Tracy Unified School District

Governance Team Handbook

TRACY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

EDUCATION = OPPORTUNITY

Approved Board of Trustees: ~~03.14.23~~

Tracy Unified School District

Governance Handbook 2025

Board of Trustees

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Structure – Board Protocols

Efficient Boards discuss and agree on the formal structures used by the Board and Superintendent in their functioning as a team and how they do business.

	AGENDA AND MEETINGS
1. Getting Something on the Agenda	*Principles*: • Any Board member has the right to request, in writing to the Superintendent, at least one week before the meeting date that an item be placed on the agenda. • The agenda belongs to the full Board. • Members need to understand the process for making these requests. Agreements: The Board agenda shall be built implementing the following guidelines: 1. Board Member's recommendation. A Board member's recommendation of an agenda item should either: a. be requested at a Board meeting; or b. the Board Member should email the Superintendent or Board President, who will consider the request. 2. Board President's recommendation 3. Superintendent's recommendation 4. Input from staff. District personnel may recommend items to be placed on the Board agenda 5. Request by the public. Such requests will be in writing and reviewed by the Board President and Superintendent.
2. Information re: Board Packet Information	*Principles:* • Trustees are prepared for Board meetings and have reviewed agenda materials before each meeting. • Trustees have equal access to information. • The governance team demonstrates respect for staff. Agreements: 1. Board Members may email the Superintendent anytime with questions regarding board meeting materials. 2. To ensure ~~question~~questions can be answered prior to the Board meeting, questions will be submitted by end of day

	Monday prior to the Board meeting, if possible, but no later than Tuesday at noon. 3. The Superintendent will, if appropriate, share any question and answer with all Board Members by email. The Board trusts the Superintendent to make this judgment. 4. A majority of Board members shall not directly or electronically discuss, deliberate, or take action on any matter outside of Board meetings.
3. Questions in Advance – No Surprises	*Principle:* • The governance team demonstrates respect for staff. Agreements: 1. Trustees will, if possible, inform the Superintendent in advance if they intend to ask a question at a Board meeting. 2. Trustees may not always anticipate questions in advance. If so, Trustees will let the Board and community know before asking. For example: "I did not ask this in advance, so you may not have the answer here, but here…"
4. Role of the President	*Principles:* • The Board wants its meetings to be effective, efficient, and carry out the will of the majority. • The President manages the meeting in a manner consistent with the Board's agreements. Agreement: *1.* The Board gives the Board President permission to enforce the Board's agreements regarding the conduct of meetings.
5. Meeting Decorum	*Principle:* • The Board wishes to conduct business in a professional and respectful manner. Agreements: 1. Trustees and staff refer to each other by title and last name. 2. President will be referred to as Mr./Ms. President. 3. The President will recognize Trustees in order. 4. The President may move the meeting by saying, "unless any new ideas."

6. Public Comments at Meetings	*Principles:* • Public is treated respectfully. • Board and Superintendent are responsive to public comment. • The Board meeting is productive and efficient Agreements: ***Non-Agenda Items***: 1. Public comments are taken (placed on agenda). 2. Speakers are allocated 3-minutes per person and cannot share minutes with other speakers. 3. Comments can also be made on action items during this time; however, they cannot comment on the same issue under both non-agenda and agendized items. ***Agendized Items:*** 1. President opens the item. 2. Staff reports on the item. 3. President calls for public comment. 4. President opens public comments and reminds the community of the guidelines for public comment. a. Three-minute time limit per person per topic. Note: The President may, in consultation with the Board, adjust the time to accommodate large groups. b. Comments must be within the purview / jurisdiction of the Board. c. Public can comment on action items during this time or under hearing of delegations, but they may not address the Board twice. 5. Comments should be directed to the full Board. 6. The President will acknowledge each speaker and respond appropriately; can ask Superintendent to correct misinformation for the record. a. Any Board member or the Superintendent may ask for clarifications of fact. 7. The President closes public comment. 8. Trustees shall remain neutral and refrain from responding to public comment. 9. The total time limit for public input on each item is 20 minutes. a. With Board consent, the President may increase or decrease time allowed for public presentation, depending on topic and number of persons wishing to be heard.

7. Staff Reports	*Principles* : The Board: • receives sufficient information to do its work. • values the contributions of district staff. • keeps meetings focused and efficient. Agreements: 1. Staff reports will be provided in advance unless unavoidable. 2. Staff reports should address as applicable: a. Impact on students b. District Priorities c. Policy d. Cost e. Options & Alternatives f. Rationale for Proposed Action 3. Guidelines for Staff a. Focus on the most important aspects of the issue. b. Avoid jargon c. Don't read slides or reports to the Board.
8. Deliberations	*Principles*: • Trustees are prepared for deliberation by advance study of Board materials. • All Trustees have an opportunity to participate. • All Trustees work to demonstrate understanding of the views of all Trustees. Agreements: In deliberations, and for responding to staff recommendations, the Board will reflect on: 1. District mission, values, and priorities 2. Policy 3. Budget 4. Impact on students 5. Community perspectives 6. Impact on other systems: Staff, Facilities, etc. 7. Reasonableness

9. Trustee Comments / Reports	Agreements: 1. Trustees will attempt to keep comments less than 2 minutes. 2. Trustees will focus comments on: a. Board development activity (may include professional reading, training, etc.) b. District activities they have attended.
10. Asking for Additional Information	*Principle:* • Only the Board may direct the Superintendent. Agreements: 1. If a Board Member asks for additional information that is not readily available, the Board directs the Superintendent to present the request to the full Board at a Board meeting. 2. At the meeting, the Board Member can explain the request and the Superintendent can inform the Board how fulfilling the request will impact staff.
	COMMUNICATION/GENERAL
11. Board – Superintendent Communication	*Principles:* • The Superintendent wishes to provide the Board with efficient, accurate information. • The Board wishes to demonstrate respect for the Superintendent. • Board members have access to the same information. Agreements: 1. Board members will direct all district communication to the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's executive assistant. a. The Superintendent will either answer or direct staff to answer the question. b. The Superintendent uses his/her judgment to determine which information is shared and will respond to all Board members, without the original name of the Trustee who asked the question(s).
12. Keeping the Board Informed	*Principle*: • Trustees have access to sufficient and equal information. Agreement: 1. The Superintendent will inform the Board by email, as soon as possible regarding serious issues that include but are not limited to liability exposure, media exposure, serious injury, unexpected/ dramatic staff issues, or other serious concerns.

	a. The Superintendent exercises discretion and independent judgment on what to report to the Board. b. When necessary, the Superintendent will provide the Board with talking points.
13. Email Communication	*Principles:* • Trustees wish to avoid unintentional violations of the Brown Act • Governance team members wish to be courteous and responsive to each other. Agreements: 1. If the Superintendent sends an email to all Board members and needs no response, he/she may indicate this by placing the words "No Reply Needed" in the subject header of the email. 2. If the Superintendent sends an email to all Board members and seeks a response, he/she may indicate this by placing the text "Reply Requested" in the subject header of the email. a. Board members will use the "reply" function so that only the Superintendent receives the response. Members will not use "reply to all." b. Governance team members will make every reasonable effort to respond to emails (and calls) within 24 hours.
14. Avoiding Serial Meetings- Brown Act	*Principle*: • Trustees wish to avoid violations of the Brown Act Agreements: 1. When approached by 1 or 2 Trustees regarding a matter within the Board's jurisdiction, both Trustees will disclose whether they have discussed the matter with another Trustee. 2. If issue has been discussed by two other Board Members, the Trustees will stop the conversation.
15. Visiting Schools	*Principles*: Trustees visit schools to: • Demonstrate interest in student learning and support for the work of staff. • See the connection between the work of the Board and the experience of students and staff.

	Agreements: 1. As a courtesy, Board members inform the Superintendent's office when they plan to visit schools. 2. Board members call principals to schedule a visit. 3. Board members follow the school rules regarding visitors (e.g., sign in at the school office.) 4. Board members are careful not to make evaluative statements to school staff or students.
16. Handling Complaints / Concerns from the Staff / Community ***Note: Uniform Complaint Policy required by law***	*Principles*: • Treat others with respect. • Support District policy and procedures regarding concerns or complaints. • Board members stay within their role. Agreements: In responding to complaints, Board members will: 1. Receive – Listen, smile, and thank them. 2. Repeat – Explain their point to their satisfaction. ("Do you believe that I understand?" and/or "What would you like me to do for you?") 3. Remind – Explain that you have no authority as an individual. *4.* Re-Direct – Direct them back into the system at the appropriate level. *5.* Report – to Superintendent