



FORT BRAGG UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent
Joseph Aldridge

Board of Trustees
Kathy Babcock, President
Sage Statham, Vice President
Luz Oxe
Diana Paoli
Scott Schneider

312 South Lincoln Street, Fort Bragg, California 95437-4416

Telephone (707) 961-2850 Fax (707) 964-5002

FORT BRAGG UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK 2026

Board of Trustees

Kathy Babcock, President
Sage Statham, Vice President
Luz Oxe, Member
Diana Paoli, Member
Scott Schneider, Member

Superintendent

Joseph Aldridge

- Equity Statement:** Within the Fort Bragg Unified School District and community, we are committed to equity, and to empower each and every student with access, opportunity, and resources they need to reach their highest academic and social potential.
- Vision:** Every student receives engaging and challenging learning experiences to reach their greatest potential and thrive in a diverse global society.
- Mission:** FBUSD delivers exceptional, engaging, equitable, and collaborative learning opportunities for all students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BOARD MEMBER COMMITMENT	3
EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE	3
UNITY OF PURPOSE	3
District Mission Statement	3
District Vision Statement	3
District Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)	3
GOVERNANCE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES	3
PERFORMING GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES	4
Setting the Direction	4
Establishing the Structure	4
Providing Support	4
Ensuring Accountability	4
Act as Community Leaders	4
BOARD STANDARDS	7
PROTOCOLS	7
Role in Public	7
Board Spokesperson	7
Community Relations and Advocacy	8
Self-Monitoring	8
Visiting Schools	8
Handling Concerns from the Public and Staff	8
Community and Public Input	8
Placing Items on Board Meeting Agendas	9
Developing the Board Meeting Agendas	9
Agenda Questions before Meetings/Individual Members Request for Information	9
Board Deliberation	9

BOARD MEMBER COMMITMENT

One Regular Board meeting a month except the month of June which has two meetings. Each meeting is normally on a Thursday based on the school calendar. Traditionally no meetings the month of July. Generally, the meetings start at 5:00 p.m. for closed session with open session at 6:00 p.m. Open session generally lasts 2 to 3 hours and per Board Bylaw 9323, could be as late as 10:30 p.m. unless extended by vote. Board member materials are sent out as early as possible, but no later than 72 hours in advance, and can take anywhere from 2 hours to 8 hours to review prior to meeting.

Board Agenda Settings Meetings generally occur 10 days prior to the Regular meeting at the District Office. This meeting is normally 1 hour or less. There are always two Board members at Agenda Setting. The President attends all Agenda Settings; the Vice President six and other Trustees attend twice annually. Only two board members can attend to avoid a quorum. The Superintendent will have a draft Agenda to review and discuss. Board members may ask questions and review Board Action Calendar with Superintendent. Other Board members can access a draft copy of Agenda after meeting.

Special Board Meetings are scheduled as needed to explore relevant topics that require more in-depth attention than may be allowed at a Regular Meeting due to time constraints. A **Board Retreat** is normally scheduled after the Organization meeting on a Saturday. The intent of this meeting is to review Board Action Calendar, Governance Handbook, Self-Evaluation Tool, Discuss Professional Development and Community Relations/Advocacy. Annual state of the District may be provided by Superintendent. Other **Board Workshops** will be scheduled as needed.

Evaluation of Superintendent in accordance with Superintendent's contract which occurs once a year and may take 2-3 closed sessions at Regular meetings to complete by June Regular meeting. In January a Mid-year check-in with Superintendent is planned. Board President will need to consult Legal Counsel when Superintendent Contract requires renewal.

Annual Organization Meeting occurs in December to select regular meeting dates, elect President and Vice President, designate Ancillary Duties and School Site Assignments, and approve Agenda Setting Calendar. Important meeting to bring board member's personal calendars in order to commit to attend all meetings, if possible.

Self-Evaluation of the Board is normally in January during open session during a regular meeting. Board Member input is collected in advance of this meeting.

Training/Professional Learning to be determined by Board annually. California School Board Association ("CSBA") offers Masters in Governance, Institute for New or First-Term Board Members or Mendocino County Office of Education may offer Brown Act session or other topics that align with Board goals/vision and mission. The Board may also read relevant books, the last two being *The Governance Core* and *Cultural Proficiency* in connection with Equity Training with Nicole Anderson & Associates.

CSBA Annual Education Conference is held first week of December from Wednesday through Saturday. If the district budget allows, members are encouraged to attend.

Special Events that happen in our community or within Mendocino County including CSBA Virtual Legislative Action Week in March with local representatives. Though not required community events are encouraged. Board has also scheduled New School Year Meet & Greet for all Staff in September an hour before the regular meeting.

School Activities/Events such as Back to School, Band Concert, Open House, Awards, Alt Ed graduation, High School Graduation and Middle School promotion occur annually and Board members are encouraged to attend, as well as visit assigned School sites as often as the site recommends.

Pay and Benefits currently includes a \$0 per month stipend per Board Bylaw 9250 and the option to join the District's group health insurance plan at the same rate as employees.

Onboarding a New Board Member

- The Board President or designee meets with each newly elected/appointed Board Member as soon as possible and preferably prior to the Annual Organizational Meeting. Topics can include:
 - Current issues facing the Board
 - Board member's role within the District and the Community
 - Review of any upcoming agendas including the Annual Organizational Meeting
 - Review of the Governance Handbook and Board Bylaws (BP 9000)
 - Confidentiality
- The Superintendent will meet with each newly elected/appointed Board Member. Meetings can include:
 - Introductions to key District staff
 - Brief review of budget and District financials
 - Review of benefits and other protocols available to and accepted from the Board Member
 - Superintendent/Board Member relationship
 - Brown Act
 - LCAP, District Mission/Vision, etc.
 - District organizational structure including school sites, programs, advisory groups/committees, etc. Also includes acronym use and definitions
 - Site visits (as time permits)
 - District website, schedule, means of communication

Becoming a School Board Member Candidate: To be eligible you must be registered to vote and live anywhere in the district and need the most votes from voters in the district to be elected. FBUSD is an At-Large District and is a five-member board. Elections are in even-numbered years held in conjunction with November general election. School board members serve two or four year terms. Terms are usually staggered so there will be openings every two years. Call District office to find out date of next election with open seat(s). Candidates must fill out a Declaration of Candidacy form with a deadline during the summer. Contact County of Mendocino Elections (707) 234-6819 to obtain Candidate Information Packet and deadlines. If filed, the cost of a Candidate Statement is paid by the FBUSD District. Candidate packets/forms are required to be hand-delivered to the County of Mendocino in Ukiah. Once elected School board members must abide by state requirements including The Brown Act and filing annually Form 700 "Statements of Economic Interest" or you will be fined. Contact California Fair Political Practices Commission in Sacramento for more information.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

School district governance is the process of setting organizational policies and standards that are adopted by the Board of Trustees and implemented by the Superintendent in order to provide strategic direction and ensure that objectives are met, risks are managed appropriately, and resources are utilized responsibly in order to ensure the best education possible for all students.

The Fort Bragg Unified School District Board of Trustees are members of the California School Boards Association ("CSBA") and adopted the Professional Governance Standards on November, 2021. The Standards describe the three components vital to effective school governance. They are:

- The attributes of an effective individual trustee
- The attributes of an effective governing Board, and
- The specific jobs the Board performs in its governance role.

UNITY OF PURPOSE

The focused efforts of the Fort Bragg Unified School District come from a variety of goals, both those within the Board and those surrounding the District as a whole. The efforts are shared within the Districts Vision and Mission Statements, Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), School Plans and any other plans developed by District Staff.

While keeping these roles and responsibilities in mind, the Board shall take additional steps to ensure quality work at the Board table.

EQUITY STATEMENT

Within the Fort Bragg Unified School District and community, we are committed to equity, and to empower each and every student with access, opportunity, and resources they need to reach their highest academic and social potential.

FORT BRAGG UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

(Adopted: April 16, 2020)

Every student receives engaging and challenging learning experiences to reach their greatest potential and thrive in a diverse global society.

FORT BRAGG UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S VISION

(Adopted: April 16, 2020)

Fort Bragg Unified School District delivers exceptional, engaging, equitable and collaborative learning opportunities for all students.

FORT BRAGG UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LOCAL CONTROL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS

1. Increase College and Career Readiness
2. Increase Student Academic Achievement
3. Improve School Culture
4. Reduce Chronic Absenteeism at Alternative Education Sites

GOVERNANCE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. The role of the Trustees who sit on locally elected school boards is to ensure school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing five major responsibilities. These are setting direction, establishing an effective and efficient structure, providing support, ensuring accountability and providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district and public schools.

These five responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the community it serves, they can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority is granted to the Board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, Board Members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the Superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the community.

PERFORMING GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

We agree with the responsibilities of school boards as described below by the California School Boards Association ("CSBA"):

Set the Direction for the Community's Schools

- Focus on student learning
- Assess needs/ obtain baseline data
- Generate, review and/or revise setting direction documents (vision, mission, priorities, goals and success indicators)
- Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used
- Ensure these documents are the driving force for all district efforts

Establish an Effective and Efficient Structure for the School District

- Employ and support the Superintendent
- Establish a human resources framework that includes policies for hiring and evaluating other personnel
- Oversee the development of and adopt policies
- Set a direction for and adopt the curriculum and require data-producing assessment systems
- Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues
- Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

Provide Support through our Behavior and Actions

- Act with professional demeanor that models the District's mission and vision
- Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
- Uphold Board-approved district policies and support staff implementation of Board direction
- Ensure a positive working climate exists
- Be knowledgeable enough about district efforts to explain them to the public

Ensure Accountability to the Public

- Evaluate the Superintendent
- Monitor, review and revise policies
- Serve as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated
- Monitor and adjust district finances and periodically review facilities issues
- Monitor the collective bargaining process

Act as Community Leaders

- Speak with a common voice about district priorities, goals and issues
- Engage and involve the community in district schools and activities
- Communicate clear information about policies, programs and fiscal condition of the district
- Educate the community and the media about the issues facing students, the district and public education
- Advocate for children, district programs and public education to the general public, key community members and local, state, and national leaders

BOARD STANDARDS

We operate within our respective roles and responsibilities in order to facilitate the efficient and effective running of the school district.

We recognize that each Board Member brings unique experiences, values and beliefs to the table, and that we must work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to all students.

We view the Superintendent as a key player on the governance team, understand their role and responsibilities, respect their expertise and seek their professional advice on all Board business.

We maintain open and honest two-way communication with each other in order to develop a strong Board/Superintendent relationship.

We provide direction so that staff presents sufficient, appropriate, specific information that supports the Board's ability to make rational, thoughtful, responsible decisions on behalf of students and the community.

We assume positive intent with all interactions.

We take collective responsibility for the success of our governance team and are willing to respectfully discuss personal concerns or issues with other individuals on the team, if necessary.

We work to understand other team members' concerns, perspectives and interests.

We give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion.

We support each other, and demonstrate mutual respect and understanding for our respective responsibilities and time constraints, recognizing that the Superintendent is doing their best to treat every Board Member equally.

We focus our time and energy on important issues, not pettiness or politics.

PROTOCOLS

The following Protocols were developed to support and promote the effectiveness of our governance team.

Role in Public

- The Trustees understand the importance of being visible and accessible to the public. Trustees will demonstrate their dedication and commitment to the governance team by clarifying their authority as one of five in all Board decisions and actions.
- Trustees represent the Board in what they say and do and will set an example of professionalism.

Board Spokesperson

We believe it is essential for information to be communicated in a cohesive and timely manner. We prefer to speak and communicate with a common voice. We recognize that some situations have legal and other

considerations; therefore, we believe it is important that all communication out from the Board will come from the following parties:

- Crisis/Disaster: The Superintendent will be the primary spokesperson and may involve the Board President at their discretion.
- Meeting Information (Board Meetings, Agenda items, study sessions): The Board President and Superintendent will be the primary spokespersons. If time permits, letter(s) to be reviewed by Board prior to release to public.
- Vision and Mission Statements/Goals and Local Control Accountability Plan/General District Information: All governance team members may serve as spokesperson utilizing developed and agreed upon key messages.

Community Relations and Advocacy

- Advocate for all students year round.
- Follow educational bill development at the legislative level, develop relationships with legislative leaders, Chris Rogers, Assembly and Mike McGuire, Senate.
- Participate and attend regional meetings of CSBA Public Affairs & Community Engagement - North Coast Division (known as PACER) and CSBA Virtual Legislative Action Week.

Self-Monitoring

- Individual trustees agree to review annually and adhere to the guidelines set forth in this Governance Handbook as well as Board Bylaws (BP 9000) and The Brown Act.
- In order to conduct efficient and effective Board Meetings, Trustees will come to the Board Meetings prepared and ready to do business.
- Board Members agree to speak to the issues and respond to fellow Board Members with respect.
- Board Members agree to cc Board President on all emails & correspondence.

Visiting Schools

- The Board of Trustees understands that periodic visits to school sites are a valuable tool in understanding the day-to-day operations of our District.
- Drop in visits on staff and schools are discouraged and should be coordinated with the Site Principal and/or Superintendent in advance.
- Board Member visibility is important.
- The Board will conduct "Board Walks" at school sites.

Handling Concerns from the Public and Staff

- The governing Board is the unit of authority over the District and Trustees understand that any one Board Member does not have individual authority or the capacity to solve an issue or complaint.
- When approached by a community member with an issue or concern, Board Members will listen openly and seek understanding of the issue or concern.
- The Trustee will explain that the District has complaint policies in place and, if appropriate, will let the community member know what the complaint policy is and how they may access the process or procedure.
- All complaints should be handled first at the site where the issue occurred. Board members will use judgement in responding and be mindful of their role in judicial review.
- The Trustee will call and/or email the Superintendent and President when they direct a community member to contact them.

Community and Public Input

- There are two opportunities for public comment/input at Board Meetings:
 - During public comment or agenda/non agenda items; or
 - During discussion when agenda item occurs
- Board Members shall listen to public comment/input and take it into account during discussion and deliberation. Each person will have three (3) minutes for public comment.
- Board Members may ask questions for those giving formal reports; however, the Brown Act prevents direct interaction with the public during a regular Board Meeting.
- Public speaker cards will be available at meetings where high interest topics will be discussed to ensure a timely and well-run meeting.
- It is the task of the Board President to acknowledge and thank those giving public comment as appropriate. Once the Board has made their comments and have moved to discussion, the audience and staff will no longer participate.

Placing Items on Board Agendas

- If there are at least two Board Members that support an idea to be placed on an Agenda, the President and Superintendent will ensure it is placed on an appropriate future Agenda.
- Proposals for Agenda items should be sent to the Superintendent and the President.
- The Public may submit written requests, anytime, for agenda items to the Board President and/or Superintendent.
- The Board President and Superintendent will decide whether an agenda item request is appropriate for the Board Agenda and within the jurisdiction of the Board.

Developing the Board Meeting Agendas

- The Board President, along with one other rotating Board Member, will meet with the Superintendent the week prior to each Board Meeting. The planners will be mindful of time needed for staff to make adjustments and prepare for the Agenda.

Agenda Questions Before Board Meetings/Individual Members Request for Information

- It is important for Trustees to be well informed. Board Members will work with the Superintendent to request information that will be made public at the Board Meeting.
- Staff will make every effort to ensure that Board Agenda items include thorough background and information.
- The Superintendent will forward information requested out to all Board Members.
- Trustees should self-regulate the amount of requests for information regarding issues to conserve staff resources.
- Board Members will, when possible, let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information or questions will be asked in public to provide the opportunity for the staff to be prepared with a response.

Board Deliberation

Each Board Member brings unique skills, values and beliefs to the board table. The best decisions are made when all parties can contribute and everyone is operating within the same parameters. This protocol promotes making the “best” decision by welcoming all viewpoints, exploring all options, being efficient and avoiding repetition.

- The Board President or Superintendent introduces the item, explains how/when the public may comment and how the board will deliberate. The Agenda describes when and how the public may speak on any given item.

- The staff makes the presentation (when appropriate), including the staff recommendation. The Board asks for clarification on the presentation. Board President will recognize members who desire to speak, alternating so all members have the opportunity to speak.
- The Board President acknowledges any member of the public who wishes to speak.
- The Board may ask for further clarification, following public comment.
- The Board deliberates and advocates. No further public comment per The Brown Act.
- The Board votes. Once individual votes are made, we come together as a Board, and set aside any differences.

We have reviewed and agreed to this Governance Handbook in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Fort Bragg Unified School Board, staff, students, and the community. We shall review this Handbook annually. Affirmed on this 12th day of March, 2026.


Kathy Babcock, President


Sage Statham, Vice President


Diana Paoli, Member


Luz Oxe, Member


Scott Schneider, Member