the work of a trustee and build a cohesive working relationship with each other and the Superintendent.

6. **Community Events** that throughout Gilroy are also part of a Trustee's purview. Trustees are encouraged to attend local events to stay engaged with the community.

7. **School Activities** occur quite regularly at each of our schools. Trustees are encouraged to attend when possible.

8. **The Superintendent's Formal School Site Visits** occur twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring, to each school in order to see student progress in the classrooms. Trustees are encouraged to attend.

9. **Pay and Benefits** currently include a $400 per month stipend and the option to join the District's group health insurance plan at the same rate as employees.

More information about the School Board's role:

The School Board Role in Creating the Conditions for Student Achievement School Boards in Action

What It Takes to Lead: The role and function of California's school boards

GUSD's Motto and Mission

Motto:

- ***Excellence:*** *It takes everyone!*

Mission Statement:

- *The Gilroy Unified School District will provide opportunities for all students to reach their highest academic and intellectual competencies and personal attributes, to be life-long learners, responsible citizens, and productive members of society. This will be accomplished by having a clear focus on student needs; staff, parents and community members demonstrating high expectations for themselves and for every child served; and by continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.*

GUSD School Board's Goal and Priorities

Goal:

- Develop a strong district-wide team that builds a culture of shared leadership and ownership of all student outcomes.

Priorities:

- Student Preparation and Performance
    - Achievement is attainable for all student groups with a commitment for all students to meet or exceed standards.

- Culture, Engagement, and Teamwork
    - Promote communication with stakeholders that embraces engagement around the belief that all students are valued and will achieve.

- Professional Growth and Learning
    - A commitment to continuous learning and growth to achieve our goals for student success (All staff, Trustees, and Parents).

- Safety
    - A place where every person feels safe, secure, and has a sense of belonging, so learning and achievement can occur.

Unity of Purpose

The Board of Education and the Superintendent believe that our primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board and Superintendent are also committed to parents and guardians, members of the community, employees, the state of California, laws pertaining to public education, and established policies of the district. To maximize effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Trustees and the Superintendent are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct while representing a shared unity of purpose.

1. *We value, advocate for, and support public education.*
2. *We keep the District focused on learning and achievement for all students.*
3. *We communicate a common vision.*
4. *We ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.*
5. *We are here to serve the community.*
6. *We ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations.*
7. *We support opinions with evidence and facts.*
8. *We put aside personal and political preferences and opinions so that students' needs and priorities drive our decisions.*
9. *We recognize and appreciate the professional judgment of our staff and their commitment to our schools and students.*
10. *We operate in a unified, cohesive manner with a unity of purpose rooted in action and driven by ethical imperatives.*
11. *We serve as a model for the value of lifelong learning.*

Roles and Responsibilities

These roles and responsibilities represent core functions that are fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public. Authority is granted to the Board as a whole, not any Trustee 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 role of Trustees is to stay focused on the big picture while fulfilling their responsibilities in a series of job areas. These five responsibilities are:

- To set the direction.
- To establish the structure.
- To provide support.
- To ensure accountability.
- To act as community leaders.

We carry 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, mission, and goals.

Board Governance Standards

Effective boards make a commitment to govern responsibly and effectively. Board Governance Standards are designed to guide the collective work of the Board in their responsibility to protect the public interest in schools and ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. The standards also provide a framework for Trustees and the Superintendent to work together as a governance team.

1. Trustees understand the distinction between the Board roles and District staff roles and delegate administrative functions to the Superintendent.

2. Trustees never discuss confidential personnel matters, confidential negotiation matters, or any matters discussed in closed session, with anyone, including members of the bargaining units, the public, or staff.

3. No Trustee will make, or appear to make a decision, which appropriately should be made by the entire Board. There are seven board members. "I am only one equal vote."

4. Each member of the team accepts responsibility for making the team successful.

5. Appointments are made by the Superintendent, in consultation with the Board. Personnel changes are to be recommended by the Superintendent. Board input will include only significant and relevant data – never the "pushing for" or "pushing out" of individuals.

6. Trustees are encouraged to be aware of their conversations involving the business of the District to ensure that their conversations outside of a noticed meeting, either directly or indirectly, involve less than a majority of the Board (Brown Act).

7. Loyalty to the entire team includes:
   a. Reading board packets prior to meeting, bringing questions or concerns prior to the meeting
   b. Attending meetings
   c. Participating in the discussion of issues and listening patiently and respectfully
   d. Being civil and striving to understand points of view
   e. Respecting and acknowledging each individual's thoughts and opinions
   f. Accepting and living with the action of the Board – prior disagreements are deemed closed after action is taken

8. The Board will 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.

9. The Board will periodically evaluate its own effectiveness.

Board Protocols

Protocols provide specific guidelines within which the Board will function. The following are agreed upon norms, procedures, and protocols required for the Board to work in a cohesive, consistent, and professional manner.

1. Discussions are conducted professionally, exhibiting attentive listening, mutual respect, politeness and calm, despite differences of opinion.

2. New issues or items raised during public comment at a school board meeting will be referred to the Superintendent, and the Superintendent will respond accordingly.

3. Questions and clarification of board agenda items are to be communicated to the Executive Committee by the Monday prior to the board meeting.

4. Any substantive complaint or concern communicated to a trustee by the community is to be referred to the Executive Committee, and the Superintendent shall provide a response to the entire Board in a timely manner.

5. Individual requests for reports, surveys, projects, or information will be directed to the Executive Committee and responses will be directed to the entire Board.

6. Rumor and innuendo information are not to be pursued except by and in the judgment of the Superintendent.

7. Trustees should not come between the Superintendent and District staff, as this may undermine the Superintendent's authority.

8. Any concern reported to the Superintendent by a Trustee is to receive the appropriate priority, with the disposition of the matter communicated to all of the Board.

9. With the exception of campaigning for office during election season, Trustees will not use the media as a personal forum. The Superintendent and the Board President are the District spokespersons for issues involving the media. The Superintendent may consult with Trustees to develop a public statement.

Gilroy Unified School District

Resolution No. 24/25-17
Adopt Board Governance Handbook

WHEREAS, local boards of education are entrusted by their diverse communities to uphold the Constitution, protect the public interest in schools and ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student; and

WHEREAS, local boards must govern responsibly and effectively on behalf of the students and communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, the intent of this resolution is to build unity, create a positive organizational culture, improve the effectiveness of the Board's leadership and governance, and thereby, operate on established Board governance standards, roles, and protocols which act as guidelines for the conduct of effective Board-Superintendent relations and Board meetings; and

WHEREAS, because boards can only perform their governance work at board meetings, and they have limited time and often extensive issues that require their attention, the efficiency of these meetings is critical to effective governance; and

WHEREAS, the Board Governance Standards, Protocols and Unity of Purpose will be utilized to enhance our District's effectiveness and to help our community and families to better understand the structure and function of the School Board and Superintendent; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Gilroy Unified School District, have agreed upon the following Unity of Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities, Board Governance Standards, and Board Protocols, which shall be reviewed and updated periodically. Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Gilroy Unified School District hereby adopts the GUSD Board Governance Handbook this 17 day of October, 2024 at a regular meeting of the Board of Education, by the following vote:

AYES: Melissa Aguirre, Tuyen Fiack, Mark Good, Gabriela Kim, Michelle Nelson, James Pace, Linda Piceno

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Attest: _____
Board President