

LUCERNE VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Governance Handbook 2015

Board of Trustees

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This handbook reflects the governance team's work on creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, trustee roles, commitment to norms, and developing consensus on protocols / formal structures that will enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits the children of Lucerne Valley Unified School District.

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EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Governance – A Definition

School district governance is the process of setting organizational policies and standards that are adopted by the Board of Trustees and implemented by the Superintendent in order to provide strategic direction and ensure that objectives are met, risks are managed appropriately, and resources are utilized responsibly in order to ensure the best education possible for all students.

Governance tenets encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors that enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in a school district and maintain the focus on improved student learning and achievement. This Governance Handbook documents the governance responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and Superintendent of the Lucerne Valley Unified School District within these three dimensions:

1. Governing as a unified team with a shared vision to lead and serve the community
2. Mutual support for roles and responsibilities
3. Creating and sustaining a positive governance leadership culture

UNITY OF PURPOSE

Unity of purpose is a common focus, agreement on priority goals, and shared values about students and the district that transcend individual differences and fulfill a greater purpose.

A unity of purpose exists when the commitment to achieving these goals becomes the guiding principle of all trustees and the superintendent. The focused efforts of the Lucerne Valley Unified School District will be reflected in the vision and mission statements, and the strategic plan adopted by the board.

Belief Statement

We embrace being a small district where each student has a name and not just a number.

The Lucerne Valley Unified School District Vision Statement

All students will be proficient in State grade-level standards as determined by valid assessment measures. This will be achieved through the use of a highly qualified and trained staff, full implementation of effective curriculum, and research proven interventions under the guidance and support of highly qualified administrators. LVUSD will be a safe, caring, supportive environment for all.

The Lucerne Valley Unified School District Mission Statement

Lucerne Valley Unified School District is committed to becoming a model district in the State of California. Our students will be prepared academically, socially, and ethically to become lifelong learners and responsible, productive citizens.

GOVERNANCE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in America. The role of the trustees who sit on the board is to ensure school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs, and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing five major responsibilities. These are:

- Setting Direction
- Establishing an effective and efficient structure
- Providing support
- Ensuring accountability
- Providing community leadership as advocates for children and the school district

These responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the community it serves, they can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the superintendent to make decisions that best serve all the students in the community.

The superintendent assists the board in carrying out its responsibilities and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon district vision and goals.

PERFORMING SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Superintendent shall be governed by and perform duties and responsibilities set forth in the laws of the State of California, by rules, regulations, policies, and directives of the Board. These include formal duties(1) and additional duties(2),(3) as outlined in the employment contract.

(1) The Superintendent:

- Shall be the chief executive officer and secretary of the Board. As such, the Superintendent shall have the primary responsibility for execution of Board policy. The Board retains the primary responsibility for formulating and adopting said policy.
- Shall be responsible for day to day organizational decisions; financial decisions; and all personnel matters to include hiring and termination of employees.

- Has the authority to organize or re-organize, transfer or demote the administrative and all management staff. The Superintendent will inform the Board of actions at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Superintendent shall recommend all new employees to the Board for their approval. The Board reserves the right to accept or reject the Superintendent's recommendations to hire personnel. If the Superintendent's recommendation is rejected the Superintendent will recommend another employee until the Board approves the selection.
- Has the authority to accept employee resignations. The resignation is final once the Superintendent signs and dates receipt of all resignations. The Superintendent shall inform the Board of all resignations at the next regular Board meeting.
- Shall review all policies adopted by the Board and make appropriate recommendations to the Board.
- Shall evaluate employees as provided for by California law or Board policy.
- Shall advise the Board on the financial health of the District on an annual basis.
- Shall maintain and improve professional competence by all available means: journals, conferences, associations and their activities.
- Shall arrange for District participation in community activities.
- Serve as the liaison between the Board and all employer-employee matters and make recommendations to the Board concerning these matters.
- Understands that she is hired by the board to manage and to lead the District to achieve the Board's goals and objectives.

(2) The Superintendent shall perform all functions and responsibilities of the position of Principal of Alternative Education, including but not limited to:

- Supervises instructional and support personnel in the areas of Educational/Student Achievement and School Environment.
- Lead/ Monitor implementation of curriculum alignment to State Standards, performance-based assessments, articulation and instructional technology
- Monitor and evaluate student progress in all areas, through discussion with teachers and data/documentation analysis.
- Provide leadership to the staff in assessing school needs and development and implementation of short and long ranged plans with focus on student achievement.
- Conducts regular productive personnel evaluations, maintains high level of proper student conduct adhering to board policies and CA Education Code, processes student disciplinary actions, personnel actions and/or related matters ensuring a safe and positive school climate.

(3) The Superintendent shall perform all functions and responsibilities of Director of Student Educational Services, including, but not limited to:

- Oversees all areas of the Special Education and Section 504 Services for the district.
- Oversees and coordinates all District discipline programs and protocols, due process procedures for student discipline, including expulsions.

- Monitors and oversees District attendance, truancy and dropout • Coordinates and implements District School Attendance Review Board (SARB) and acts as its chair.
- Oversees Inter/Intra District transfers.
- Oversees McKinneyNento Homeless Program for the District.
- Serves as District Liaison for Homeless and Foster Care Programs.
- Coordinates with site administrators for the development and implementation of Safe School Plans and District Wellness Plans.
- Develops and maintains communication with all stakeholders and coordinating agencies, including meetings, trainings and professional development.

PERFORMING BOARD GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Set the direction for the school district

- Focus on student learning
- Receive needs assessment / baseline data
- Generate, review or revise setting direction documents (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used
- Ensure these documents are the driving force for all district efforts

Establish an effective and efficient structure for the school district

- Employ and support the superintendent; set policy for hiring of other personnel
- Oversee the development of and adopt policies
- Set a direction for and adopt the curriculum
- Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues
- Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

Provide support through our behavior and actions

- Act with professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and vision
- Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
- Uphold district policies and all actions the board has approved
- Ensure a positive working climate exists
- Be knowledgeable about district efforts

Ensure accountability to the public

- Evaluate the superintendent
- Monitor, review and revise policies and serve as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated
- Monitor and adjust district finances
- Monitor the collective bargaining process
- Develop and implement board self-evaluation

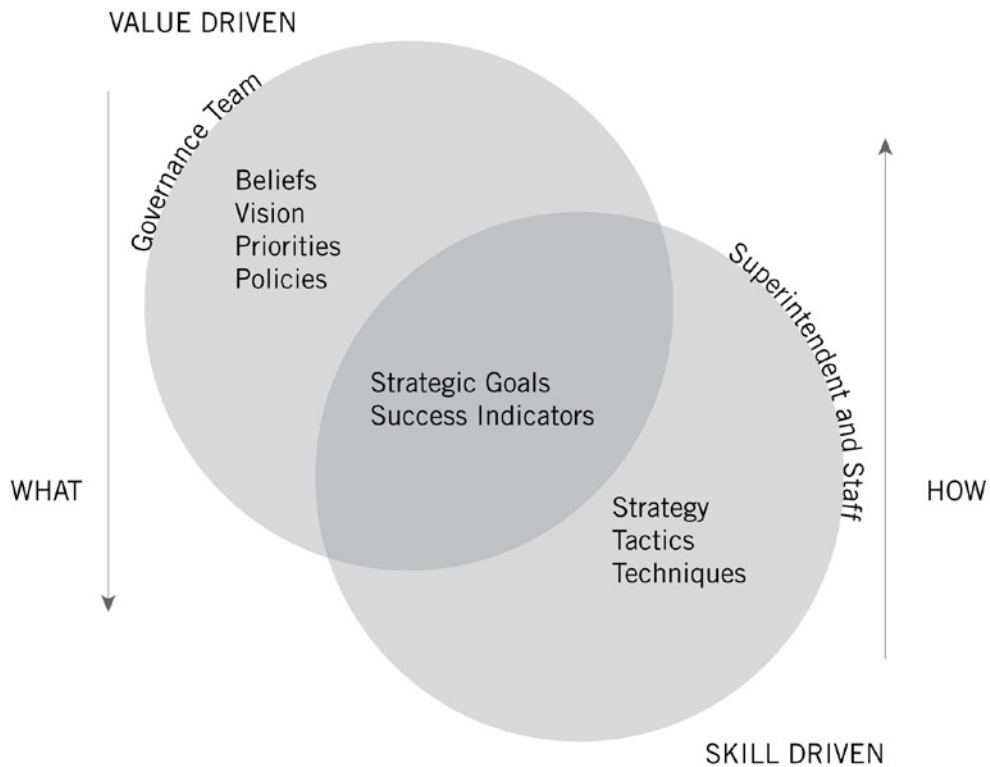
Demonstrate Community Leadership

- Speak with a common voice about district policies, goals, and issues
- Engage and involve the community in district schools and activities
- Communicate clear information about policies, programs, and fiscal condition of the district
- Educate the community and the media about the issues facing students and the district
- Advocate for children and district programs to the general public, key community members, and local, state, and national leaders

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE TEAMS

Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent, and strive to operate within them.

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNANCE ROLES*



*Source: California School Board Association

Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Requesting Information from the Superintendent	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critical to the ability of trustees to make informed decisions is timely access to Information. ● The superintendent wants to be responsive to requests for information, maintain the focus on district priorities and balance the management of staff time. ● This will provide clarity about the organizational structure for trustees and staff.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trustees will always work through the superintendent when asking questions or requesting additional information on board meeting agenda items. ● The superintendent will ensure timely responses to requests and will provide the information or direct trustees to the correct source. As appropriate, the superintendent will distribute answers to all trustees. ● 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. Requests requiring inordinate amounts of time will be brought to the board to decide whether to support the request.

Meetings as Strategic Leadership	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board meeting is a meeting to conduct district business in public. Well-run efficient meetings model leadership, promote trust and confidence and provide opportunities to demonstrate strategically moving the district forward and planning for the future. ● The governance team wants to demonstrate to the public that the board maintains the focus on priorities and that deliberation and discussion are conducted with professionalism and respect. ● The board meeting provides opportunities to share educational philosophy among the governance team and with the community.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board will communicate how the agenda topics link to district priorities and how actions link to the goals and strategies. ● The principal/superintendent reports will explicitly demonstrate the relationship to the district goals. ● The board members agree to share accountability for board deliberations that demonstrate that the 'right' amount of time is spent on the 'right' things while valuing the input of each member of the governance team. ● Board member comments at the board meeting with focus on goals, professional learning or educational trends. ● Annually and as needed the board will schedule study sessions and board conversations linked to the district's strategic priorities.

Role of the Board President	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board has an obligation to set an example of good government in action for the community. ● The board intends for meetings to proceed professionally, efficiently and effectively. ● The board president sets the tone and shapes the public's perception of the school board. ● Each board member must have the opportunity to express his or her viewpoint during board deliberation.
Protocol	<p>The role of the board president is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confer with the superintendent before the board meeting to prepare, as necessary for the board meeting. ● Facilitate the board meeting, supporting the effective flow of the discussion and encouraging input from all trustees while staying on task, moving forward, and maintaining proper meeting decorum ● Model the tone and behavior the board wishes to convey to the community. ● Following the board meeting, the board president with the superintendent will ensure there is appropriate follow-up and clarification of possible options for the board. ● The board president serves as the primary spokesperson for the board.

Board Deliberation and Motions on Agenda Action Items	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The tenets of parliamentary procedure help ensure the orderly conduct of board meetings. ● Establishing clear and simple rules leads to wider understanding and participation, fostering a healthier exchange of ideas. ● Motions are the vehicles for orderly decision making by the board
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board president will introduce the agenda item and present the opportunity for the superintendent and staff to report on the issue at hand and to provide staff recommendations. ● The board president will open the item for discussion so that board members may exchange thoughts or ask the superintendent and staff for further clarification if necessary. ● Members of the public will be afforded the right to address the board before or during consideration of the item. (Gov Code 54954.3) ● The board president will call for a motion. A board member may act by saying "I move that.....". ● Another board member may second the motion by saying "I second the motion" ● The board president will acknowledge the motion and second and ask if any further discussion by the board is necessary ● The board president will call for a vote saying "All in favor please respond by saying aye." "Any opposed please respond by saying no." ● The board president announces the result of the vote and clarifies Board direction for the Superintendent and the record keeper.

Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Board Meeting Agenda Consent Calendar	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A consent calendar allows the board to approve items together without discussion or individual motions. ● Consent calendars help streamline meetings by allowing procedural decisions that are likely to be noncontroversial to be made through a single motion.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board members, staff, or members of the public can request an item be pulled from the consent calendar for individual consideration. ● Typical reasons to remove an item from the consent calendar are; to discuss the item, to query the item, or to register a vote against the item. ● Ideally requests to remove an item from the consent calendar and the reason for the request should be made during approval of the agenda. Items may also be removed when the consent calendar is considered by the board. ● Consent items should include, but are not limited to; approval of minutes, field trips, conference requests, inter-district transfers, volunteers, personnel, etc. ● An agenda item “Items removed From The Consent Calendar” will follow the consent calendar on the agenda to facilitate consideration of removed items.

Newly Elected Board Member Resources	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Newly elected members to the Board of Trustees will likely be unfamiliar with state open meeting laws, meeting procedural policies, board bylaws, the district budget, goals, and other district related issues. ● The governance team wants to provide all the tools necessary to help new board members reach their potential to be a productive and effective member to the team. ● Having resources related to board meeting procedure and pertinent district information will help prepare new board members for their first board meeting and facilitate integration into the governance team.
Protocol	<p>Newly elected board members will receive the following resources upon election and prior to their first board meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brown Act Handbook, LVUSD Governance Handbook and Governance Calendar, Annual Board Meeting Calendar, Board Bylaws/Policies, and CSBA Professional Governance Standards ● Strategic/Long Range Plan, District Budget, District Budget Development Calendar, and District Resource Document <p>The governance team will schedule a workshop/conversation meeting at the first board meeting held with newly elected board member(s). This should include a mock meeting scenario to help familiarize new board members with agenda item participation, making motions, and all other board meeting procedures.</p>

Establishing Multi - Year Goals	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishing district multi-year and annual goals is critical to a forward thinking, proactive board that is committed to continuous learning. ● Important to the work of the board is the ability to track progress over multiple years. ● Critical to governance work is data driven decision-making that promotes clarity of direction, focus and alignment. Setting goals ensures that the work of the district is focused.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The annual goal setting process is linked to the district mission map and the superintendent evaluation and will follow an established calendar. ● <i>July</i> - review past year accomplishments and status of goals. ● <i>July</i> - set annual goals based on the District Strategic Plan and establish a schedule of progress reports.

Designated Spokesperson	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is essential that important and accurate information be communicated to members of the board, the staff and the community in as timely a fashion as possible. ● The governance team recognizes that some situations have legal or other considerations that may place restrictions on what may be told to the media or public.
Protocol	<p>The governance team commits to speaking with one voice. The designated spokesperson will vary depending on the issue or situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crisis/Disaster: The superintendent is the primary spokesperson and may involve the board president at her discretion. ● Meeting Information (e.g. board meetings, agenda items, study sessions): The board president and the superintendent will serve as primary spokespersons or may choose a designee. ● Core Values /Vision / District Priorities / General District Information: All governance team members may serve as spokespersons utilizing developed and agreed upon key messages. <p><i>For requests via email:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If a trustee receives an email request from a member of the public, the trustee will respond and copy the board president and superintendent on the response. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued ></i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the request is sent to the superintendent, she will copy the answer to all trustees. ● If the e-mail is sent to some or all trustees, trustees will refer the request to board president with a copy to the superintendent (if the superintendent is not already copied). The board president or superintendent will agree on which of them will respond, copying all trustees. <p><i>For requests from the media:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A trustee may answer a request from the media or recommend that the request be directed to the board president or the superintendent. ● If the trustee answers the request directly via e-mail, he/she will copy the superintendent and board president. If the trustee answers the request directly via conversation or phone call, he/she will inform the superintendent and board president. ● The board Vice President will perform the role of the board president if the board president is unavailable for an extended period.
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Handling Community or Staff Concerns and/or Complaints	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board members want to be accessible, responsive, consistent and fair in dealings with complaints and concerns from staff and the community. ● The board values open communication and timely resolution of issues. ● Board members may take receiving complaints as an opportunity to explain the role of trustees. ● Board members understand they do not have the authority to resolve complaints as individual members of the governing body.
Protocol	<p>When approached with an issue or concern, trustees agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen openly, being careful to remain neutral. ● Remind staff and members of the community that no individual trustee has the authority to solve the issue/concern. ● Encourage addressing this with the person who can most directly help with their concern, e.g. teacher, principal, superintendent. ● As appropriate, explain the district complaint or grievance process. Trustees will notify the superintendent of the issue or concern, as appropriate.

Board Governance Self Assessment	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducting a governance self-evaluation demonstrates accountability to the community and the willingness of the governance team to strengthen and improve
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board supports continuous improvement through ongoing evaluation of governance effectiveness. ● The governance self-assessment provides an opportunity to reflect, evaluate, prioritize and focus on strengthening the governance team. ● The board will participate in at least one workshop annually to review the governance goals, governance team agreements and processes and to participate in a self-evaluation process. ● The assessment process will align with assessment of progress on district goals and the superintendent evaluation. ● At the conclusion of the annual governance self-assessment, the board will reach agreement on one to two governance goals/objectives that are directly linked to the district goals.

Confidentiality	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The governing board recognizes the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of information acquired as part of a board member's official duties.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The responsibility of the board includes being privy to closed sessions or confidential information about district litigation, personnel, negotiations, superintendent evaluation, or other issues permitted under the Brown Act. ● We will work to maintain the public's trust by not breaching confidentiality. ● If we inadvertently or accidentally violate a confidential issue, we will take immediate responsibility for our action. ● Confidential items will be reserved for full board discussion.

Visiting Schools and Attending School Events	
Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The board wants to be informed about instructional practices, and the needs of the students and staff with regard to school programs. ● The board respects the busy schedule of staff and the anxiety that can be created by well-meaning, but unannounced visits to schools.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As a professional courtesy, trustees will schedule school visits. ● The superintendent and/or principal will accompany trustees on classroom visits. ● Trustees requesting a meeting with school staff or administration will schedule this meeting through the superintendent. ● The superintendent will ensure that staff is aware of the process and protocols for trustees visiting the classrooms. ● Board members are encouraged to visit schools and attend school events.

Collective Bargaining	
Principle	Board members involvement in the collective bargaining process ensures that the District is represented well by those selected to negotiate on behalf of the Board and the community, while also ensuring that the ethical, fiscal and educational goals of the LVUSD community are represented in the actions taken throughout the collective bargaining process
Protocol	<p>To achieve this, board members should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participate by providing direction and guidance to those selected to represent the Board (District Negotiating Team). Board members will not participate in the individual negotiation sessions, either directly (at the table) or indirectly (observing the District's negotiation team). ● Create the most positive environment possible to support the negotiation process; (e.g., Superintendent will endeavor to hold regular monthly employee/employer relations (ERR) meetings with each union's lead Negotiator and President). Superintendent and management team member shall endeavor to hold regular meetings to maintain consistent positive communication. ● Set the District's collective bargaining parameters for its negotiation team. ● Expect, as the representative of the Board, that the Superintendent will ensure that the Board, collectively and individually, is informed on the issues and strategies implemented within the collective bargaining process. ● Expect, as the representative of the Board, that the Superintendent will recommend, for approval of the Board, the Chief Negotiator and the members of each of the District's negotiation teams. ● Encourage open communication to all those impacted by negotiations, within allowed parameters. ● Expect, while the negotiation process is taking place that the Superintendent will be available to address the challenges related to the district. As the representative of the Board, the Superintendent will guide the development of the bargaining strategy and will be primarily responsible for facilitating the collective bargaining process.