Minutes of
Special Meeting of the Governing Board
For Tracy Unified School District
Held on Tuesday, February 28, 2025

1. 3:11 PM **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

2. Roll Call – Establish Quorum
Board: O. Alexander, Denise Cheeseman, RG Fagin, L. Hawkins, S. Secker, J. Silcox, D. Traina
Staff: R. Pecot, B. Etcheverry, S. Smith
Facilitator: Terilyn Finders

3. Comments **Hearing of Delegations:** None.

4. Workshop **4.1 Board Governance Workshop**

Board introductions were made. Trustee Silcox introduced Ms. Terilyn Finders who facilitated the meeting. The Board reviewed the current Board Governance Handbook, previously approved March 14, 2023. They went over each section, adding suggestions and/or deletions. The suggested changes to the handbook will be presented at the March 25, 2025 board meeting as an action item for approval.

Key points discussed:

- Only the board has authority by law, not individually, to give direction to the Superintendent, all other employees report to other professionals within the organization. The board's responsibility is to set the direction and hire/evaluate the Superintendent. The board sets the policy for the district in accordance with federal and state law. The board is an advocate for the children and the district, they connect with the community but are not expected to bring expertise to the district. They make sure there is a structure in place to ensure things are attended to but do not solve individual issues.
- Be careful not to place opinions in a message. Do not editorialize, you do not want it to appear as you have made up your mind prior to the board meeting decision.
- A basic explanation and overview of the Brown Act was discussed. Discussions must occur in public. You can speak together, one on one, but you cannot move toward a quorum discussion outside of the public view (board meeting).

Getting an Item on the Agenda:

- Members of the public have the right to place a topic on the agenda but it must first be within your subject matter jurisdiction. Requestors should be referred to submit their request to the Superintendent in writing.

Information Regarding Board Packet:

- Board packets should be reviewed in advance so you are aware of what is being presented for approval and so you can ask questions in advance if needed. The meeting is more effective if there is time to prepare a thoughtful answer to share.
- Board trustees should not come into the meeting with their mind made up. If a report is being given, you may have questions or discussion take place prior to a vote.

Meeting Decorum:

- Discussions in the boardroom should be civilized. When being asked to make a big decision on policy change, you are not expected to do this in one meeting. Committees may be formed; it is a time to give direction to staff and the public that the topic is being considered.
- A board trustee cannot abstain on a vote unless there is a conflict of interest. You must vote yes or no.

Public Comments at Meetings:

- The public can address the board when an item is on the agenda during public comments. Trustees can honor their questions by letting the superintendent respond to them if necessary. For example, if there is a hot topic that has had a lot of prior discussion, it is okay to inform or clarify if there has been a committee working on the situation for a certain amount of time.
- Public comments should be made in line with the boards subject matter jurisdiction. If a person is using the meeting as an open forum, you may need to pull them aside and inform them that these types of questions will not be entertained in the future.
- When the need arises to clarify for the record, always address the board, not the individual in the audience.
- The board cannot address the public on a non-agendized item. Explain to them that you cannot engage with them. A best practice is to ask the superintendent to have a staff member take them aside to assist or guide them in the direction they may need.
- For agendized items, it is important for the president to announce that they are closing public comment to allow for them to move on.

Email Communication:

- Email and texts are subject to public records requests. Be careful how you utilize your cell phone and email. All communication should be through your district issued email account.

Handling Complaints/Concerns from Staff/Community:

- The community may bring you a concern. It is a legal problem if you try to solve that issue yourself. Acknowledge their emotion and bridge them to who they should be connected to. The Uniform Complaint Process outlines the chain of command. The School Board is the only elected body within the district, if you get too involved through communication or listening too deeply about concerns, you may have to recuse yourself from doing your role on the board. Your job is to make sure there is a process for problems, not to solve them.

A self-evaluation tool was provided, and a working styles handout was completed and discussed.

4. 5:06 PM **Adjourned.**

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Clerk Date