

GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK



Jessica Rebholtz, Board President
Rebecca Pardoe, Board Clerk
Susan Johnson, Trustee
Lisa Ollivier, Trustee
Cynthia Bones, Trustee

Gary Storts, Superintendent



"Every Learner, Every Day: Engaged,
Empowered, and Future-Ready."

Board Approved: March 13, 2025

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PURPOSE

The Eureka City Schools (ECS) Governance Handbook serves as a guiding document for the Board of Education and the Superintendent. It outlines the principles, protocols, and practices that promote effective leadership and strategic decision-making, ensuring that ECS achieves its mission of preparing **"Every Learner, Every Day: Engaged, Empowered, and Future-Ready."**



MISSION, CORE VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission

Every Learner, Every Day: Engaged, Empowered, and Future-Ready

Core Values

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and commitments, ensuring trust and transparency in all we do.

Empathy: We listen with compassion and understanding, recognizing the needs and perspectives of others to create a supportive community.

Communication: We foster open, honest, and respectful dialogue to strengthen connections and collaboration within our community.

Innovation: We embrace creativity and forward-thinking solutions, continually seeking new ways to improve learning and growth.

Resilience: We adapt and persevere through challenges with a growth mindset, striving for continuous improvement and success.

MISSION, CORE VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles

Our Beliefs and Guiding Principles About Learners and Learning:

Learner-Centered Experiences

We believe learners excel when they direct their learning with personalized support and high expectations.

Safe, Inclusive, and Belonging Environments

We believe learning flourishes in safe, inclusive spaces where learners feel they belong.

Equitable Access for All

We believe learners learn at their own unique pace, in their own unique way, and deserve their own unique support.

Growth and Resilience

With a growth mindset, we believe learners overcome challenges and grow through effort.

Engagement and Relevance

We believe learning should be joyful, relevant, and connected to real-life experiences.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

The Portrait of a Graduate serves as a **visionary framework**, guiding Eureka City Schools (ECS) in preparing learners to navigate and thrive in a rapidly changing 21st-century world. Crafted by the greater Eureka community, the Portrait articulates the essential knowledge, skills, and attributes learners must develop during their educational journey.



This framework is structured around six significant rings of growth, each representing a core competency that shapes curricula, instructional practices, and the development of ECS learners as capable, responsible, and compassionate citizens.

The Portrait of a Graduate is a promise to our learners: You will leave Eureka City Schools ready to thrive as leaders, problem-solvers, and responsible citizens of our interconnected world.

EUREKA CITY SCHOOLS *Portrait of a Graduate*



Effective **COMMUNICATOR**

AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR, WHO:

- Develops ideas and opinions using credible evidence and applying relevant reasoning.
- Organizes and expresses factual, accurate, and reliable information to diverse audiences.
- Uses appropriate visuals, digital, and/or multimedia tools to express ideas.
- Demonstrates confidence when speaking and addressing ideas.
- Writes evidence-based arguments effectively, using academic language.



Independent **CRITICAL THINKER**

AN INDEPENDENT CRITICAL THINKER, WHO:

- Demonstrates mastery of college and career skills and knowledge.
- Researches thoroughly when approaching a topic, question, or problem.
- Analyzes and synthesizes ideas from complex texts and tasks.
- Writes evidence-based arguments effectively, using academic and content-specific language.
- Presents evidence-based arguments and claims using various and valid media and other resources.



Responsible **COLLABORATOR**

A RESPONSIBLE COLLABORATOR, WHO:

- Communicates clearly and effectively supported by technology.
- Uses restorative practices to strengthen relationships. Manages collaborative tasks, and both gives and receives help.
- Honors experiences, perspectives, cultures, and languages of others, especially those in marginalized groups.
- Demonstrates professionalism and builds networks within and outside of the community.



Community **ENGAGER**

A COMMUNITY ENGAGER, WHO:

- Analyzes complex local issues with an equity lens to build relationships within diverse individuals and groups in the local community.
- Applies empathy and inclusive cooperative processes to achieve goals, and to improve ideas, actions, and a community.
- Synthesizes ideas and perspectives to make decisions, resolve conflicts, and accomplish goals that benefit a community, especially those who have been marginalized.
- Uses democratic processes to assess strengths of self and others, and utilizes strengths to improve and uplift their community.



Global **STEWARD**

A GLOBAL STEWARD, WHO:

- Explores community and global issues from the perspectives of those most impacted. Uses democratic processes to take appropriate action and improve their community.
- Analyzes how power, privilege, oppression and resistance function in historical and current issues/context.
- Engages in safe and ethical behavior in real and virtual spaces.
- Applies responsible and sustainable strategies as stewards of natural and material resources.



Resilient **LEARNER**

A RESILIENT LEARNER, WHO:

- Develops interests and advocates for their needs as a continuous learner.
- Sets clear goals and achieves them by persisting through obstacles.
- Makes informed, responsible, and well-reasoned decisions.
- Develops and maintains organizational systems.
- Nurtures a positive identity based on personal and cultural assets.

EVERY LEARNER, EVERY DAY: ENGAGED, EMPOWERED, AND FUTURE-READY

GOVERNANCE PROTOCOLS

● Board Roles and Responsibilities

- **Setting Direction:** Establish district vision, goals, and strategic priorities.
- **Providing Structure:** Develop policies and budgets aligned with ECS objectives.
- **Ensuring Accountability:** Monitor learner achievement, evaluate policies, and oversee the fiscal health of the district.
- **Providing Community Leadership:** Advocate for public education and engage stakeholders.

● Superintendent's Role

- Promote learner success as the district's top priority.
- Provide timely, accurate information to the Board.
- Implement the district's vision, goals, and policies responsibly.
- Foster a positive organizational culture aligned with ECS's mission, core values, and guiding principles.
- Communicate openly and equitably with all Trustees.
- Respect the governance-management distinction, facilitating clear roles between the Board and staff.

● Governance Norms

- Focus on learner success.
- Foster trust and transparency.
- Communicate a shared vision and values.
- Govern with dignity, respect, and professionalism.
- Encourage various perspectives to inform decisions.
- Periodically evaluate governance effectiveness.

GOVERNANCE PROTOCOLS



Board Meeting Preparation

- **Questions on Agenda Items:** Submit to the Superintendent in advance for clarity and to ensure a thorough and timely response.
- **Consent Calendar Items:** Notify the Superintendent if pulling an item for discussion.
- **Non-Agenda Requests:** Notify the Superintendent; consensus may be required for staff-intensive requests. Information provided in response to one Board member's inquiry will be shared with the entire Board to maintain transparency.
- **Agenda Development:** Collaborate with the Board President to align with district priorities.



During Board Meetings

- Maintain decorum and professionalism.
- Avoid distractions and side conversations.
- Refrain from electronic communications.
- Follow structured deliberation protocols:
 - Staff presentation.
 - Trustee questions.
 - Public comments.
 - Trustee deliberation.
 - Motion, second, and vote.

GOVERNANCE PROTOCOLS



Board Meeting Management

- Meetings will be conducted efficiently to accomplish district business.
- The Board President will facilitate discussions, ensuring all Trustees have an opportunity to speak.
- The Clerk may assist by calling for process checks to maintain meeting norms.
- Opportunities for public comment is provided during regularly scheduled Board meetings. Trustees will listen respectfully to all input but refrain from direct responses during public comment.



Communication Norms

- The Board President serves as the official spokesperson for the Board.
- During emergencies, the Superintendent will serve as the primary spokesperson.
- Trustees should avoid operational matters, directing complaints to the proper channels.
- Confidentiality is maintained for closed sessions and privileged information.
- Trustees will not engage in private discussions that relate to deliberations during breaks.
- Trustees are expected to vote unless there is a conflict of interest.
- When voting in the minority or abstaining, Trustees will provide a brief, professional explanation of their decision.
- Once a decision is made by a majority vote of the Board, it becomes the Board's final and unified decision, which all members are expected to support.

EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



Governance Self-Evaluation

- Conduct annual evaluations using a structured rubric.
- Assess adherence to core values: Accountability, Empathy, Communication, Innovation, Resilience.
- Celebrate successes and address areas for improvement collaboratively.
- Align outcomes with ECS's strategic goals and professional development plans.



Semi-Annual Reflection Rubric

- Rate performance on a scale of 1-4:
 - 4: Exemplary
 - 3: Proficient
 - 2: Developing
 - 1: Needs Improvement
- Provide evidence and examples for ratings.
- Identify strengths, growth areas, and actionable next steps.
- Areas evaluated include alignment with the mission, respect for diverse perspectives, and fostering an inclusive environment.



Board Training

Board Training - Every Two Years:

- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training
- Brown Act Training
- Ethics Training

Annual: Board Development Calendar

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS



Trustee Announcements at Board Meetings

- Trustee announcements are limited to updates on:
 - Board-related committee work.
 - School and district events attended.
 - Professional development relevant to ECS governance.
 - This is not a time for political statements or personal opinions.



Items Recommended for Future Board Discussion

- Trustees may request items for future discussion during the designated portion of the agenda.
- Requests should be shared with the Superintendent prior to the meeting, if possible, and documented in writing.



Closed Session

- The Board will maintain strict confidentiality regarding closed-session discussions, respecting the Brown Act.
- The Board Clerk will report out in open session on any action taken in closed session, when required.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS



Visiting School Sites

- Trustees are encouraged to visit schools to build understanding and relations.
- Trustees will:
 - Notify the Superintendent and Site Principal before visiting.
 - Avoid interrupting instruction or the work of staff.
 - Clarify that their visit is observational, not evaluative.



Handling Complaints or Concerns

- Trustees approached with complaints will:
 - Listen respectfully without making commitments or judgments.
 - Direct the complainant to the appropriate staff member or process, i.e. Teacher → Site Principal → Superintendent.
 - Inform the Superintendent of the concern promptly.

The Eureka City Schools Governance Handbook embodies the commitment of the Board and Superintendent to **lead with integrity and professionalism**. By adhering to these protocols and values, ECS ensures every learner's success as an **engaged, empowered, and future-ready graduate**.

Elected Board of Trustees for Eureka City Schools



Lisa Ollivier, Trustee - Area 1
ollivierl@eurekacityschools.org
Occupation: Antique Dealer
Term: 2022-2026



Cynthia Bones, Trustee - Area 2
bonesc@eurekacityschools.org
Occupation: Project Manager
Term: 2024-2028



Rebecca Pardoe, Trustee - Area 3
pardoer@eurekacityschools.org
Occupation: Healthcare
Term: 2022-2026



Susan Johnson, Trustee - Area 4
johnsonsusan@eurekacityschools.org
Occupation: Registered Nurse
Term: 2024-2028



Jessica Rebholtz, Trustee - Area 5
rebholtzj@eurekacityschools.org
Occupation: Local Business Owner
Term: 2022-2026



Gary Storts, Superintendent
stortsg@eurekacityschools.org

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1:
Instructions to Access Board Policies

Appendix 2:
Semi-Annual Reflection Rubric

APPENDIX 1

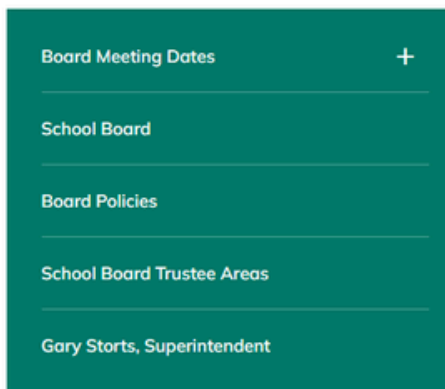
Appendix 1: Instructions to Access Board Policies

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Instructions to Access Board Policies

1. Eureka City Schools' Website (www.eurekacityschools.org)
2. Click **Governance** → Click **Board Policies**
3. Link: GAMUT - Main Page
(<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=36030728>)

HOME > GOVERNANCE



Governance

Board Meeting Dates

Board Policies

Board policies for Eureka City Schools are available online through Gamut Online, a service provided by the California School Boards Association (CSBA). Policies are updated throughout the year and added to Gamut Online after adoption by the Governing Board.

GAMUT - Main Page: <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=36030728>

Direct Link - Adopted Policies: <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/PolicyListing.aspx?S=36030728>

To search for policies, click on "policies" in the upper right corner of the page. Policies can be searched by code, title, type, and by keyword.

REQUIRED POSTINGS

The posting of the following materials to the district website is required by law. Please use the Gamut login credentials above to search for the appropriate Board Policy (BP) or Administrative Regulation (AR).

- Suicide Prevention - BP 5141.52
- Bullying - AR 5131.2
- Nondiscrimination/Harassment - AR 5145.3
- Hate-Motivated Behavior - BP 5145.9

APPENDIX 2


Appendix 2: Semi-Annual Reflection Rubric

Appendix 2: Semi-Annual Reflection Rubric

Eureka City Schools Semi-Annual Board Self-Reflection Rubric

Instructions

The Board will complete this tool as part of its semi-annual governance self-evaluation. Rate the Board's performance on each **Core Value** using the four-point scale below. Provide evidence/examples to support your ratings, and identify next steps for improvement.

Rating Scale	Description
4 - Exemplary	Consistently demonstrates the value in all areas with evidence of exceptional performance and alignment to district goals.
3 - Proficient	Frequently demonstrates the value with minor areas for improvement. Alignment to district goals is clear.] 
2 - Developing	Inconsistently demonstrates the value; improvement is needed in specific areas. Alignment to district goals is emerging.
1 - Needs Improvement	Rarely demonstrates the value; significant improvement is needed to align with district goals.

1. Accountability

Definition: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and commitments, fostering trust and transparency.

Indicators	Score (1-4)	Evidence/Examples	Next Steps
Board decisions align with ECS's mission, vision, and strategic goals.			
Board meetings are well-prepared, focused, and conducted efficiently, demonstrating responsible use of time and resources.			
Board monitors progress on district goals, including student achievement and fiscal accountability.			
The Board collectively supports decisions made through open deliberation and takes responsibility for outcomes.			

Appendix 2: Semi-Annual Reflection Rubric

2. Empathy

Definition: We listen and act with compassion, supporting the needs of all members of our community.

Indicators	Score (1-4)	Evidence/Examples	Next Steps
The Board fosters a respectful, inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are welcomed and valued.			
Board members demonstrate active listening during meetings and community engagement.			
The Board consistently considers the needs of students, families, staff, and the community in its decisions.			
Trustees model empathy in addressing concerns from stakeholders and resolve disagreements respectfully.			

3. Communication

Definition: We engage in open, honest, and respectful dialogue to strengthen collaboration and relationships.

Indicators	Score (1-4)	Evidence/Examples	Next Steps
Trustees communicate openly and transparently with the Superintendent, fellow Board members, and stakeholders.			
Public input is actively encouraged and thoughtfully considered in decision-making processes.			
Board members uphold the “no surprises” rule and share concerns proactively to maintain trust.			
The Board speaks with one voice after decisions are made, demonstrating unity and clarity of purpose.			

Appendix 2: Semi-Annual Reflection Rubric

4. Innovation

Definition: We embrace creativity and forward-thinking solutions to continuously improve learning.

Indicators	Score (1-4)	Evidence/Examples	Next Steps
The Board champions innovative practices that align with the Portrait of a Graduate and ECS strategic goals.			
Trustees encourage creative, evidence-based solutions to challenges facing the district.			
The Board supports professional development and continuous improvement for district leadership and staff.			
Board initiatives promote forward-thinking approaches that prepare students to be future-ready learners.			

5. Resilience

Definition: We persevere through challenges with a growth mindset, promoting continuous improvement.

Indicators	Score (1-4)	Evidence/Examples	Next Steps
The Board demonstrates perseverance and adaptability when facing challenges or setbacks.			
Board members approach difficult decisions and situations with a growth mindset, focusing on solutions and learning.			
The Board supports and promotes a culture of resilience within the district, encouraging continuous improvement for students, staff, and leadership.			
Trustees learn from past experiences to inform better decision-making and overcome challenges.			

Appendix 2: Semi-Annual Reflection Rubric

Reflection and Next Steps

Overall Strengths:

What are the Board's key strengths based on this reflection?

Response:

Areas for Growth:

Which areas require improvement or additional focus?

Response:

Action Steps:

What specific actions will the Board take to improve its performance over the next six months?

Response:

Scoring Summary

Core Value	Score (1-4)
Accountability	
Empathy	
Communication	
Innovation	
Resilience	

Total Score: _____ / 20

Overall Rating:

- **Mastery (18-20)**
- **Accomplished (14-17)**
- **Capable (10-13)**
- **Emerging (≤9)**