

Governance Handbook

Unity of purpose, roles, responsibilities, norms and protocols.



Updated February 3, 2023



LAWNDALE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT



The Board of Trustees

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Adim Morales, Clerk

Shirley Rudolph, Trustee

Bonnie J. Coronado, Trustee

Cathy Burris, Trustee

Superintendent

Ms. Virginia Castro

Effective Governance

Unity of Purpose, Roles, Responsibilities, Norms and Protocols

This document reflects the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This process involves ongoing discussions and agreements about unity of purpose, roles, norms, and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.

On December 11, 2021, the Lawndale Elementary School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent participated in a workshop on Effective Governance with a governance consultant from the California School Boards Association. This document reflects the governance team’s discussion about developing and sustaining a framework for effective governance and includes highlights of their conversation about unity of purpose, roles, norms, and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best serves all students.

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UNITY OF PURPOSE

Unity of purpose is the common focus, overarching goals, and the core values, beliefs and principles governing body members share in common about children, the district and public education

What We Hope to Accomplish

- Ensure each child can achieve their potential by providing an engaging and rigorous education and robust social-emotional support.
- Keep doing the very best for every student and the entire district.
- Provide an education and experiences to have Lawndale children live fulfilled lives.
- Provide mental and academic tools for students to be critical thinkers in order to build confidence in their learning experiences.
- Give our students the confidence to know they can, “learn” and “do” anything they want to do as they become adults.
- Provide students plenty of opportunities through different programs in order for them to be the best students possible.

District Goals

Goal 1: Increase Academic Achievement

Ensure all students learn through access to high quality actions and services that increase academic achievement and civic, career, and college readiness.

Goal 2: Ensure Access & Equity

Provide high quality actions and services to eliminate barriers to student access to required and desired areas of study.

Goal 3: Improve Parent & Student Engagement

Ensure all school sites have safe, welcoming, healthy, and inspiring climates for all students and families, so that all students are behaviorally and academically engaged in school and ready to learn.

Goal 4: Provide 21st Century Learning Environments

Invest in optimal learning environments that enhance student learning and ensure safety.

GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Role of the Board and Superintendent - CSBA:

School board “trustees” are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure the district schools educate the children in consideration of the interests of the local community. The role of the School Board is to govern the school district.

The superintendent is hired by the school board to provide the professional expertise in the day-to-day operations of the district. The role of the Superintendent is:

1. To work with the school board to develop an effective governance leadership team.
2. To serve as the chief administrative officer for the school district.

Performing Board Responsibilities - CSBA:

We **set the direction** for the community’s schools by:

- Focusing on student learning.
- Assessing district needs.
- Generating, reviewing, and revising setting direction documents: (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- Ensuring an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop these documents.
- Ensuring that these documents are the driving force for all district efforts.

We **establish an effective and efficient structure** for the school district by:

- Employing the superintendent.
- Setting policy for hiring of other personnel.
- Setting policies.
- Setting direction for and adopting the curriculum.
- Establishing budget priorities and adopting the budget.
- Overseeing facilities issues.
- Providing direction for and voting to accept collective bargaining agreements.

GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We **provide support** through our behavior and actions by:

- Acting with a professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and vision.
- Making decisions and providing resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals.
- Upholding board approved district policies.
- Ensuring a positive personnel climate exists.
- Being knowledgeable about district efforts and able to explain them to the public.

We **ensure accountability** to the public by:

- Evaluating the superintendent
- Monitoring, reviewing, and revising policies
- Serving as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitoring student achievement and program effectiveness and requiring program changes as indicated
- Monitoring and adjusting district finances
- Reviewing facilities issues
- Monitoring the collective bargaining process

We **act as community leaders** by:

- Speaking with a common voice about district priorities, goals, and issues.
- Engaging and involving the community in district schools and activities.
- Communicating clear information about policies, programs, and fiscal conditions of the district.
- Educating the community and the media about issues facing the district and public education.
- Advocating for children, district programs and public education to the general public, community, and local, state, and national leaders.



LAWNDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE TEAM

Agreements to facilitate governance leadership

Governance Team Norms and Protocols

The Board of Education for the Lawndale Elementary School District is entrusted by the community to uphold the Constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public's interest in the schools, and to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student.

To effectively meet district challenges, the Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team. Agreed upon behaviors or norms, and operating procedures or protocols, support consistent behavior and actions among team members. The purpose of the Lawndale ESD governance team agreements is to ensure that a positive and productive working relationship exists among board members, the superintendent, district staff, students, and the community. Norms and protocols are developed for and by the members of the governance team and may be modified over time as needed.

OUR AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP:

Meeting Guidelines:

- We will keep our focus on the best interest of our students.
- We will wait to speak until a team member has finished talking. We will keep our remarks brief and to the point so that all opinions can be expressed.
- We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked.
- We will all work to make sure there are no hidden agendas and that all issues and concerns can be dealt with openly by all members.
- We will respect differences, show respect, and never dismiss or devalue others.
- When we have a difference of opinion, we will debate the facts of the situation and avoid personalities. We will address process -- not personalities.
- We will be supportive rather than judgmental.
- We will communicate openly and honestly with each other.
- We will respect team meeting times: start on time, return from breaks promptly, avoid unnecessary interruptions.
- Each member will take responsibility for the work of the team. We will each be responsible for the success of the meeting – participate equally and address concerns.
- We will build upon the ideas of others and look for common ground.
- All team members are encouraged to offer their ideas and resources.
- Unless dealing with an emergency, we will all keep our cell phones off during meetings.
- We will work toward the future – learning from the past.



OUR NORMS AND PROTOCOLS

The Board will consider all decisions in terms of what is best for the students.

Trustees will respect the opinion of other Board members, the staff, and the community members.

Trustees will treat other Board members, the staff, and community members with dignity and respect.

Only items authorized by the "Brown Act" will be discussed in closed sessions and all discussions will be confidential.

Trustees shall make continuous efforts to acquaint themselves with matters pertaining to education and to the duties and responsibilities of their office.

Questions about agenda items will be directed to the Superintendent or appropriate staff member prior to a Board meeting.

Any irritation with the Superintendent or staff member will be discussed with the Superintendent as soon as possible.

OUR NORMS AND PROTOCOLS

Continued

Any request by Board members for reports or study will be directed to the Superintendent with consensus of the Board.

Board members should understand and support the lines of authority and the assignment of all responsibilities.

Any complaint made to a Board member will be referred to the Superintendent.

No individual member of the Board has any legal authority to give direction to the Superintendent; direction is given by the Board as a body.

Board members will exchange ideas freely and clearly and avoid internal conflicts that block progress.

The Governance team will avoid surprises between the Board, the Superintendent, and staff at Board meetings.

Board members will support the Superintendent in public.

The Board will listen to public comment in a professional manner.

Each Trustee is obligated to abide by and uphold the adopted policies of the Board whether that individual voted for the adoption or not.

The Board will meet as a body of the whole with the Superintendent to discuss his or her evaluation.



BOARD BYLAW 9012:

Board Member Electronic Communications

Emails cannot be sent to another Board member that, if forwarded, could lead to a discussion about district business by a majority of the Board. In order to help prevent an inadvertent violation, the Superintendent and Trustees may wish to consider including a "do not reply/forward" alert in the subject line of emails, as appropriate.

“Board members may engage in separate conversations or communications with members of the public on a social media platform to answer questions, provide information, or solicit information regarding a matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, as long as a majority of the Board does not use the platform to discuss among themselves any business of a specific nature that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. A Board member is prohibited from responding directly to any communication from other Board members regarding matters that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board or using digital icons (e.g., "likes" or emojis) to express reactions to communications made by other Board members. (Government Code 54952.2)”

GOVERNANCE AGREEMENTS

We have reviewed and agree to follow the aforementioned governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Lawndale Elementary School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students, and the community. We shall review and renew this document annually.

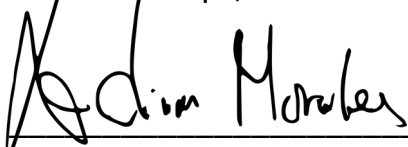
Affirmed on this 4th day of February, 2023



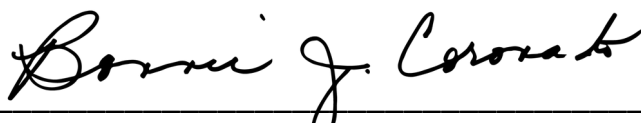
Virginia Castro, Superintendent



Ann M. Phillips, President



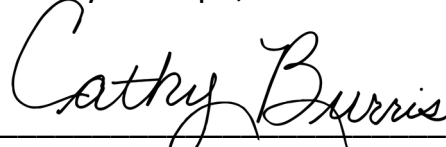
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