

# ***A BOARD GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

## ***Unity of Purpose***

The School Board is the guardian of the public trust. Board members have the opportunity to take responsibility for the success of local public education. Through the policies they make, School Boards establish the standards and philosophies by which the district is run and the criteria used to judge whether they are being run well.

We affirm the unique role of public education, whereby each community collectively pools its resources for the common good through the education of its students. Therefore, we seek to uphold and improve public education for our community.

- We want to build trust and move the district forward.
- We want to become an effective team.
- We want to understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
- We want to be a team with a common, focused direction.
- We want to create a district culture that supports positive change.
- We want to perpetuate a positive district culture that survives in the face of Board member and staff turnover.

*Please refer to the IASB Policy Reference Manual:*

*2:20 Powers and Duties of the Board of Education: Indemnification*

*2:80-E Board member Code of Conduct*

# ***Roles & Responsibilities***

## **Governance**

As the corporate entity charged by law with governing the school district, the Board of Education sits in trust for the entire community. In this essential governance capacity, the Board holds the School District accountable for achieving appropriate results for the appropriate persons at an appropriate cost, and for avoiding unacceptable choices, conditions and activities.

The Board will seek always to:

- govern with a focus on the future, on results, and on continuous improvement;
- encourage collective decision making and diversity in viewpoints;
- respect the distinction between Board and Superintendent/staff roles, and
- pursue rigorous and continual improvement in its ability to define community values and its vision of the future.

## **Board Job Description**

The Board of Education represents the public interest in maintaining education programs that best serve the aims of the community and the state. The Board is primarily responsible for determining what the community wants from its public schools and is willing to support financially.

- a. The Board will focus first on its primary work, which is to clarify district purpose, direction and goals.
- b. As trustee for the community, the Board is committed to an on-going, two-way conversation with constituents about their aspirations for the education of the district's students.
- c. The Board has one employee – the Superintendent. The Board and Superintendent work together to fulfill their mutually complementary roles in an atmosphere of trust combined with open and honest communication. Generally, the Board will expect the Superintendent's recommendation on all matters that come before the Board. The Board does not provide direction or oversight of other school district staff. The Board will evaluate the Superintendent's performance. (See [A Superintendent Evaluation Process](https://www.iasb.com/training/superintendent-evaluation-process.pdf) at <https://www.iasb.com/training/superintendent-evaluation-process.pdf>).
- d. The Board expects the staff to implement Board policy; i.e. to develop the means to accomplish district ends. Respecting the staff's role and obligation to determine means, the Board will refrain from doing staff work and will not

second-guess staff decisions that represent reasonable interpretations of Board policy. Most Board decisions are understood to be policy decisions.

- e. As the Board establishes goals, it assures that there is agreement on how the goals will be measured. The Board determines the kinds of data it needs to monitor progress in achieving goals (“ends”) and compliance with its written Board policies. Board decisions will be based on relevant data and other information.
- f. The Board commits itself individually and collectively to stand by its Code of Conduct, to “speak with one voice,” to maintain a positive culture and orderly decision-making processes, and to conduct its work openly.
- g. The Board adopts a district budget with revenue and spending parameters and a system for monitoring financial performance.

*Please refer to the IASB Policy Reference Manual:*

<i>1:10 School District Legal Status</i>	<i>2:240 Board Policy Development</i>
<i>1:30 School District Philosophy</i>	<i>3:10 Goals and Objectives</i>
<i>2:10 School District Governance</i>	<i>3:40 Superintendent</i>
<i>2:80-E Board Member Code of Conduct</i>	<i>4:10 Fiscal and Business Management</i>
<i>2:140 Communications To and From the Board</i>	<i>6:10 Educational Philosophy and Objectives</i>
<i>2:230 Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board</i>	<i>8:10 Connection with the Community</i>

## ***Working Agreements***

- a. The Board regards the creation of a vision and direction for the district to be a primary responsibility.
- b. The Board will not adopt any new program or service unless it is aligned with and contributes to our mission and vision and is fiscally prudent.
- c. The relationship between the Superintendent and any individual Board members is collegial not hierarchical, based on mutual respect for their complimentary roles.
- d. The Superintendent is accountable only to the full Board of Education.
- e. No Board member or subset of the Board of Education has the authority to act or speak on behalf of the Board without the consent of the Board.
- f. The Board and the Superintendent have the right to expect performance, candor and honesty from one another.

- g. Board members act in the best interest of all the students in the district.
- h. Board members must respect the confidentiality of the executive session.
- i. Ideas should be judged as more important than the person who expresses the idea.
- j. The Board as a whole, and each member, must accept responsibility for Board processes and effectiveness.
- k. Board members recognize that they have no authority as individuals.
- l. Board members will refrain from advising staff. Board involvement in staff decisions reduces the degree to which the staff can be held accountable and interferes with staff ownership.
- m. Board members on the losing sides of a motion will not sabotage the action; individuals on both sides of an issue will respect their Board colleagues.
- n. The Superintendent's powers should be exercised to the fullest, bounded, of course, by the parameters set by the Board in written Board policy.
- o. The Superintendent has the right to expect the Board of Education to be clear about its direction and expects the Superintendent to implement policy through Administrative Procedures.
- p. The Superintendent is bound to honor only written Board expectations.

## ***Behavioral Expectations***

- a. Start with the common belief that everyone has good intentions.
- b. Respect the needs of our diverse community and make decisions based on the common good for our students.
- c. Clearly identify issues and discuss them in an open, honest and respectful manner.
- d. Seek to understand district issues in a broader perspective.
- e. Display personal integrity.
- f. Solve problems through a collaborative process where all participants support the decision and actively work toward its implementation,
- g. Acknowledge and celebrate our accomplishments with each other,
- h. Be respectful and genuinely concerned about the feelings of others.

- i. Create a safe environment for the productive exchange of ideas.
- j. Sincerely listen and seek to understand the viewpoints of others
- k. Respect the expertise that others bring to the organization.
- l. Support the development of educational programs which meet the individual needs of every student, regardless of ability, race, sex, creed, or social standing.
- m. Support the development of procedures for the regular and systematic evaluation of programs, staff performance and Board operations to ensure progress toward educational and fiscal goals.
- n. Support the development of effective school Board policies which provide direction for the operation of the schools and delegate authority to the Superintendent for their administration.
- o. Support the development of systematic communications which ensure that the school Board, administration, staff, students and community are fully informed and that the staff understands the community's aspirations for its schools.
- p. Support the development of sound business practices which ensure that every dollar spent produces maximum benefits

*2:80-E Board Member Code of Conduct*

## ***Board Protocols***

### **Meetings of the Board**

We understand that Board meetings are meetings of the Board held in public, not open-forum town-hall meetings. We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted on the agenda to ensure the multiple voices of the community inform Board deliberations. However, when the Board deliberates, it will be a time for the Board to listen and learn from each other, taking the public input into consideration, not a time to re-engage with the public.

We will consistently abide by our formal processes relating to this issue so that all persons are treated fairly and equally. We will review our policies relating to Board meeting management (e.g., time limits on input from members of the public), revising or re-affirming them as appropriate.

*Reference IASB Policy Reference Manual:*

*2:200 Types of Board of Education Meetings*

## **Board Meeting Agenda**

The Board's agenda is an expression of what the Board understands its work to be and how it intends to pursue that work. Typically, the agenda is a cooperative effort of the Board president and superintendent. All Board members are invited to submit suggestions for agenda items. Periodically, the entire Board will consider important topics or agenda items for consideration in the following months.

## **Engaging the Community**

Because the Board sits in trust for the whole community, the Board will make continuing efforts to hear and engage the whole community. We will seek venues beyond the Board meeting where we can effectively engage community members and listen to their concerns. We will attempt to be in touch with all stakeholders and all segments of the community, not just those who seek us out. We will monitor our efforts in this area, asking the question "which community voices are not part of Board considerations, and how can we allow these voices to be heard?"

2:230 *Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board*

8:10 *Connection with the Community*

## **No Surprises!**

Meaning, no one (superintendent, board member) gets surprised at any time – in the meeting, or between meetings. The truth of no surprises is respect. Each Board member and superintendent must respect all the other participants, and the processes the Board team shares. Jump outside of respect for either people or processes, and someone will get surprised – and end up looking or feeling bad. And the work will suffer.

## **New Board Member Orientation**

The Board desires to be a team where all members contribute to effective Board leadership. The Board takes initiative in helping new members learn, understand and practice effective governance. The Board President shall arrange a meeting of the whole Board to review Board processes and procedures. The Superintendent shall meet with new Board members to answer questions and acquaint the member with the District. If desired by the new Board member, a veteran member will be identified as a mentor.

2:120 *Board Member Development*

## **Concerns from the community and staff**

When someone complains to us, we will listen carefully, remembering we are only hearing one side of the story. We will then direct that person to the person in the

district most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. We will make sure they understand the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principal, then district staff) and are aware of any formal forms or policies that might assist them (e.g., written complaint form). This will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally and expeditiously and that the processes and procedures of the district are upheld. It will also clarify that one Board member has no individual authority to fix a problem. The Board member will contact the Superintendent with the issue.

*2:140 Communications To and From the Board*

*2:260 Uniform Grievance and Conflict Resolution Procedures*

*8:110 Public Suggestions and Concerns*

### **Voting Method**

When a vote is taken upon any measure before the Board with a quorum being present, a majority of the votes cast determines the outcome. Each Board member respects the right of the other members to vote “no” on an issue. On important matters, Board members are encouraged to explain the reasons for a “no” vote either during deliberation or before casting the vote.

*2:220 Board of Education Meeting Procedure*

### **Board Member Request for Information**

When an individual Board member requests information, it will be provided to all Board members. An individual Board member will - insofar as possible - work to let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made in public so the staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer.

Individual Board members will self-monitor to ensure one person's request for information does not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals. If the Superintendent determines that a request for information may require more than 30 minutes to fulfill, the Superintendent may bring the request to the board for a consensus to proceed.

*2:130 Board-Superintendent Relationship*

### **Board Member Requests for Action**

The only authority to direct action rests with the full Board sitting at the Board table during a duly called open meeting. A majority vote sets such direction. The Board President is responsible for focusing Board agendas on appropriate content (board work). Board Members and district residents may suggest items for inclusion on the agenda. Such items may be added to the agenda upon approval of the Board. Since action items must be posted in the meeting notice, such items will typically be scheduled for a subsequent meeting. Whenever possible, action items will be

considered and discussed at a previous meeting.

When a majority of the Board, sitting in a formal meeting, requests action, it should be made relative to the intended results, not the methods used to achieve those results.

*2:220 Board of Education Meeting Procedure*

### **The Board Takes Responsibility for itself**

The Board will schedule a regular workshop to complete a Board Self-Evaluation and review governance team agreements and processes.

*2:120 Board Member Development*

### **The Board President**

The Board is a group of seven equals; the board president is the first in the line of equals. Each member takes full responsibility for Board activity and behavior. The task of the board president is the facilitation of the work of the Board and its ability to comply with its working agreements and mutual expectations. The Board president will also assume some responsibility for facilitating the relationship between the Superintendent and the Board. The Board president will be the spokesperson for the Board to the media and to the public. The Board will elect a member for this important position who is well suited to the responsibilities.

The Board President will be elected every year at the Board organizational meeting. The President pro-tempore will accept nominations for the position, including self-nominations. A second is not necessary for the nomination. Roll call voting will continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast. A run-off of the top vote getters may be necessary to achieve the required majority.

*2:110 Qualification, Term and Duties of Board Officers*

## **Code of Conduct for Members of School Boards**

As a member of my local school board, I will do my utmost to represent the public interest in education by adhering to the following standards and principals:

1. I will represent all school district constituents honestly and equally and refuse to surrender my responsibilities to special interest or partisan political groups.
2. I will avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety which could result from my position, and shall not use my Board membership for personal gain or publicity.
3. I will recognize that a Board member has no legal authority as an individual and

that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a Board meeting.

4. I will take no private action that might compromise the Board or administration and will respect the confidentiality of privileged information.
5. I will abide by majority decisions of the Board, while retaining the right to seek changes in such decisions through ethical and constructive channels.
6. I will encourage and respect the free expression of opinion by my fellow board members and will participate in board discussions in a open, honest and respectful manner, honoring the differences of opinion or perspective.
7. I will prepare for, attend and actively participate in school board meetings.
8. I will be sufficiently informed about and prepared to act on the specific issues before the board, and remain reasonably knowledgeable about local, state, national, and global education issues.
9. I will respectfully listen to those who communicate with the board, seeking to understand their views, while recognizing my responsibility to represent the interests of the entire community.
10. I will strive for a positive working relationship with the superintendent, respecting the superintendent's authority to advise the board, implement board policy, and administer the district.
11. I will model continuous learning and work to ensure good governance by taking advantage of board member development opportunities, such as those sponsored by my state and national school board associations, and encourage my fellow board members to do the same.
12. I will strive to keep my board focused on its primary work of clarifying the district purpose, direction and goals, and monitoring district performance.

Approved by the AHSD 25  
School Board at the Regular Session on  
November 16, 2017