



Napa Valley USD

Governance Handbook

December 2019

Board of Trustees

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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.

On May 3, 2019 and July 16, 2019, Napa Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent participated in workshops on Effective Governance with the California School Boards Association. This document reflects the governance team’s discussions about developing and sustaining a framework for effective governance and includes highlights of their conversations 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNITY OF PURPOSE

Our Vision	3
What We Hope to Accomplish	3

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Discussion of Roles	3
The Board’s Responsibilities	4

POSITIVE GOVERNANCE TEAM CULTURE

Norms	5
Meeting Guidelines	6

SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES (Protocols)

Protocols	6
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GOVERNANCE AGREEMENTS SIGNATURE PAGE	10
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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.

OUR STRATEGIC VISION

Transforming lives by instilling and inspiring lifelong learning in every student.

I. UNITY OF PURPOSE

What We Hope to Accomplish as a Team is to:

- Transform the culture of the District through communication of the strategic plan with our stakeholders.
- Make goal-oriented progress to move our District forward.
- Provide thoughtful and effective governance that supports our strategic goals and the betterment of education on behalf of our students.
- Develop a coherent plan for the District to academically, financially, and socially support students.
- Make data-driven short- and long-term decisions that stabilize the budget to advance excellence in teaching and learning.
- Get to the point where all aspects of the District are reviewed and governed in order to gain more institutional control.
- Include and engage our broader community and the Napa Valley USD in aligning with the District's Strategic Plan.

II. GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Role of the Board and Superintendent according to CSBA:

School Board "Trustees" are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure that 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 according to 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, such as beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, and success indicators.
- Ensuring an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop these tools.
- Ensuring that these tools 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.

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 necessary.
- Monitoring and adjusting district finances to ensure fiscal solvency.
- 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 public, community, and local, state and national leaders.

III. AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

Governance Team Norms and Protocols:

The Board of Education for the Napa Valley Unified 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 and leverage opportunities, 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 Napa Valley USD 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 as needed.

Governance Team Norms

We, the Governance Team of Napa Valley USD, as an effective Governance Team, adhere to strong, positive norms that guide our work. They are listed below:

- We operate with respect and trust.
- We have open, honest communication and engage in meaningful discussion.
- We listen actively and empathize.
- We are well-informed.
- We support, once they are made, Board decisions.

To this end, we have developed the following meeting guidelines:

- We will communicate openly and honestly with each other.
- All team members will offer their ideas and suggestions.
- We will work toward the future while learning from the past.
- We will keep our focus on the best interests of our students.
- We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked.
- When we have a difference of opinion, we will debate the facts, address process, and avoid personalities.
- We will build upon the ideas of others, look for common ground, and paraphrase for understanding.
- We will give helpful feedback directly and openly.
- We will respect differences, show respect, and never dismiss or devalue others.

IV. PROTOCOLS

Effective governance teams discuss and agree upon the formal structures and processes, or protocols, used by the Board and Superintendent in their functioning as a team. These structures and processes guide the operations of the governance team and determine how they do business. Protocols are the agreements that ensure that all members of the team are operating within their agreed upon roles.

The following protocols were developed at our Governance Workshops:

Closed Session Communication	<p><u>Rationale:</u> We want to ensure that we are all following the same rules and that all voices are heard.</p> <p>Therefore, during closed session discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will go around the table so that all opinions can be expressed.• The Board President will ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak and that no one person or persons dominate the conversation.
Meetings with Staff and Site Visits	<p><u>Rationale:</u> We wish to see teaching and learning in action, but do not wish to be disruptive.</p> <p>Therefore,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notify the Superintendent’s office when we wish to visit a school as a Board Member. The Superintendent’s office will schedule the appointment. This is not necessary when we are visiting solely as a parent.• Notify the Superintendent’s office, if we are invited to a site.• Remember that we are there as observers and learners and not to direct or evaluate staff.• Attend appropriate school events whenever possible.
Proposing New, Future Board Agenda Items	<p><u>Rationale:</u> We wish to have clarity on how agenda items are proposed and delivered during future board meetings.</p> <p>Therefore,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Superintendent will continue the development of her log, recording requests as they are suggested in the manner outlined in <i>BP 9322, Agendas/Meeting Materials</i>.• The Superintendent will share the items listed on the log with the Board under “Future Agenda Items.”• When appropriate, the Superintendent will convey to the Board the amount of staff time required to address each issue and the item’s relationship to district goals.• The Board will decide whether or not to place each item on a future agenda.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Superintendent will determine the scheduling of the item on a future board agenda. • The Superintendent will provide status reports to the Board on an as needed basis.
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<p>Inquiries on Agenda Items</p>	<p><u>Rationale:</u> We wish to create clarity around communication.</p> <p>Therefore,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All board agenda inquires will go to the Superintendent. • The Superintendent will determine the appropriate staff member to address the item. • The form of response will be determined by the Superintendent. The Superintendent may respond directly to the Board Member or request that another staff member respond and copy her on the response. • Responses may be conveyed electronically or via telephone.
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<p>Board Committee Participation and Representation</p>	<p><u>Rationale:</u> We wish to create clarity around committee participation.</p> <p>Therefore,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following Board Advisory Committees will be established, and board member participants will be assigned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curriculum and Student Support ○ Policy ○ Finance ○ Facilities and Technology • It is important to have representation on various community entities. Individual Board Members will be assigned to the following groups to serve as liaisons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Special Education CAC ○ City of Napa ○ City of American Canyon ○ Town of Yountville • Membership on various task forces or adhoc committees will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
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<p>Responding to Staff or Community Concerns or Complaints</p>	<p><u>Rationale:</u> Board Members want to be responsive to the community, but we recognize that individual Board Members do not have the legal authority to resolve issues and complaints, as stated in BP 9200, <i>Limits of Board Member Authority</i>.</p> <p>Therefore, when a Board Member is approached by a community or staff member with an issue or concern, he or she will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receive: Listen without interruption and without preparing a response to the person’s issues or concerns, unless it is an issue that may come before us in our judicial role. That information will be shared with the entire Board at the appropriate place and time. ● Repeat: If it is appropriate for us to listen to the concern, we will paraphrase or ask a clarifying question to ensure understanding of what has been said. ● Request: Ask what the person sees as the solution to the problem or concern. ● Redirect: Direct the person back toward the school system at the appropriate level, person, or place. ● Report: Notify the Superintendent of the conversation so that he or she has the full picture and can follow through as appropriate or necessary. ● Emails: Board Members receiving concerns via email will acknowledge receipt of the email and forward the message to the Superintendent so that he or she can deal with the issue appropriately.
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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 Napa Valley Unified School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students, and the community. We shall review and renew this document annually.

Affirmed on this _____ day of _____, 2019

Icela Martin, Board President

Elba Gonzalez-Mares, Vice President

Robin Jankiewicz, Clerk

José Hurtado, Trustee

David T. Gracia, Trustee

Joe Schunk, Trustee

Cindy Watter, Trustee

Rosanna Mucetti, Ed. D,
Superintendent