

GOVERNANCE TEAM HANDBOOK

West Side School District

Unity of Purpose

1. We model the type of behavior we expect to see throughout the District:
 - a. Be prepared
 - b. Be courteous
 - c. Be good citizens
 - d. Take personal responsibility
 - e. Be informed
 - f. Be trustworthy (competence and character)
2. We establish clear, meaningful goals and maintain focus against those goals. While we remain open to input, we only change if the input causes a major shift.
3. We base our decisions on a thorough evaluation of available and substantiated facts; not on emotion, personal bias or public pressure.
4. We focus on dialogue; collaborate, not berate. We communicate clearly and often. No surprises.
5. We speak with one voice once decisions are made; we collectively support them and move to implementation.

Governance Protocol

| Issue/Background | Our agreement on how we will handle this |
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| Handling complaints and concerns Individual Board members have no authority to fix problems. The appropriate order of whom to contact is first the teacher/coach, principal (Athletic Director before principal if sports related), then Superintendent. | Trustees listen carefully to complaints, remembering they are only hearing one side of the story, then direct the person making the complaint to the person in the District most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. This will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally, and expeditiously and that the processes and procedures of the District are upheld. As representatives of the public, it is important that Trustees invite the person with the complaint to ultimately get back to them if the issue is not resolved. The Trustee will advise the Superintendent of the concern. If concern is to be brought before the board, the Chairman should be notified 5 days before the board meeting. |
| Trustee request for information | Trustees will, insofar as possible, 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. If it appears that a request for information will take considerable staff time, the Board Chair will restate the request and ask the Superintendent for input regarding time and resources involved. The Board Chair will then ask for a “thumbs up” from the entire Board to see if a majority of the Board supports the request. When an individual Board member requests information, it will be provided to all Board members. |

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| Voting “no” or abstaining | Each Trustee respects the right of other Trustees to vote “no” or to abstain on an issue. But everyone agrees it is a courtesy to the team to explain the reasons for the “no” vote or abstention during deliberation. |
| Visiting schools | Visits are encouraged. As a professional courtesy, Trustees will call the principal ahead of time when requesting visits to classrooms or programs. Trustees will be cautious about encroaching on the administrator’s time. Trustees should advise the Superintendent when they plan to make site visits. |
| Spokesperson | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once decisions have been made, the Board Chair, or the Chair’s designee, will be the spokesperson for the Board and describe the Board’s processes and positions. 2. During disasters and emergencies, Board Chair, or the Chair’s designee, will be the spokesperson for the Board. |
| Communications during meetings | <p>Communications utilized during Board meetings, including those by electronic means, are subject to requests from the public under the Public Records Act. Trustees will refrain from sending/receiving electronic communication during Board meetings on matters that are being heard, considered, or deliberated.</p> <p>As a matter of courtesy, and to allow all Board members access to the most complete information possible, Trustees will refrain from engaging in private conversations during Board meetings, including during breaks, with members of the public on matters of which the Board will be deliberating.</p> |
| Getting questions answered about items on the agenda before a meeting | <p>Call or email questions to the Superintendent as soon as possible. If the item is confidential, do not use names of personnel or students when using e-mail.</p> <p>Notify the Superintendent if staff has not responded to questions when they said they would.</p> |
| Self-monitoring of governance team effectiveness | Individual Trustees agree to review and adhere to meeting norms, goals and ISBA Board member roles. When behavior by an individual Trustee detracts from effective governance, other Trustees work with that Trustee to encourage conformance to our norms (communicating with courage and consideration). In a workshop setting, the governance team will evaluate its effectiveness twice a year. |
| Board meeting management | <p>During discussion, Trustees will be called on only when they indicate they have something to say (vs. “going down line”).</p> <p>Trustees may request that a break be taken during long meetings. Trustees may leave for a personal break.</p> <p>It is the role of the Board Chair, and individual Trustees, to actively facilitate Board meeting efficiency and protocol.</p> |

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| Trustee announcements/ requests | <p>Trustees will limit their remarks to announcements regarding committees they sit on in which they represent the Board and information that helps other Trustees do their job better. Before beginning, it is appropriate to first ask oneself, “Does this need to be said?”</p> <p>Requests could include giving direction to the Superintendent or making requests for information from the Superintendent or other Board members.</p> |
| Setting Board agenda | <p>The Superintendent will distribute a tentative calendar of agenda items to all Board members each year. Following the established template, the Superintendent and Board Chair will order the agenda for each meeting for maximum effectiveness, as in policy 1500P—considerations will include staff time, paid consultant time, likely public involvement, and anticipated Trustee discussion. Under unusual circumstances, the Superintendent and Board Chair may reorder the established template. Out of courtesy to staff and the community, whenever possible the published agenda will reflect the actual order of the meeting. However, there may be times that the Board will reorder the agenda at the beginning of a meeting. Trustees may request that an item be placed on an upcoming agenda; if no consensus exists, the Trustee may follow Board policy for placing an item on the agenda.</p> |
| Meeting norms Developed specifically for workshop setting, but also applies to Board meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Everyone participates ➤ Seek first to understand, then be understood ➤ Stay on topic ➤ Listen before responding ➤ Keep discussion moving forward (Does it need to be said?) ➤ Remain objective ➤ Adhere to time ➤ One conversation ➤ Protect confidence |
| Process Options for Community Input | <p>An agenda item will be included in a regular Board meeting following the standard format of staff presentation, questions from the Board, public comments and Board discussion. If the Board feels additional public input would be helpful in determining a course of action, the following steps may be taken:</p> <p>Step 1: A community input meeting may be held. The Board will decide the parameters for discussion, the desired representation (school sites, pertinent interest groups, community-at-large, etc.) and appropriate timeline. Invitations will be issued to the suggested representatives.</p> <p>Step 2: After receiving this additional input, the Board may decide if an ongoing group is needed to continue to address the issue. The Board may form a committee or direct the Superintendent to form a task force.</p> |
| Election of Board Officers | <p>The board shall at its first regular meeting in January elect a chairman, a vice chairman, a clerk and a treasurer. The clerk and the treasurer may be members of the board of trustees; or, in the discretion of the board, either or both may be selected from among competent and responsible persons outside the membership of the board</p> |
| Board Chair | <p>The Board Chair conducts meetings, works closely with the Superintendent to construct upcoming agendas, and at times serves as the public face of the Board.</p> |

Individual Trustee Standards*

Individual trustees bring unique skills, values and beliefs to the Board. In order to govern effectively, individual trustees must work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student.

I will . . .

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.
2. Value, support and advocate for public education.
3. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community.
4. Act with dignity and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior.
5. Keep confidential matters confidential.
6. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.
7. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.
8. Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals.

Governance Norms*

The WSSD is governed by a Board, not by individual Trustees. While understanding our separate roles, the Board and Superintendent work together as a “governance team.” This team assumes collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively.

We will . . .

1. Keep the District focused on learning and achievement for all students.
2. Communicate a common vision.
3. Operate openly, with trust and integrity.
4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.
6. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance.
7. Periodically evaluate our own effectiveness.
8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.

Board Responsibilities

1. Set a direction for the District
2. Provide a structure by establishing policies
3. Ensure accountability
4. Provide community leadership on behalf of the District and public education

Board Roles*

1. Involve the community, parents, students and staff in developing a common vision for the District focused on learning and achievement and responsive to the needs of all students.
2. Adopt, evaluate and update policies consistent with the law and the District's vision and goals.
3. Maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress.
4. Hire and support the Superintendent so that the vision, goals and policies of the District can be implemented.
5. Conduct regular and timely evaluations of the Superintendent based on the vision, goals and performance of the District, and ensure that the Superintendent holds District personnel accountable.
6. Adopt a fiscally responsible budget based on the District's vision and goals, and regularly monitor the fiscal health of the District.
7. Ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.
8. Provide community leadership on educational issues and advocate on behalf of students and public education at the local, state and federal levels.

Superintendent Standards*

To support the Board in the governance of the District, the Superintendent:

1. Promotes the success of all students and supports the efforts of the Board of Trustees to keep the District focused on learning and achievement.
2. Values, advocates and supports public education and all stake holders.
3. Recognizes and respects the differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community - and ensures that the diverse range of views inform Board decisions.
4. Acts with dignity, treats everyone with civility and respect, and understands the implications of demeanor and behavior.
5. Serves as a model for the value of lifelong learning and supports the Board's continuous professional development.
6. Works with the Board as a "governance team" and assures collective responsibility for building a unity of purpose, communicating a common vision and creating a positive organizational culture.
7. Recognizes that the Board/Superintendent governance relationship is supported by the management team in each District.
8. Understands the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and respects the role of the Board as the representative of the community.
9. Understands that authority rests with the Board as a whole; provides guidance to the Board to assist in decision-making; and provides leadership based on the direction of the Board as a whole.
10. Communicates openly with trust and integrity including providing all members of the Board with equal access to information, and recognizing the importance of both responsive and anticipatory communications.
11. Accepts leadership responsibility and accountability for implementing the vision, goals and policies of the District.

Adopted 07/17/2023