

Nuview Union School District

Governance Handbook

Board of Trustees

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Unity of Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities, Norms and Agreements

These workshop notes reflect the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions and agreements about unity of purpose, roles, norms and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.

Nuview Union School District

Effective Governance Handbook

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The original Nuview Union School District Governance Handbook was developed during a workshop on August 10, 2013 with the assistance of Leslie DeMersseman, Governance Consultant, California School Boards Association

UNITY OF PURPOSE

NUVIEW UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The Nuvview Union School District is committed to creating the learning opportunities necessary to cultivate character in our students and provide creative, caring and contributing members to society. We empower all students with skills, knowledge, and values, in an environment that is positive for the student, educators, and the community.

OUR SHARED BELIEFS ABOUT PUBLIC EDUCATION

- There has to be an educated electorate for our democracy to succeed.
- Public education is the great equalizer; it ensures all levels of society have the opportunity to succeed.
- All students have the opportunity to achieve what they want out of life.
- Education is a basic human right and is the gateway to all other human rights.
- Education allows everyone to become productive citizens in their community.
- Public education standardizes what is learned so everyone has a common understanding.
- Education instills values, virtues, and character in our students.

OUR SHARED BELIEFS ABOUT STUDENTS AND LEARNING

- All students are different.
- Student well-being and learning is the reason public education exists.
- Every child is “the most important one”.
- We have to balance our decisions based on educating each student within the context of the whole.
- We have to prepare our students for their future, not our past.
- All decisions should be based on what is best for students.
- Responsibility for student learning and behavior is a shared responsibility with our teachers, parents, and the community.
- Equal opportunities and equitable opportunity are not the same thing.

OUR SHARED BELIEFS ABOUT LOCALLY ELECTED SCHOOL BOARDS

- Local Boards allow local people to make decisions based on what a particular district needs.
- Local Boards maintain local control; the best decisions about children are made locally.
- Local Boards allows constituents to make their issues or concerns known; a locally elected Board is more responsive to constituent issues.
- There is a high level of buy-in from people in the community who are passionate about the area in which they live.
- Boards make decisions on behalf of the community, to make sure the students receive the best education and to protect the public interest in the public schools.
- Locally elected Board members are the eyes and ears of the community and have a clearer picture of what is going on than county, State or federal officials.
- Locally elected Boards see that the community is heard.

AGREEMENTS TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

SUSTAIN A POSITIVE GOVERNANCE CULTURE - Norms

Meeting Guidelines:

We agree to...

- Keep our focus on our students' best interests.
- Listen respectfully and respect each other's point of view.
- Be self-confident, but not overly assertive.
- Maintain discretion about what we share with other people regarding our personal discussions with each other.
- Stay focused on our agenda.
- Behave professionally.
- Be reflective and be present.
- Recognize that our authority is as a body, not as individuals.
- Honor the decisions made by the Board.
- Keep things separate.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following descriptions of the roles of the Board and Superintendent are the result of conversations by members of the Nuview USD Governance Team.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The role of the Board is to represent student and community interests by developing a vision that fosters an environment where excellence can be achieved.

It is the responsibility of the Board to...

- Establish budget priorities.
- Ensure safety.
- Set academic expectations, standards of responsible governance, and parameters for negotiations.
- Hire, support and evaluate the Superintendent.
- Evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of policies and instructional programs.

THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent:

- Ensures that the governing Board's vision and goals are implemented in order to support student learning.
- Makes decisions concerning district operations.
- Provides leadership in organizational structure, staffing and decision-making processes.
- Supports the district in achieving its goals.
- Manages the instructional and non-instructional operations of the district.

NUVIEW UNION SD BOARD OPERATING PROTOCOLS

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the Board and between the Board and the administration, we, the members of the Nuvview Union School Board, do hereby commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocols:

1. **Children's interests come first.** The Board will represent the needs and interests of all the children in our district.
2. **The purpose of school Board meetings is for the Board to conduct its business in public.** Board meetings are not public forums. The Brown Act requires the Board to conduct its business meetings in public, unless the topic is appropriate for closed "executive" session which is for the purpose of addressing issues dealing with real estate transactions, negotiations, personnel, or anticipated litigation. The discussion of agenda items is intended to be among Board members, and cannot be a discussion with the public, as this is the process of the Board conducting its business in a public setting.
3. **Meeting Protocol.** Conduct at a Board meeting is very important. We desire to have the legacy of a well-functioning, effective Board. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression of an individual, the Board, or the district. We will be open-minded and willing to "attentively listen" to all speakers/presenters. We acknowledge that we can disagree and will do so using common courtesy and respect for others. We will not react to impromptu complaints on the spot, but the Board President will assure the individual(s) that the school district will follow-up.
4. **We agree that we will ask the Board President or the Superintendent to place an item on the agenda.** If Board members have questions they want to address at the Board meeting, they should communicate with the Superintendent or Board President prior to the meeting. Do not spring surprises on other Board members or the Superintendent.
5. **Board members conduct.** The Board will be professional, courteous and respectful at all times and will follow the chain of command in addressing complaints or concerns. The Board meeting should be the last step in handling complaints and Board members should refer all complainants to the person they are concerned with as the first step. When complaints are addressed to the Board, the President shall refer the matter to the Superintendent to meet with the complainant as soon as possible after the Board meeting, recognizing that the Superintendent is the chief executive officer of the school district and should ensure the matter is handled appropriately. The Superintendent may issue a report to the Board in regard to the resolution of the issue if deemed appropriate.

6. **The Board acts only as a body.** Individual Board members do not have authority. Only the Board as a whole has authority. We agree that an individual Board member will not take unilateral action. During Board meetings, the Board President will communicate the position(s) of the Board on all issues. When Board members serve on various school committees their role shall be defined by the Board as silent observer or active participant.
7. **Follow the chain of command.** The last stop, not the first, will be the Board. We agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do so. While the Board is eager to listen to constituents and staff, Board members will refer the person back to the employee who can properly and expeditiously address the situation.
8. **Executive/closed session will be held only for appropriate matters.** Executive sessions will be held only when specific needs arise on topics that are appropriate for closed session according to the Open Meeting Act (the Brown Act). Board members will be extremely sensitive to the legal ramifications of closed session meetings, and will not make comments outside of the meeting about the closed session discussions.
9. **Communication between staff and the Board is encouraged.** However, all Board requests for information of materials will be directed to the Superintendent. Requests that will likely require considerable staff time or have political implications may be brought to the Board for approval. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent. The senior leadership team recognizes that “good,” “timely,” “open,” and “constant” communication regarding school district issues is extremely important. We will strive to anticipate issues which may become important or are sensitive to our school district and district stakeholders.
10. **Exemplify the governance role.** The leadership team (the Board and Superintendent) will support the policies our district currently has in place. We will continue to annually study and review policies for effectiveness and appropriately engage key stakeholders in the development or deletion of policies and policy revisions. We will maintain and apply district policies consistently while being cognizant of and recognizing the potential uniqueness of any given situation.
11. **Practice efficient decision-making.** Board meetings are for decision-making action and votes, not endless discussion. We agree to move the question when discussion is repetitive.
12. **Utilize Superintendent input.** The Superintendent should make recommendations, proposals, or suggestions on most matters that come before the Board.

13. **Speak to agenda issues.** The Board will not play to the audience. We agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and listen to our fellow Board members. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the Superintendent.
14. **Clearly stated goals.** The Board will set clear goals for themselves and the Superintendent. The Board and Superintendent will set clear goals for the Nuvview Union School District.
15. **Own your own issues.** The Board will not be a liaison for others, but rather, will encourage others to present their own issues, problems, or proposals when discussing issues.
16. **Conduct efficient and effective Board meetings.** Long Board meetings should be avoided. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at Board meetings should be minimal. If a Board member believes he/she doesn't have enough information or has questions the Superintendent is to be called before the meeting.
17. **Annually conduct a Board evaluation.** The Board will address its behaviors in a yearly self-evaluation and by addressing individual problems such as poor meeting attendance or leaks of confidential information, as they arise.
18. **Schedule annual study session dates.** During the December Organizational Meetings, the Board will schedule at a minimum, quarterly Board Study Sessions for the school year.

PROTOCOLS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

Nuvview Union SD Board Meeting Protocols

Members of the public will be expected to adhere to the following guidelines at Board meetings:

1. **Respectful communication at all times.** All members of the public attending school Board meetings must treat each other, staff members, and the Board with respect. We want to demonstrate decency, respect, courtesy, and politeness at all times. We want to believe the best about each other and give others the benefit of the doubt.
2. **Courteous behavior.** Individuals are not permitted to engage in conduct that interferes with the ability of other citizens to watch the Board meetings, interferes with the ability of other citizens to offer citizen comments to the Board, or interferes with the ability of the Board to conduct its business.

3. **Showing signs and placards.** Those wishing to display placards, signs and/or banners must remain in the auditorium foyer behind the seating area, and may not block any attendee's view of the proceedings. Placards, signs, and banners are not allowed in the auditorium seating area. Placards, signs, and banners may not have wooden or metal sticks or poles attached to them.
4. **Speaking at Board meetings.** Members of the public who intend to offer public comment to the Board should submit the public comment sign up form before the start of each Board meeting. The Board chair has discretion to call on those who have signed up and set the order of speakers (District students should identify themselves as such on the citizen comment sign-in sheet and they will be called upon first). Individuals offering citizen comment must stand at the podium designated for their use and must speak into the microphone. Prior to beginning any testimony, individuals should state their name for the record.
5. **Limit comments to three minutes.** Each citizen must limit his or her comments to three minutes to allow sufficient time for others to also offer their comment. The Board has the discretion to limit the overall time for public comment. The Board shall limit the total time for public input on each item to 20 minutes. With Board consent, the President may increase or decrease the time allowed for public comments, depending on the topic and the number of persons wishing to be heard. The President may take a poll of speakers for or against a particular issue and may ask that additional persons speak only if they have something new to add.

PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT SECTION OF BOARD MEETINGS

Rationale: *Members of the public are encouraged to attend Board meetings and to address the Board concerning any item on the agenda or within the Board's jurisdiction. The purpose of public participation at Board meetings is to inform the Board, not deliberation. We have an obligation to ensure that the public understands that purpose. The processes for addressing the Board as defined in BB 9323 – Meeting Conduct – will be made clear to the public. Board meetings are meetings of the governing body held in public, not public forums, and will be held in a civil, orderly and respectful manner.*

Protocol: *We agree...*

- At the beginning of the meeting the Board President will explain the processes followed during the Public Comment Section:
 - the posted Nuvview Union SD Board Meeting Protocols will be followed throughout the meeting
 - there are two opportunities for public participation: 1.) topics that are not on the agenda, and 2.) input on agenda items
 - the intent and restrictions of the Brown Act
 - speakers will be recognized by the Board President before commenting.
- The Board President will formally open the Public Comment section of the Board Meeting explaining the time limits that will be followed for each speaker and/or topic.
 - Board members may ask questions to make sure they understand what the speaker is saying – but may not engage in dialogue with the speaker
 - All Board member questions should be directed through the Board President
- The Board President will formally close the Public Comment section of the Board Meeting after the last speaker has addressed the Board.
- Following the Public Comment section, the Board President may ask the Superintendent to clarify a question or any issues raised by a speaker. The Superintendent may ask a member of the staff to respond as appropriate.
- Board discussion and/or deliberation takes place after the Public Comment section has been closed.
- Board members may mention comments made by public comment speakers during deliberations.

There is no further discussion or interaction with the public during Board discussion and deliberation.

PROTOCOL FOR USING A GOVERNANCE CALENDAR

Rationale: *It is important that Board members are confident they have sufficient information for responsible decision-making. Scheduled study sessions and discussion meetings provide time for full Board discussion of district business and to discuss and understand the short and long-term issues and challenges facing the district.*

- Protocol:** *We agree...*
- The Board and Superintendent will develop a Governance Calendar annually following the district goal setting process, and will add to it throughout the year as necessary.
 - The Board calendar will include a timeline of Board actions and information meetings and will include the following topics:
 - Action items that have legal deadlines (i.e. most budget processes, staffing issues, etc.)
 - Action items that come up at the same time every year (i.e. standardized test results, etc.)
 - Progress and final reports about accomplishment of district priorities and goals
 - As needed, the Board and Superintendent will add scheduled study sessions/discussion meetings linked to the district priorities and goals, and other complex or critical issues facing the district.
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HOLDING CONVERSATION AND/OR DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Guiding Principles:

A conversation/discussion meeting is an opportunity for the Board and Superintendent to talk with each other in an informal setting where no action will be taken about issues of importance, interest or concern. Conversation/discussion meetings may follow a study session where background or detailed information is provided by staff, and must be held in open public session unless the topic falls within the Brown Act restrictions for closed executive session.

Protocol:

- Conversation meetings about progress toward previously discussed goals, or complex or critical issues will be scheduled as necessary throughout the year and will be listed on our Governance Calendar as soon as practical.
- No action will be taken at conversation meetings.
- Conversation meetings may be scheduled on Thursday evenings other than Board Meetings or on the 5th Thursday of the month (if there is a 5th week.).

Effective Governance Discussion Sessions:

- A governance team work session will be scheduled annually in January to review our governance agreements. This work session is especially important when new members have joined our team. During this session Governance Team members will discuss, identify and come to agreement on the Governance Team's:
 - Unity of purpose – the common ground that team members share about students, learning, the district's learning and working environment, expectations for behavior and standards of performance for students and staff.
 - Roles and Responsibilities – gaining clarity and common understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Board and the Superintendent, and the limits of individual Board member authority.
 - Building and sustaining a positive governance team culture (behavioral norms).
 - Establishing processes to conduct our governance work (Protocols).
- We will schedule opportunities to “check-in” with each other about our agreements two other times during the year.
 - One of these governance work sessions will be scheduled annually in July or August for conducting and discussing our Board Self-Evaluation.

AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

Governance Team Norms and Protocols:

The Board of Education for the Nuvview Union School District is entrusted by the community to uphold the Constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public interest in schools, and to ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student.

The Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team in order to effectively meet county office challenges. Agreed upon behaviors, or norms, and operating procedures or protocols support consistent behaviors and actions among team members. The purpose of the Nuvview Union SD governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among Board members, the county Superintendent, Nuvview Union SD staff, students, and the community. The following norms and protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team, and may be modified over time as needed.

Our Agreements to Facilitate Governance Leadership:

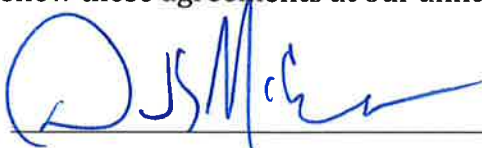
NORMS:

- Meeting Guidelines

PROCOTOLS:

- Nuvview Union SD Operating Protocols
- Nuvview Union SD Board Meeting Protocols
- Public Comment Section of Board Meetings

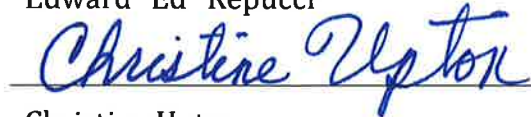
We have reviewed and agreed to the governance team norms and protocols listed above in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Nuvview Union SD Board of Education, staff, students and the community. We shall renew these agreements at our annual governance workshop.



David S. McCabe



Edward "Ed" Repucci

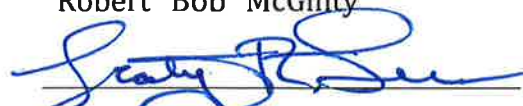


Christine Upton

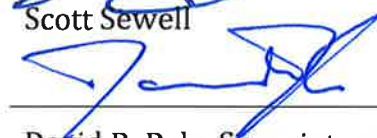
Affirmed on October 13, 2016



Robert "Bob" McGinty



Scott Sewell



David R. Pyle, Superintendent