

# LUSD GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

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*Adopted on August 8, 2019*

# ***BOARD CORE VALUES***

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## **High Achievement for All LUSD Students**

Our schools are dedicated to teaching students to be involved, active learners who think critically, learn continuously, collaborate constructively, communicate effectively, persevere relentlessly and care deeply. We emphasize high academic expectations for all students, and support them to reach their full potential to be prepared for college, career and life. We believe these outcomes are attainable for all LUSD students.

## **Excellence in Teaching**

Passionate, knowledgeable, skillful teachers, supported by strong site leaders, are the core strength of our school district. We expect our faculty, staff and site leaders to provide engaging, challenging, and relevant learning experiences for all students. Excellent teaching begins with strong relationships between staff and students and is nurtured by collaboration among colleagues. We are committed to supporting a professional community that creates an atmosphere of excellence, engaging instruction, and ongoing growth for students and adults alike.

## **Respect for Human Difference**

We are committed to acknowledging and celebrating the diversity within our community while affirming the importance of our common humanity. By promoting an emotionally safe environment for questioning, debate, and dialogue, we foster the growth and value that comes from different perspectives, cultures and experiences. Our commitment is to create an atmosphere of emotional and intellectual safety in which to express difference while advancing acceptance and respect for all.

## **Continuous Improvement**

We believe that powerful, relevant goals and clear action plans guide progress over time, and we commit to setting goals, monitoring progress and sharing results. We believe that high standards of responsibility and accountability must be present throughout the system, and we commit to providing resources to enable staff to meet Board goals. When staff, students, parents and the community are responsible and valued partners in the education of our students and active participants in the decision-making process, our entire system is stronger.

## **Effective Governance**

As a Board of Trustees, we believe that a fiscally sound budget that is reflective of the district's vision is imperative to the financial stability of the district and to attainment of its goals. We believe that our governance of the district sets the tone for the organization and provides a model for students and staff of effective dialogue, decision-making and leadership. We believe in open, honest communication, trusting relationships, and integrity in all we do, and strive to model this consistently, both among Board members and between the Board and the Superintendent.

# **GOVERNANCE TEAM STANDARDS OF PRACTICE**

As elected members of the board of the Lakeside Union School District, we accept the high honor and trust that has been placed in us to ensure that the students of this district receive the best education available anywhere in the United States of America. In accepting this role, we hold the pursuit of that goal as our sacred duty. To that end, we hereby commit to the following in the conduct of our business. We will:

- Place the interests of students above all others in every decision that we make;
- Uphold all applicable federal and state laws and regulations;
- Abide by the policies of the Board, and work with fellow governance team members to change those policies as needed to improve student learning;
- Maintain board focus on the achievement of all students regardless of race, class, ethnicity, or gender;
- Not use our positions for personal or partisan gain;
- Model continuous learning in our roles as members of the governance team;
- Maintain a long-range plan for the district that clearly defines success and accountability for the board, the staff, and our students;
- Focus on the policy work of the Board and monitor progress on the indicators of success in our strategic plan, leaving the day to day operation of the district to the superintendent and staff;
- Base our decisions upon available facts, vote our convictions, avoid bias, and uphold and support the decisions of the majority of the board once a decision is made;
- Work to build trust between and among board members and the superintendent by treating everyone with dignity and respect, even in times of disagreement;
- Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information including that shared in executive sessions of the board;
- Recognize that authority rests only with majority decisions of the board and will make no independent commitments or take any independent actions that may compromise the board as a whole;
- Refer constituent complaints and concerns to the appropriate person within the district chain of command; and
- Respect the leadership roles of the board chair and superintendent.

We will maintain fidelity to these commitments and will be held accountable by our fellow board members should any one of us fail to live up to these commitments.

*Adopted 12/13/18*

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## Board Roles

- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Adopt, evaluate and update policies consistent with the law and the District's vision and goals.
- ⇒ Maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress.
- ⇒ Hire and support the Superintendent so that the vision, goals and policies of the District can be implemented.
- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Adopt a fiscally responsible budget based on the District's vision and goals, and regularly monitor the fiscal health of the District.
- ⇒ Ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.
- ⇒ Establish parameters for the District's collective bargaining process and adopt responsible agreements.
- ⇒ 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:*

- ⇒ Promotes the success of all students and supports the efforts of the Board of Trustees to keep the District focused on learning and achievement.
- ⇒ Values, advocates and supports public education and all stakeholders.
- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Acts with dignity, treats everyone with civility and respect, and understands the implications of demeanor and behavior.
- ⇒ Serves as a model for the value of lifelong learning and supports the Board's continuous professional development.
- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Recognizes that the Board/Superintendent governance relationship is supported by the management team in each District.
- ⇒ Understands the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and respects the role of the Board as the representative of the community.
- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Accepts leadership responsibility and accountability for implementing the vision, goals and policies of the District.

# **BOARD PROTOCOLS: COMMUNICATION**

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1. It is recognized that the superintendent is the only employee of the district who reports to five bosses, therefore communication protocols are not only necessary, but must be established in order to maintain effective communications between the superintendent, board, and all constituent groups of the system.
2. As superintendent, you can expect me to keep you as fully informed as needed to effectively fulfill your responsibilities.
3. This communication will be provided through my office via the following methods:
  - a. Monthly board meetings and board study sessions
  - b. Quarterly governance team retreats
  - c. Quarterly superintendent/board member one-on-one interviews
  - d. Periodic phone check-ins
  - e. Periodic one-on-one face-to-face meetings as necessary
  - f. Urgent calls or emails to alert you to events you're likely to hear about through the media or from your neighbors
  - g. Information requested by any member will be distributed to all members
  - h. If I have a concern about something you have done or have not done, you will hear it from me only
  - i. Media advisories and press releases
  - j. Planning meetings with the board president/vice president
4. As superintendent, I need the following from you if I am going to do my job effectively:
  - a. Be a good listener to constituent concerns.
  - b. Refer employee concerns to the point of the problem and/or to their union representative if a contract violation is alleged. Inform me so that I can ensure the issue is handled properly.
  - c. Refer constituent concerns or complaints to the point of the problem, and, through the appropriate chain of command, to my office if necessary.
  - d. If you believe that a concern raised by a constituent is of a potentially serious nature or may require a board policy change, inform me immediately.
  - e. If you need information on any aspect of the district, please communicate this request to my office so that I can ensure that your needs are met.
  - f. Remember that as a board member, your electronic communications are public information.
  - g. If you have a concern about something that I have done or have not done, reciprocate the courtesy outlined in 3.h.
  - h. Maintain fidelity to your fellow board members, your board policies and governance team standards when communicating with the media.

# **BOARD PROTOCOLS: BOARD MEETINGS**

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- ⇒ *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 will be made in public. This will allow the staff member to be prepared to answer any questions or to prepare materials. Board Members will self-monitor their requests to ensure that one member’s requests will not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve District goals. Board Members recognize the concept of “Nice to Know” vs. “Need to Know” in information and will seek information only needed for effective decision making.
- ⇒ *No Surprises:* In working as a Governance Team, it is important that whenever possible, Board Members communicate issues and concerns openly with the Superintendent prior to a public meeting. The Governance Team should work toward a professional manner and a standard of “No Surprises” during Board meetings, both from the Board to the Superintendent, and from the Superintendent to the Board.
- ⇒ *Confidentiality:* The responsibility of our Governance Team includes being privy to closed sessions or confidential information about District litigation, personnel, negotiations, Superintendent evaluation and other issues permitted under the Brown Act. Each Trustee will work to maintain the public’s trust by not breaching this confidentiality. If a Trustee inadvertently or accidentally violates this confidentiality, the Trustee will take immediate responsibility for his/her action.
- ⇒ *Follow-up on Items Brought up by Community Members during Board Meetings:* There are times when a community member makes comments to the Board at a Board Meeting about an item which is not on the agenda. After the presentation, the Superintendent may assign the appropriate person to follow up. The Superintendent will then report back to the Board.
- ⇒ *Voting “No”:* 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.
- ⇒ *Abstaining:* The Board believes that when no conflict of interest requires abstention, its members have a duty to vote on issues before them. When a member abstains, his/her abstention shall not be counted for purposes of determining whether a majority of the membership of the Board has taken action. The reason for the abstention needs to be stated and recorded in the minutes.
- ⇒ *Communications During Meetings:* 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.
- ⇒ *Getting Questions Answered about Items on the Agenda Prior to a Meeting:*
  - **Method 1:** Call or email questions to the Superintendent (with cc to the Assistant Superintendents, if applicable) as soon as possible. If the item is confidential, do not use names of personnel or students when using email.

# **BOARD PROTOCOLS: BOARD MEETINGS (CONT'D)**

- **Method 2:** Ask questions of the Superintendent during the board member briefing phone call.
- **Method 3:** Make an appointment through the Superintendent's secretary and ask the questions then.

⇒ *Closed Session Protocol:* During board agenda planning, Cabinet will identify any input they plan to obtain from the Board during the upcoming Closed Session. At the end of Closed Session, the Board Vice President will summarize (and record) the direction provided by the Board. During negotiations, School Board Members act as a single entity to determine objective and give parameters to the district's negotiating team. By law, Board Members are prohibited from engaging in negotiations with bargaining units or bargaining unit members.

⇒ *Election of Board Officers:* The Board normally follows a rotation method (Clerk to Vice President to President) for selecting officers. The Board President will call a special meeting by the end of October should any Board member wish to discuss the Board positions the following year.

⇒ *Board President and Vice President:* The Board President conducts meetings, works closely with the Superintendent to construct upcoming agendas, and at times serves as the public face of the Board. Because of the key role the President plays in the success of the Governance Team, the Board requires that President complete the New President workshop offered through CSBA before assuming office. A new Vice President must commit to completing the New President workshop by December 1 of the following year.

## **BOARD PROTOCOLS: PERIODIC EVALUATION**

### *Board Members will:*

- ⇒ Objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance and provide appropriate feedback.
- ⇒ Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness, review its protocols at least every two years.

### *The Superintendent will:*

- ⇒ Respect and acknowledge the Board's role in setting policy and overseeing the performance of the Superintendent.
- ⇒ Complete the Board's self-assessment instrument for the Board's consideration, once the Board self-assessment process is determined.

## **BOARD PROTOCOLS: SCHOOL VISITS**

School visits are encouraged. Board Members will call the Principal ahead of time to arrange a formal visit. Board Members will be cautious about encroaching on the learning environment. To assist in this matter, the Superintendent will ensure that principals and teachers know that a teacher does not need to interrupt his/her lesson when a Board Member visits a classroom. Board Members will advise the Superintendent when they plan to make site visits.

## **BOARD PROTOCOLS: HANDLING CONCERNS/ COMPLAINTS FROM PUBLIC & STAFF**

Individual Board Members have no authority to fix problems. 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. The appropriate order of whom to contact is first the teacher, then principal, then District staff. This will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally and expeditiously and that the processes and procedures of the District are upheld. As representative 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.



# **BOARD PROTOCOLS: WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE**

The Governance Team recognizes that electronic and other written correspondence is an effective and convenient way to communicate among Board Members and between Board Members, District administration and members of the public. Members of the Governance Team shall exercise caution to ensure that electronic communications are not used as a means to deliberate outside of an agendaized Board meeting. If an individual Board Member chooses to respond to written correspondence received from a member of the community, the communication shall clearly state that the response does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board as a whole. Any complaint or request for information received by the Governance Team will be addressed by the Superintendent through the appropriate District process. Like other writings concerning District business, a Board Member's electronic communication may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

# **BOARD PROTOCOLS: ORIENTATION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Immediately following the certification of public election or appointment of the Board, new Board Members will be seated following the oath of office. As soon as possible, the Board President will schedule an orientation session for the new members. The orientation session will include, but is not limited to:

- ⇒ Review the Governance Handbook protocols and agreements
- ⇒ Review of Board agenda process and procedures
- ⇒ Review of 9000 series of Board Bylaws
- ⇒ Review of the Brown Act and discussion of confidentiality
- ⇒ Review of Board Policy 2100, Professional Standards of the Superintendent, as they relate to accountability of Superintendent to Board
- ⇒ Review Superintendent evaluation procedures
- ⇒ Discuss critical issues and any pending litigation
- ⇒ Discuss responsibility of Board to monitor fiscal matters
- ⇒ Review of Board calendar
- ⇒ Scheduling of district tour by Superintendent