



## Eastside Union School District Governance Handbook

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### Board of Trustees

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#### **EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

#### **Unity of Purpose, Roles, Responsibilities, Norms and Protocols**

*These workshop notes reflect the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This process 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.*

*On March 24, 2014, Eastside Union School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent participated in a workshop on Effective Governance with the California School Boards Association. These workshop notes reflect an update of the governance team’s discussions about developing and sustaining a framework for effective governance. The notes reflect highlights of their ongoing 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.*

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## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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### We Chose to Serve as a Board Member/Superintendent, Because...

- I believed that students were getting a substandard education in the district.
- I care about the kids and the District.
- I care about the children and the District and thought I had a lot to offer. We need to keep things going forward.
- I am dedicated and have a desire to improve student achievement and outcomes.
- I want to make a difference in the lives of students.
- My children were starting school and I wanted to be a part of their education.
- I wanted to create the best environment for the kids.

## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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### We Value and Believe that:

- Every child should have the education that they need and be taught in the way that they can learn.
- Every child in public school should have the opportunity to have the best education.
- All students have a right to equal educational opportunities in order to lead successful lives.
- A quality education can unlock any door or breakdown any barrier for students.
- All children can learn to their fullest potential and they deserve a loving, caring childhood.
- Public education should provide opportunities for all.

## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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### What We Are Most Proud of About this District:

**“Eastside Union School District is the best kept secret in Lancaster.”**

- Quality education.
- The staff and what they are accomplishing.
- The rise in test scores.  
The “family atmosphere” – the small size contributes to our ability to be involved in the schools.
- The resiliency of our teachers; their ability to come through for the children in the face of adversity.
- That we have always been able to move forward.
- We are small, mighty and proud and always leaders in newness.

## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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### What We Hope to Accomplish:

- To accomplish our goals to better our children's education and to back our Superintendent's efforts to do that.
- To better utilize our assets and strengths to serve our stakeholders.
- Open communication
- To empower the Board.
- To build the team in order to move the district forward.
- Every decision should be in the best interest of children and we should support the Superintendent in this effort.
- Unity.
- Sharing communication among team members so that we all have the same information.
- Create and foster an atmosphere of trust and the belief among our stakeholders and ourselves that we are doing what is best in order to educate our kids.
- We will look for solutions not road blocks.

### **Vision**

“Innovative Education, Unparalleled Results”

### **Mission Statement**

To provide an inclusive, challenging and innovative education in a safe, positive and rigorous learning environment with dynamic and responsive staff, who encourage unparalleled results for students.



## District Goals

- Improve Student Achievement
- Ensure a Safe and Caring Learning Environment
- Promote a Team Commitment
- Operate with Increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness

## GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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### The Role of the Board and Superintendent - CSBA:

School board “trustees” are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure that the 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 - 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: (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- Ensuring an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop these documents.
- Ensuring that these documents 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 indicated
- Monitoring and adjusting district finances
- 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 general public, community, and local, state and national leaders.

**An Effective Trustee:**

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The Board determined that the following characteristic describe an Effective Trustee:

- **BEING MINDFUL:**
  - Being aware of the big picture and knowing the details regarding each department
  - Having a balanced approach to issues – Listening to **all** sides equally.
  - Being open-minded in regards to change:
    - a. During deliberations
    - b. After a decision is made (if new information comes to light.)
  - Being aware of how our actions affect others
  - Knowledge is power
- **BEING PREPARED:**
  - Doing our homework!
    - a. Reading all information
    - b. Touring– sites, food services, transportation, etc.
    - c. Asking questions
    - d. Doing the research necessary to understand issues
  - Ensuring that policies are up-to-date
  - Participating in trainings and workshops
  - Reading updates
  - Understanding the history of the district

- **MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY:**
  - Ensuring that nothing confidential leaves closed session.
  - Being careful of everything one says.
  - Realizing that “Confidential” means – **“Telling No One!”**
  - Understanding that confidentiality is essential for building trust
  - Being aware that breaking confidentiality has legal and financial ramifications; confidentiality is a necessity!
  
- **BEING FOCUSED:**
  - Ensuring that the district’s vision is at the root of all decisions.
  - Making assertive and intentional decisions – Refraining from passivity.
  - Giving the district’s issues and agenda items their due attention.
  - **Always Focusing on the Children!**
  
- **MAINTAINING AN APPROPRIATE MANNER:**
  - Being aware of our behavior and body language
  - Being aware of how things are displayed to others
  - Being aware of why we behave in different ways
  - Do we change when we need to?
  
- **BEING COMMITTED:**
  - To planning – (Knowing what is needed and who is involved?)
  - Staying the course for as long as it takes; not letting something fall into the weeds.
  - Providing the needed next steps for the students.

## **GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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What the Board needs from the Superintendent:

**The superintendent will support trustees in fulfilling their responsibilities by communicating effectively:**

- Having two Board Meetings per month – one business meeting and one study session.
- By keeping the Board informed. If one Board Member asks a question, the response should go out to everyone.
- Providing updates on District issues in Thursday packets.
- Including pros and cons, as well as, recommendations on agenda items to help us think through issues.

## What the Superintendent needs from the Board:

### **The trustees can support the superintendent in fulfilling his responsibilities by doing the following:**

- Asking questions in advance so that the staff and the Board can be better prepared for meetings.
- Keeping the communication link open and giving him time to do his job.
- Understanding that some issues predate this Superintendent. Having awareness that patience is needed.
- Being aware of personnel cuts and the impact that they have had on the Superintendent and all staff.
- Taking time to *smell the roses* and appreciate the good things.

## What the Board Members need from each other:

### **The trustees can support each other in fulfilling their responsibilities by doing the following:**

- Talking about policies when we receive them and acting promptly.
- Asking a colleague procedural questions.
- Getting comfortable with respectful conflict when making decisions.
- Giving each other time to process.
- Working for understanding.
- Remembering that our hearts are in the right place.
- Being patient with each other and ourselves.

# Eastside Union School District Governance Team

## AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

### Governance Team Norms and Protocols:

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

*To effectively meet district challenges, 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 Eastside Union School District governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship 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 over time as needed.*

### ***Our Agreements to Facilitate Governance Leadership:***

## Norms

**Our Governance Team wishes to create a culture that models...**

- **Respect**
- **Trust**
- **Open, Honest Communication.**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Avoiding Surprises**
- **Assuming good will**

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

## **Meeting Guidelines**

- We will keep our focus on the best interest of our students.
- All confidential team discussions will remain confidential. Confidentiality allows us to be more open.
- Each member will take responsibility for the work of the team. We will each be responsible for the success of the meeting, participate equally, address concerns and support majority decisions.
- When we have a difference of opinion, we will debate the facts of the situation and avoid personalities. We will address process -- not personalities.
- Preconceptions about each other should be left at the door.
- We will listen actively to all ideas. We will listen openly without preparing responses.
- Everyone's opinions count; we will be open to the ideas of others.
- We will wait to speak until a team member has finished talking. We will keep our remarks brief and to the point so that all opinions can be expressed.
- Anyone can call a "time out" if s/he feels the need for a break.
- We will communicate openly and honestly with each other.
- We will respect differences; we will show respect and never dismiss or devalue others.
- We will be supportive rather than judgmental.
- We will give helpful feedback directly and openly.
- All team members will offer their ideas and resources.
- We will build upon the ideas of others and look for common ground; we will paraphrase for understanding.
- We will respect team meeting times: start on time, return from breaks promptly and avoid unnecessary interruptions.
- **We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked.**
- We will all work to make sure there are no hidden agendas and that all issues and concerns can be dealt with openly by all members.
- **We will work toward the future – learning from the past.**

# Protocols

## STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

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 operation 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.

### *Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership:*

TOPIC:	PROTOCOL:
<p><b>Site Visits</b></p>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> We believe that site visits are important; they provide us with the opportunity to see the good things that are happening in our schools and help us stay informed.</p> <p>When visiting schools, we need to remember the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember that we are always a Board Member.</li> <li>• Principals need to know that we are coming so that we do not catch people off guard, which can create a sense of mistrust. Notification is respectful to staff and allows Board Members the quality time at the sites that they deserve.</li> <li>• We need to be respectful to staff.</li> <li>• We believe that visits should not be disruptive to school staff.</li> <li>• Remember that what you see is a snapshot.</li> </ul> <p>To that end, we agree that when we wish to visit a school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will contact the Superintendent except when attending special events by invitation.</li> <li>• The Superintendent or designee will then notify the principal.</li> <li>• Scheduling then takes place.</li> <li>• Board Members will sign-in at the office upon arriving at the school.</li> <li>• The principal is responsible for the visit.</li> </ul>

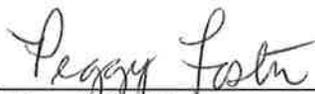
**Responding to  
Staff or  
Community  
Concerns or  
Complaints**

**Rationale:** We recognize that individual Board Members do not have the authority to resolve issues and complaints. Therefore, when a Board Member is approached by a community or staff member with an issue or concern, he/she will:

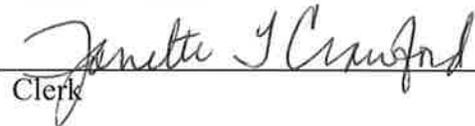
- **Receive** – Listen without interruption and without preparing a response to the person’s issues or concerns.
- **Repeat** – Paraphrase or ask a clarifying question to ensure understanding of what has been said.
- **Request** – Ask what the person sees as the solution to the problem or concern. Ask what they would have us do with the information they have given us.
- **Review** – The conversation (and next steps, if any).
- **Redirect** – Put the person back into the system at the appropriate place.
- **Refrain** - From making judgments until we have received all of the information.
- **Respect** – The legitimacy of the concern.
- **Report** - Notify the Superintendent of the conversation so that he has the full picture and can follow through as appropriate and/or necessary.

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 Eastside Union School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students and the community. ***We shall renew this agreement at each Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education.***

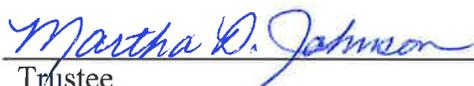
Affirmed on this day of December 12, 2016



Board President



Clerk



Trustee



Vice President

Trustee



Dr. Mark E. Marshall, Superintendent