



# Castaic Union School District Governance Handbook

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November 9, 2017

## Board of Trustees

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Mrs. Susan Christopher, *President*

Mrs. Laura Pearson, *Clerk*

Mrs. Mayreen Burk, *Trustee*

Mrs. Stacy Dobbs, *Trustee*

Mr. Fred Malcomb, *Trustee*

## Superintendent

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Steve Doyle

<b>EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE</b>
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<b>Unity of Purpose, Roles, Responsibilities, Norms and Protocols</b>
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<i>This document reflects the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This process involves <b>ongoing</b> 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.</i>
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*On June 11, 2016 and June 3, 2017, Castaic Union School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent participated in workshops on Effective Governance with the California School Boards Association. This document reflects the governance team's discussion about developing and sustaining a framework for effective governance and includes highlights of their conversation 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

*Unity of purpose is the common focus, overarching goals, and the core values, beliefs and principles governing body members share in common about children, the district and public education*

## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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Why We Chose to Become a Board Member or Superintendent:

- To continue serving our community
- To work on impacting a larger community than a classroom or school and to set direction
- I was actively involved in the schools (in PTA and Site Council) and was encouraged to run. I wanted to shift the focus of the district to ensure that students needing support received the assistance that they required in order to be successful.
- To advocate for the best education for all kids
- As a child, I had a strong support system, which had a great impact on my life; I want our district to provide that level of support for every child.

## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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What We Are Most Proud of About this District:

- We have been able to look at the positive and maintain our family atmosphere.
  - It works - the district enhances the community; people want to live here because of the schools.
  - The community feel – we care about families and kids.
  - Our resilience and dedication to kids no matter what
  - The ability of the district to come together during the financial crisis
  - Our student focus and customer service
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## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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### What We Hope to Accomplish, to:

- Continue to be successful
- Make our district even better than it is and implement new programs
- Restore faith in our schools and live up to what the community deserves
- Continue to respect individual views and differences
- Have a roadmap, a vision about where we are taking the district financially and in regard to facilities
- Rebuild the district with open lines of communication

### Our Mission Statement

The Castaic Union School District, in partnership with the community, provides children with a creative and collaborative learning environment supported by a safe and nurturing atmosphere that creates life-long learners and empowers them to be critical thinkers in a global community. (Approved by the Board on May 13, 2014)

### 5 -YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

(Approved by the Board on May 13, 2014)

#### 1. LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

- 1.1 The Castaic Union School District will sustain a high rate of success and growth for all students in all curricular areas.
- 1.2 The Castaic Union School District implements a balanced curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core Standards, Preschool Foundations, and 21st Century Learning Skills to promote student achievement.
- 1.3 The Castaic Union School District implements and will sustain high quality instructional programs based on current research and professional standards for teacher effectiveness.
- 1.4 The Castaic Union School District promotes the exploration of global career opportunities, future goals, and the development of real world skills.
- 1.5 The Castaic Union School District provides opportunities to extend learning through preschool, intervention activities and enrichment experiences.
- 1.6 The Castaic Union School District builds and maintains relationships with other districts and community partners to ensure a wide variety of opportunities for all students.
- 1.7 The Castaic Union School District provides instruction on the effective use of technology and how it can be used to promote student learning.

## **2. SAFE, ORDERLY, POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

- 2.1 The Castaic Union School District promotes the development of character traits that utilize the strengths of a diverse community.
- 2.2 Castaic Union School District schools maintain safe, clean and up-to-date facilities.
- 2.3 Castaic Union School District schools are prepared to respond to unforeseen emergencies.
- 2.4 Castaic Union School District schools promote a bully-free environment.

## **3. QUALITY STAFF PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE**

- 3.1 The Castaic Union School District hires and sustains staff as needed to maintain quality educational services.
- 3.2 The Castaic Union School District promotes collaboration and respect among employees through opportunities for meaningful participation, validation and recognition to better meet student needs.
- 3.3 The Castaic Union School District provides all staff with purposeful professional development and opportunities to share, demonstrate and implement best practices.

## **4. SCHOOL/HOME/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION**

- 4.1 Castaic Union School District schools nurture welcoming environments that promote positive relationships in support of students, staff and families.
- 4.2 The Castaic Union School District engages in meaningful communication amongst all stakeholders.
- 4.3 The Castaic Union School District initiates and supports partnerships with businesses, local agencies and the community to support learning.
- 4.4 The Castaic Union School District uses current technologies to foster communication and partnerships between schools and the community.

## **5. ACQUISITION & ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT GOALS # 1 - 4**

- 5.1 The Castaic Union School District provides sufficient resources and facilities to ensure that each student has access to safe and equitable educational opportunities of a high caliber.

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

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

School board “trustees” are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure 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.
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## **GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**What the Board needs from the Superintendent:**

**The superintendent will support trustees in fulfilling their responsibilities by continuing to provide good communication:**

- Utilizing different modalities of communication to denote the urgency of the message:
  - ✓ Phone call – most urgent
  - ✓ Text
  - ✓ Email – least urgent
- Providing a Friday Letter on weeks without Board Meetings to keep the Board informed. Provide a brief summary paragraph regarding departments, programs and sites, as well as, articles of interest - clarifying the importance of the articles from crucial to good to know.
- Touching base with the Board regarding the district culture.

## What the Superintendent needs from the Board:

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

- Continuing to ask questions in advance – avoiding surprises
- Providing support
- Continuing the open, honest communication
- “Copying” him when asking questions of staff

## What Board Members need from each other:

### **The trustees can support each other by:**

- Reviving “Spotlight for Success” – Coordinate the information shared at Board Meetings and share one item per Board Member.
- Making space for each person to speak at meetings
- Supporting each other
- Encouraging new Board Members to attend workshops and training sessions



# **Castaic Union School District Governance Team**

## **AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP**

### **Governance Team Norms and Protocols:**

The Board of Education for the Castaic 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 the 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 Castaic Union SD governance team agreements is to ensure that a positive and productive working relationship exists 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 demonstrates ...**

- **Professionalism**
- **Saying what you mean and meaning what you say – honesty**
- **A unified front**
- **Remembering confidentiality**
- **Treating each other and all people with respect; Valuing everyone's opinions and perspective - Watching our body language**
- **Active listening – listening to understand the perspectives of others.**
- **Coming prepared and asking questions in advance**
- **Friendliness**
- **Communication and support**
- **Trust**
- **Commitment and dedication**

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

## **Meeting Guidelines**

- We will keep our focus on the best interest of our students.
- We will work toward the future – learning from the past.
- We will communicate openly and honestly with each other and actively listen to all ideas.
- Everyone’s ideas count; we will be open to the ideas of others.
- When we have a difference of opinion, we will debate the facts of the situation and avoid personalities. We will address process -- not personalities.
- All team members will offer their ideas and resources.
- We will respect differences; we will show respect and be supportive of each other - never dismiss or devalue others.
- We will value the experiences of the staff and community.
- Each member will take responsibility for the work of the team. We will each be responsible for the success of the meeting, participate equally and address concerns.
- Anyone can call a “time out’ if he/she feels the need for a break.
- We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked.
- We will build upon the ideas of others and look for common ground.

# 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 operations 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:
<b>Responding to Staff or Community Concerns or Complaints</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> We care about the concerns of our constituents – it is part of our job.</p> <p><b>Therefore, when a Board Member is approached by a community or staff member with an issue or concern, he/she will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><u>Receive</u></b> – Listen without interruption and without preparing a response to the person’s issues or concerns, except in the case of issues that might possibly come before us in our judicial role – that information will be shared with the entire Board at the appropriate place and time - during the hearing.</li><li>• <b><u>Repeat</u></b> – When it is appropriate to listen to the complaint, paraphrase or ask a clarifying question to ensure understanding of what has been said.</li><li>• <b><u>Request</u></b> – 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.</li><li>• <b><u>Review</u></b> – The conversation (and next steps, if any).</li><li>• <b><u>Redirect</u></b> – Put the person back into the system at the appropriate place.</li><li>• <b><u>Report</u></b> – Notify the Superintendent of the conversation so that he has the full picture and can follow through as appropriate and/or necessary.</li></ul>

TOPIC:

**Electronic  
Communication**

PROTOCOL:

**Rationale:** It is essential to have a protocol regarding electronic communication because:

- We believe that it is important to speak with one voice and avoid distortion and miscommunication.
- All electronic communication is public domain.
- We are always seen as Board Members; individual responses appear to have come from the Board as a whole.
- We want to ensure that our constituents receive an appropriate response.

**Therefore, we will follow the protocols below:**

**Emails sent to individual Board Members:**

- The Board Member will thank the individual for the email and inform him/her that the message has been forwarded to the Superintendent so that the matter can be dealt with appropriately.
- Board Members will then forward the email to the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent will keep the entire Board informed as to the issue and its resolution.

**Emails sent to all five Board Members:**

- Board Members may thank the constituent for his/her email and raising the issue and inform the individual that the message has been sent to the Superintendent so that it can be dealt with appropriately.
- All Board Members will forward the message to the Superintendent so that he may address the issue.
- The Superintendent will inform all Board Members as to the resolution of the issue.

**Emails that include the Superintendent:**

- If an email is specifically addressed to the Superintendent, he will respond on behalf of the entire Governance Team.
- If an email is sent to all six members of the Governance Team, the Superintendent will respond for all. Individual Board Members may thank the constituent but say nothing more.

**District Facebook:**

- All posts on the District site will go through the Executive Assistant.
- The district will advertise the site and use it to promote the district and share positive information.
- School sites will be encouraged to send in information.

**Individual Board Member’s Personal Facebook Pages:**

- When posting on Facebook, Board Members will keep in mind our goal of presenting a unified front about the district and providing good news and information.

TOPIC:

**School Tours/  
Site Visits**

PROTOCOL:

- Rationale:** We believe that school visits are important, because:
- They afford us the opportunity to stay informed and see what is actually happening in the schools – to see our policies and programs in place.
  - We need to see what is happening in order to make informed decisions.
  - Site visits enhance staff morale.
  - One-on-one time with the principals is very valuable.

**Therefore...**

- The Superintendent will schedule, organize and agendaize school tours for the entire Board.
- The Superintendent will structure the tours with the principals.
- Board Members will inform the Superintendent about topics of interest to them.
- Principals will share the school’s programs with Board Members.
- The Board and Superintendent may also schedule informal social visits with school staff after school and provide snacks for the occasion.
- Board Members may also schedule individual or paired school visits by informing the Superintendent and scheduling with the principals.
- Principals may accompany Board Members on these visits.

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 Castaic School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students and the community. We shall renew this document annually.

Affirmed on this   9   day of  November , 2017



Susan Christopher, Board President



Laura Pearson, Clerk



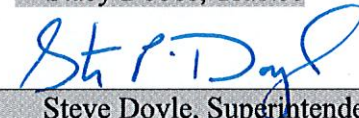
Mayreen Burk, Trustee



Stacy Dobbs, Trustee



Fred Malcomb, Trustee



Steve Doyle, Superintendent