

Orange Unified School District

Governance Team Handbook



“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”
Henry Ford

MISSION STATEMENT – Our Intention

In partnership with our community, we will provide a safe, equitable, and innovative culture of learning for each scholar to have a competitive EDGE as a leader.

VISION STATEMENT – Our Commitment

Inspiring our learners of today to be purposeful leaders of tomorrow.

CORE VALUES – Our Foundation

Equity – We promote inclusive and culturally relevant environments by supporting the social-emotional and intellectual needs of all.

Integrity – We embrace a culture of ethical and transparent decision making and actions.

Respect – We advocate for strong, compassionate relationships that appreciate the unique qualities of our diverse community.

Excellence – We strive for the highest standards in all endeavors by deliberately pursuing continuous growth and innovation.

GRADUATE PROFILE

Resilient and Self-Directed Problem Solver

Confident and Respectful Communicator

Socially Responsible and Civically Minded Citizen

Collaborative and Reflective Innovator

Well-Informed and Inquisitive Critical Thinker

Compassionate and Ethical Leader

FOCUS AREAS

Excellence In Academics and Leadership – Leading with a positive growth mindset, all Orange Unified staff emphasize meaningful, productive interactions and practices that create equitable, high-quality learning opportunities.

Dedicated and Engaged Communication – Strong and effective communication builds trust and promotes positive relationships. Orange Unified will effectively communicate with schools, students, staff, parents, and the community in a timely, relevant, and consistent way that promotes optimal student outcomes.

Genuine Wellness and Safety – A safe and respectful environment is essential to student success. By knowing each student's name, face and story, Orange Unified promotes a culture that nurtures the emotional health, safety, and well-being of students, staff, and parents.

Efficient Utilization of Fiscal Capital – It is imperative for the District to operate efficiently and effectively with the limited resources available to meet the organization's educational goals and operational needs.

BOARD PROTOCOLS

Exceptional boards make governance intentional and invest in the structures and practices that address changing circumstances. Protocols are tools to strengthen the capacity of the leadership team to engage in a constructive and positive relationship. It is grounded in a mutual understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Board and Superintendent in providing transparency and stability for the District. The Orange Unified School District Governance and Leadership team members have established the following understandings:

<u>Communications</u>	<p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Superintendent and Board members seek to engage in open and respectful dialogue with one another.• The Superintendent seeks to provide the Board with accurate and comprehensive information.• All Board members will have access to the same information. <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Superintendent will provide timely and relevant information to Board members.• In cases of urgent matters, communication may be issued from the site or District to employees/families before Board members receive information from the District, and Board members accept and respect that communicating with families may be the priority over giving them detailed information regarding the situation. That said, the District will communicate with Board members regarding the issue as quickly as possible.• Board members can contact the Superintendent by text, email, cell or phone with questions, requests and concerns.• Direct communication – if the Superintendent or a Board member has a question or concern with a governance team colleague it should be addressed to the individual.• The Board understands the distinction between the Board and staff roles and will refrain from directing or performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Superintendent and Board members should refrain from using “reply all” in order to adhere to the open meeting requirements of the Brown Act. ○ Messages addressed to all Board members will be responded to by the Superintendent, on behalf of the Board. Board members will be “blind copied” on the reply. ○ If a Board member wants to respond to an email addressed to all Board members, they should be mindful of the Brown Act, and no other Board member should be included in their response. Additionally, if any opinion is shared in an individual message, the Board member must make clear that the response reflects their personal view and not the view of the Board. ○ Board members agree to use their District email address for all District business. If they receive an email on their personal address, they will respond from their District address and request that all future communication regarding District business come to their District address. • Social Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The District does not create “official” social media pages for Trustees, and, unless otherwise determined by the Board, one Trustee does not officially speak for the entire Board on social media. ○ Board members agree that they will not engage in disrespectful or argumentative exchanges on social media platforms. They will let the Superintendent know if they are hearing/reading something in social that appears to be causing or may cause concerns in the school community so that staff have a heads-up, and if necessary, may properly respond. ○ To observe the requirements of the Brown Act, Board members will not interact with one another on social media platforms regarding District business. They may “follow” one another but they will strictly refrain from "liking" or commenting.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If commenting is allowed, Board members will not delete or hide comments on their official social media pages. ○ Board members should consider adding disclaimer language to their personal social media sites/pages. Sample text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “This is the personal page of (insert name). It is not sponsored, supported or funded by anyone else but me. The views and opinions expressed are my own and are not intended to represent the position of Orange Unified School District or its Board, unless otherwise stated.” or ▪ “This is the personal page of (insert name). It is not sponsored, supported or funded by anyone else but me.”
<u>Maintaining Confidentiality</u>	<p>Principle:</p> <p>The Board recognizes the importance of maintaining confidential information.</p> <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members and the Superintendent agree to maintain the confidentiality of all closed sessions and privileged communication, consistent with Government code 54963. • Board members should contact the Superintendent regarding any personnel concerns and/or issues that may arise. • The Board will provide clear parameters to the District’s negotiations team members and will not address issues of negotiations with employee bargaining unit members. • Board members agree that if someone wants to discuss negotiations with them, they will politely listen and encourage people to share their voice with the negotiating team.
<u>Board Member Role in Public</u>	<p>Principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board seeks to serve as responsible leaders and representatives of the District. <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members recognize and respect that when in public they always represent the Board of Education and District, thus they will be mindful of comments and work to ensure

	<p>that they are not interpreted as speaking for the Board, unless a decision on a situation has been made, and the Board member can explain the decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members should contact the Superintendent if they are contacted by news media. After Board direction, the Board President may also serve as a spokesperson on specific issues. • Individual Board members represent the District in an official capacity only when they are appointed by the Board to do so. • On high profile issues, the Superintendent or designated Board member will serve as the spokesperson for the District in order to communicate a consistent and accurate message.
<u>Visiting Schools / Attending School Events</u>	<p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees seek to demonstrate their interest in student learning and support for the work of staff. • Visiting schools illuminates the connection between the work of the Board and the experience of students and staff. <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members will coordinate site visits through the Board/Superintendent's Executive Assistant. • Board members will try to combine visits for efficient use of site staff time. • Board members will follow all school rules regarding visitors (e.g., sign in at the school office). • Board members will be careful not to make evaluative statements to school staff or students. • If during a visit, a Board member observes a safety concern, they will share this observation with the principal and offer a courtesy heads-up to the Superintendent. • When visiting a school as a parent, Board members agree to let the principal and front office know that they are present only in their capacity as a parent.
<u>Urgent Situations</u>	<p>Principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be supportive of staff and mindful of the safety of all parties <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members will not go to the site unless they are going as a parent or have otherwise been directed to by the Superintendent or Board.

<p><u>Handling Concerns</u></p>	<p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board and Superintendent seek to address parent, staff and student concerns closest to the issue, where those involved can attempt to resolve the matter. • Board members understand that it is not their individual responsibility to solve problems/concerns, rather it is the Board's responsibility to ensure policies and processes are in place to address concerns. <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members will communicate concerns to the Superintendent and not try to solve them alone. • Board members will encourage individuals to first contact the staff members with authority to address the concern striving to move the concern to those closest to the situation (teacher, principal, etc.) • If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, it is appropriate to move the concern through the chain of authority. Board members will understand and honor the Uniform Complaint Process by encouraging someone with a concern to contact the appropriate person in the process. • The Superintendent will follow up in a timely manner and provide information back to Board members on the status of the concern. This will generally be done via the Friday letter or through a follow-up phone call.
<p><u>Prior to Board Meetings</u></p>	<p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Superintendent and President will work together to develop agendas and will meet to finalize the agenda prior to the public posting. • Board members will thoroughly read materials before the Board meeting and will make every attempt to contact the Superintendent with any questions they have on the agenda the day before the meeting. • The Superintendent will contact all Board members before the meeting to answer any questions and/or discuss agenda items in need of further clarification. • Board member questions will be answered in advance of the Board meeting with a response provided to all Board members to ensure all Board members have access to the same information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members will make an effort to notify the Superintendent in advance of their intent to remove an item from the consent calendar. • When a high-profile item is being considered by the Board, any disagreements or concerns should be discussed with the Superintendent before the meeting as a courtesy so that they are prepared to help facilitate a productive meeting. • Staff will make every attempt to provide sufficient information on agenda items with enough time to allow thorough review by Board members.
<u>Board Meetings</u>	<p>Principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board seeks to conduct meetings that efficiently and effectively address District business. <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By the first meeting in January, following the organizational meeting, The Superintendent will provide a draft Governance Calendar of items generally planned for upcoming agendas. A key purpose of this calendar is to clarify when the Board will be receiving information regarding progress toward goals/priority areas of focus. ○ Board members may ask the Superintendent to place an item on the agenda through email. The Superintendent will determine the appropriate time if and when to schedule the item, in consultation with the Board President. • Public Participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All team members will be respectful and attentive during public comments. The Board President may acknowledge the speaker's comment and indicate that the Superintendent will follow up on a concern or issue, if appropriate. ○ The Board President may ask the Superintendent to clarify the facts for the record following a public comment that may be factually inaccurate. ○ The Board agrees that it will not discuss negotiations topics during public comments, as all

	<p>concerns and questions should be directed to the negotiating teams and table for proper attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board members agree to be fully engaged in the meeting and will not engage in electronic communication with anyone from the dais, unless publicly noted and explained. ○ Board members agree that it is a courtesy to each other, as well as the public, to share the reason for a dissenting vote during deliberation. ○ Each Board member will respect the right of other Board members to hold an opposing point of view and, following a Board vote, will respect the decision made by the Board majority. ○ The Superintendent or a Board member should not purposefully bring a matter to a public meeting that is intended to surprise the Governance team or staff. ○ Observing the practice of “no surprises” allows staff to prepare to adequately answer questions and provide information.
<u>Committees and Task Force Engagement</u>	<p>Principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To thoughtfully and responsibly engage members of the school community as appropriate. <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During discussion and deliberations at a Board meeting, Board members may ask staff how they will use committees to meaningfully engage stakeholders. • The Board and Superintendent will consider the option of creating an ad hoc committee when appropriate, e.g. creation of handbook, etc.
<u>Board Policies</u>	<p>Principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board seeks to establish policies that communicate its direction for the District. <p>Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board will review policies annually, as required by law. • All new or amended Board policies will first be presented on the information agenda as a “first reading.” That same

	<p>Board Policy may be presented as a discussion item or “item pending future action” prior to action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expedite review and approval of new or amended Board Policies, Board members will try to have comments ready during the “first reading” of the policy.
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