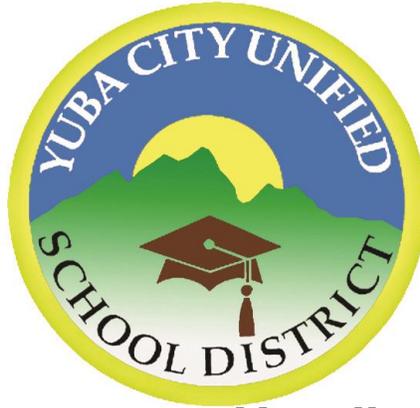


Yuba City Unified School District



Governance Handbook

The community entrusts the Board of Education 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.

Board of Trustees

Lonetta Riley, President
Steven Scriven, Vice President
Paul F. Broughton Ed.D., Clerk
Sean Fetters, Member
Brett Hancock, Member
Julie Ann Jackson, Member
Fred Northern, Member
Milan Shergill, RVHS Student Member
Jennifer Salazar, YCHS Student Member

Superintendent

Doreen Osumi

Unity of Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities, Norms, Agreements

This handbook reflects the governance team's work on creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, roles, norms and coming to agreement on protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.

This Governance Handbook was developed in a Board Governance workshop conducted on March 9th and 10th, 2017, with the assistance of Walt L. Hanline, Ed.D., Executive Director of the National Center for Executive Leadership and School Board Development. The Governance Handbook was approved on May 9, 2017.

Building a Governance Team

Unity of Purpose

School district governance is the act of transforming the needs, wishes, and desires of the community into policies that direct the community's schools.

In a school district, the Board and Superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work together effectively, members need to: Maintain a unity of purpose; agree on and govern within appropriate roles; create and sustain a positive governance culture and; create a supportive structure for effective governance.

What do we as a governance team want to accomplish? What do we stand for?

- Our shared purpose is to have the best learning environment for all students.
- We want to build trust and move the District forward.
- We want to be an effective team.
- We want to understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
- We want to be a team with a common focused direction so we are not a distraction to the District or community but a catalyst for the focused efforts of employees, and the community can see evidence of this focused direction.
- We want to be partners with the staff in positive change.
- We want to oversee the putting together of a first-rate program and first-rate facilities, making sure we continue to improve – never resting on our laurels.
- We want to perpetuate a legacy of positive culture as people come and go.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mutual agreement on the roles of the Board and Superintendent

The role of Trustees is to stay focused on the big picture while fulfilling five responsibilities in a series of job areas. These five responsibilities are:

1. We set the direction.
2. We establish the structure.
3. We provide support.
4. We ensure accountability.
5. We act as community leaders.

We carry out these responsibilities in each of the following job areas:

- Setting the District's Direction
- Student Learning and Achievement
- Finance
- Facilities
- Human Resources
- Policy
- Judicial Review
- Collective Bargaining
- Community Relations and Advocacy

The Superintendent assists the Board in carrying out its responsibilities in each of the job areas, and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon District vision and goals.

Creating and Sustaining a Positive Governance Team Culture

Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave with each other and others. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

Governance Norms

In addition to meeting the norms below in order to create a positive culture and atmosphere, we agree to act in ways that will help us meet the CSBA Professional Governance Standards.

WE AGREE TO –

- Keep from taking disagreements personally (individuality is embraced, respected).
- To show respect (never dismiss/devalue others).
- Make a commitment to effective deliberation, each listening openly while everyone is allowed to express his or her point of view.
- Make a commitment to open communication, honesty, no surprises.
- Commit the time necessary to govern effectively. This means being there, being knowledgeable, participating, understanding the full scope of being a Board Member and being willing to take on all the responsibilities involved.
- Be collaborative (this is the way we operate)!
- Maintain confidentiality (builds trust).
- Look upon history as lessons learned; focus on the present and the future.

AND – ABOVE ALL –

- Focus on students' best interest – on what's best for the students! This is what we do! And it is the touchstone that allows us to have our differences.

This Governance Handbook was developed in a Board Governance workshop conducted on March 9th and 10th, 2017, with the assistance of Walt L. Hanline, Ed.D., Executive Director of the National Center for Executive Leadership and School Board Development. The Governance Handbook was approved on May 9, 2017.

Guiding Principles

Principle 1 - The Board governs to keep the District focused on learning and achievement for all students.

- The Board demonstrates positive working relationships among members.
- The Board supports the development of district and site leaders who demonstrate effective leadership focused on proactive measures for student success.
- The Board is proactive in speaking and acting on behalf of students, programs, staff, and schools.

Principle 2 - The Board governs in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.

- Encourage thorough debate, seek to engage in dialogue for clarification and without judgment until all perspectives are heard.
- The Board provides opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.
- The Board embraces the diversity and cultural differences of our community.

Principle 3 - The Board has effective, open dialogue and deliberation of issues.

- Board members deliberate without personal challenges or attack on individual ideas and opinions.
- Board direction is clear when requesting further information from staff.
- Board agenda items receive appropriate time allocation for open deliberation in advance of taking action.

Principle 4 - The Board demeanor collectively and individually demonstrates the agreed upon attributes that include:

- Proactive; Attentive listeners and communicators; Responsive to constituents; Doing what's best for the students; Fair; Trustworthy; Accountable; Adaptable to change; Appreciative of teachers, support staff and administrators; and, Respectful.

Principle 5 - The Board operates openly, with trust and integrity.

- The Board members demonstrate trust and respect through active listening, open deliberations, and productive communications strategies.
- Clearly communicate decisions to all those who are affected by them.
- The Board is consistent in governing within YCUSD Board- adopted policies and procedures.
- The Board members demonstrate trust and respect through active listening, open deliberations, and productive communications strategies.

Principle 6 - Staff keeps the Board informed about fiscal, program, compliance, and other aspects of California's educational system. That information takes place in weekly communiqués, reports in Open Session, subcommittee meetings, among other sources.

This Governance Handbook was developed in a Board Governance workshop conducted on March 9th and 10th, 2017, with the assistance of Walt L. Hanline, Ed.D., Executive Director of the National Center for Executive Leadership and School Board Development. The Governance Handbook was approved on May 9, 2017.

Guiding Principles

Principle 7 - The Board communicates a common vision.

- The Board members honor the protocols of communication established through the YCUSD organizational chart.
- The Board develops a District vision, mission, and goals through an inclusive process that involves Board, staff, and community.
- The Board collectively and individually promotes the vision, mission, and goals of YCUSD.
- The Board creates effective systems of communication with the staff, parents, and community.

Principle 8 - The Board promotes accountability by showing willingness to be accountable to other Board members, staff, students, and community.

- The Board adheres to the criteria for effective governance as demonstrated in public meetings.
- The Board adheres to the criteria for effective governance as demonstrated through interaction with each other and constituents during the public meetings.

Principle 9 - The Board promotes communication and input from staff, students, and community on school related issues.

- The Board adheres to the criteria for effective governance as demonstrated through interaction with each other, staff, parents, and community.
- The Board adheres to their roles as established through YCUSD Board Bylaws and criteria for effective governance as demonstrated at school events.
- The Board encourages input to thoroughly debate an issue and seeks to engage in dialogue for clarification of all perspectives without judgment.

Principle 10 - The YCUSD Board communicates the District mission/goals to the community through school programs/activities, budget priorities, Board agendas, along with electronic and other communication venues. To advance student success, the Board communicates to stakeholder groups through establishing academic expectations:

- Adopting curriculum and instructional materials;
- Annually monitoring student achievement and program effectiveness, requiring program changes as necessary;
- Visiting schools and attending school events/meetings to remain informed about programs and interact with staff, students, parents, and site administration about student success;
- Providing safe and adequate facilities that support District program; and,
- Establishing an effective and efficient organizational structure for the District by being knowledgeable about district programs and efforts in order to serve as effective spokespersons. (BB9000).

Guiding Principles (continued)

Principle 11 - YCUSD attracts and develops top quality professionals focused on student success. The Board works with the Superintendent to:

- Establish an efficient organization structure for the district by employing the Superintendent and setting policy for hiring of other personnel;
- Develop an annual evaluation for the superintendent that is linked directly to the strategic plan and set policy for the evaluation of other personnel (Appendix D);
- Make sure there is appropriate follow-up and clarification of actions following the Board meeting; and,
- Uphold Board policies and standards of governance.

Principle 12 - The Board communicates to all constituents that the District is fiscally sound by:

- Ensuring accountability through monitoring and adjusting district finances;
- Protecting the District from risk of liability or litigation;
- Acknowledging that a board member is not at liberty to discuss any pending, anticipated, or existing litigation with the involved person(s), regardless of whether the person(s) are represented by counsel. Such interaction by a board member has the potential to place the district, and possibly the member, at risk of liability and may negatively impact the district's ability to carry out the litigation;
- Annually establishing budget priorities aligned with the District goals and allocate resources to advance those priorities;
- Establishing the Budget Priorities Committee to work with the superintendent and staff in the budget development process;
- Annually review its goals in Open Session through measurable annual benchmarks, data for which is provided by the superintendent and staff; and,
- Annually monitors the budget in Open Session through Board discussion/review of 1st and 2nd interim reports in October and March.

Principle 13 - Fiduciary responsibility requires the board to be loyal and committed to the people they act for and must never put their own interest first. (CA State Teachers' Retirement System) Fiscal responsibility is also referred to as part of fiduciary responsibility. The Board and individual Trustees manage financial assets of the district so as to prevent liability to the organization or to themselves as an individual.

“Fiduciary’ is derived from the Latin terms fides or fiducia, both of which mean trust and confidence. Certainly, when the public chooses an elected official, the public is putting its trust and confidence in him or her to act in the public’s best interests. The same can be said when one becomes an employee of a public agency. The agency trusts everyone on its team to put the public’s interests first. Indeed, always putting the public’s interests first is the essence of public service ethics.” (Institute for Local Government, Everyday Ethics for Local Officials. Fiduciary Duties and Public Service, February 2008)

Guiding Principles (continued)

Principal 13 (continued) The National School Boards Association indicates that personal interests and fiduciary responsibility must not come into conflict. Also, board members must not profit from his/her fiduciary position.

Principle 14 - Adopt a fiscally responsible budget based on the districts' vision and goals, and regularly monitor the fiscal health of the district.

Principle 15 - Board members and the superintendent communicate clearly about District issues. To that end, important information is communicated to the staff and community in a timely manner.

Principle 16 - The Board speaks with clarity and consistency regarding Board actions in order to maintain the trust of the community.

Board Governance Protocols

Leadership Responsibility and Roles of the Board

The Governing Board recognizes that the Board is the unit of authority over the district and that a Board member has no individual authority; however, individuals can bring up a new idea, explaining their interest in a possible course of action. Board members shall hold the education of students above any partisan principle, group interest, or personal interest. It has broad but clear limited powers. The exercise of its authority is restricted to the functions required or permitted by law, and then only when it acts in a legally constituted meeting.

The Board member represents and acts for the community as a whole, does not represent any fractional segment of the community, and agrees to abide by existing conflict of interest law.

In responding to concerns regarding the work of the District, Board members will:

- ❖ *Receive* the information, remembering that only one side of the story is being presented (listening)
- ❖ *Repeat* the information – paraphrase to ensure understanding
- ❖ *Remind* the individual that a Board member has no authority as an individual and share the appropriate line of command and process to follow to address their concern.
- ❖ *Re-Direct* – Thank them for sharing their thoughts and refer them to the appropriate staff member and, when appropriate, inform them of the formal complaint process.
- ❖ *Report* – In a timely manner, inform the Superintendent.

When interacting with the public and their constituents, Board members will hold to the highest level of professional and ethical conduct, including emphasizing the positive aspects of the District.

Board Governance Protocols (continued)

The Board's Role and Relationship with the Staff and Community

Each Board member understands the distinctions between board and staff roles, and refrains from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the superintendent and staff as a whole and not with individuals.

Board members make visits to school sites and departments for the purpose of:

- Demonstrating interest in and support for student learning;
- Showing respect and appreciation for District staff; or,
- Offering support for District improvement efforts.

As a professional courtesy, Board members will call the principal/department head ahead of time to arrange the visit and, whenever possible, wear the YCUSD identification badge to clarify their official capacity. Board members and all other site visitors 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 visitor is in his/her classroom.

Management staff are directed to relay requests from Board members to the Superintendent to ensure that appropriate information is provided to all Board members.

This protocol does not imply a censoring of any private and informal conversations.

The Board seeks to ensure that all members of the Board have the same information, leaving no secrets or surprises among members of the governance team.

Requests for information, provided by staff, should be channeled through the Superintendent's Office.

Board members will be assigned to the following committees and the agenda's for the meetings shall be communicated consistent with the requirements of the Brown Act.

- Government Liaison
- Policy
- *Facilities*
- *Budget Committee*
- *Graduation*
- *Personnel*
- *Public Relations*
- *School Safety*
- *Technology*

Board Governance Protocols (continued)

Board Meetings and the Agenda

Meetings of the Board are held in public, but are not open-forum town hall meetings. Meetings will be conducted in such a way as to allow the public to provide input in the time allotted to ensure that multiple voices of the community inform Board deliberations; however, when the Board deliberates, it will be a time for the Trustees to listen and learn from each other, taking public input into consideration without re-engaging the public.

Board meetings will be on the Second and Fourth Tuesday's of each month. Each Board meeting will begin with Closed Session. The Regular Public Meeting will begin at 7:00 pm. Study Sessions may be scheduled and shall be scheduled at the discretion of the Board.

The design of the Board agenda will follow the historical structure utilized by the Board. The design of the agenda may only be altered with the approval of the Board.

The Superintendent, with the support of staff, will create each Board Agenda. In advance of the preparation of the Board Agenda, Board members may request items to be placed on the agenda. The Board President and the Superintendent will discuss the contents of the agenda and the process that will be followed at the meeting, in advance of the Board Meeting.

Board members will make every effort to submit, prior to the meeting, questions they intend to ask so that the Superintendent and district staff has the opportunity to prepare to answer Board members' questions at Board meetings.

If unforeseen questions arrive during the meeting, Trustees will acknowledge their question or comment as spontaneous and that they understand that staff may not have the information on hand to answer the question.

Board members individually and collectively demonstrate confidentiality as appropriate and as outlined through the mandates of the California Education Code, the Brown Act, and other compliance criteria established by law or legislation. Respecting the confidentiality of information maintains the Board's judicial review role.

Board members need equal access to information, and to operate within the boundaries established within the Public Meeting law.

The use of email and social communication is subject to the Public Meeting Law. The Superintendent shall forward questions and answers to all Board members. Board members, when responding, may not "reply to all."

The Board wishes to maintain a culture of professionalism, stay focused, and respect the need of trustees to be available to their families:

- Cell phones will be set for 'silent' or vibrate.
- Trustees will be discreet in checking cell phones if necessary.

Board Governance Protocols (continued)

Board Meetings and the Agenda (continued)

Board members will review the information provided prior to the Board meeting and be open to ongoing professional development and training.

Abstentions are most appropriate in cases where there is a personal relationship between a litigant and a member (perception of bias), a decision that financially impacts the member or his or her immediate family (legal conflict), or a personal connection to the member that may bias a decision on discipline.

When abstaining because there may be a perception of bias, the member is encouraged to so state.

Where an actual legal conflict of interest exists, the member must publicly declare the conflict and recuse him or herself from voting at all.

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

Governance Team members are reminded that policy and decisions reserved to the Board must be made as a Board. Except where otherwise indicated in the Education or Government Codes, a majority consists of four of seven members of the seven-member Board voting for an item. Once the decision has been made, it becomes the decision of “the Board.”

Under the concept of majority rule, each member is compelled to support the successful implementation of a policy decision, program, or procedure even when he or she does not agree with the decision.

If a member of the Governance Team cannot support the decision of the Board because it offends a moral/personal code, the member is expected, at a minimum, to refrain from undermining the decision or directive.

The governance team will strive for brevity in deliberations, keeping remarks brief and to the point so that all opinions can be expressed and meetings can be efficient. Addressing each agenda item the Board shall, normally, adhere to the following process:

- ❖ Staff Presentation/addressing questions from the Board
(Staff members, when presenting items to the Board, are to provide appropriate back-up material for the Board to review prior to the Board meeting. If it is necessary to provide a presentation to the Board, presentations are to be limited to not more than 8 minutes, unless prior approval of the President is received.)
- ❖ Input from the Community
- ❖ Board Discussion and Deliberation

Board Governance Protocols (continued)

Board Meetings and the Agenda (continued)

Since the Public Meeting Law (Brown Act) expressly prohibits discussion leading to action from being conducted unless agendaized, Governance Team members are strongly encouraged to refrain from engaging members of the public in dialogue about issues not on the agenda.

In general, citizens and residents wishing to “dialogue” with members should be encouraged to contact individual members and discuss issues of importance with them or the Superintendent as appropriate.

As a result of a comment under public communication, a member may ask the Superintendent to briefly comment for clarity or correction. The member may also ask that a matter be investigated, with or without a follow-up report to the Board.

If a Governance Team member feels compelled to speak to the issue, the member must first be recognized by the Board President. The comments must be brief and only clarifying or correcting. Any further discussion should be agendaized.

The Board’s Role in Collective Bargaining

The Board establishes an effective and efficient organizational structure for the district by setting parameters for negotiations with employee organizations and ratifies collective bargaining agreements for all represented and unrepresented groups.

The Board ensures accountability to the public for the performance of the district’s schools by monitoring the collective bargaining process.

The Board discusses progress toward and direction for negotiations at each Closed Session related to represented and unrepresented groups. All such discussions are subject to the confidentiality mandates associated with the Brown Act.

The Board delegates the responsibility for negotiating to a team of District administration. That team acts within the direction and parameters offered by the Board.

The YCUSD Board reviews the School Services data that compares YCUSD employee salaries to districts in the established group used during negotiations and related processes.

The Superintendent is the Collective Bargaining Spokesperson for the Board.

Board Governance Protocols (continued)

The Board's Relationship with the Superintendent

The Superintendent will notify Board members about critical issues as soon as possible. The Board will commit to work through and with the Superintendent on issues regarding the running of the District. The Superintendent will inform the Board as soon as possible of:

- ✓ serious safety concerns
- ✓ serious disciplinary action
- ✓ serious / unexpected personnel changes, or disciplinary issues
- ✓ serious illness or death of a student, a staff member or members of the staff member's immediate family
- ✓ legal or liability concerns
- ✓ notable achievements

In all matters, the Board and Superintendent are expected to protect confidential information.

It is the Superintendent's responsibility to organize the staff in the manner that best serves the needs of the District. As a professional courtesy, the Superintendent shall provide appropriate notice to the Board in advance of action being taken.

As the norm, the Superintendent speaks on behalf of the Board. The Board President is authorized to speak on behalf of the Board, when necessary.

The Superintendent will inform the Board when media contacts the Superintendent.

All conflicts between the Superintendent and the Board will be handled in Closed Session, with the Superintendent being in attendance, when appropriate and necessary.

Conflicts between individual Board members and/or the Superintendent will be addressed privately between those who hold the conflict and will not involve other members of the Board or the public (community, staff, media etc.).

The Board is committed to 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.

The evaluation process and instrument is designed to bring about the collective view of the Board. Thus, the evaluation will reflect the majority view of the Board, as a whole.

Board Governance Protocols (continued)

The Ongoing Implementation of Board Approved Protocols

In addition to the administrative orientation by the Superintendent and senior staff, new members will be given an “orientation to the Board,” in a Study Session.

Training may be provided by County and State organizations, consultants, or led by staff. The training shall, whenever possible, take place prior to first Board meeting of the new Board member.

- The meeting is intended to be a conversation and overview of the things members need to know immediately. Questions will be answered, and the Board meeting structure, superintendent contract, superintendent objectives, Board policies, overview of the services and programs, and the major challenges being faced will be outlined and discussed.
- Each session may be slightly different depending upon the needs and interests of the incoming members and the major issues before the Board.
- The President will work the Superintendent to design the meeting agenda the materials.

Within 120 days of the election/appointment of a new Board member or appointment of a new superintendent, a Study Session of the whole Board will be held for the purpose of reviewing/updating the governance protocols of the Board.

Upon the request of two or more Board members, a special study session will be called for the purpose of reviewing/updating of the governance protocols of the Board.

To ensure for the optimum performance, the Board shall annually perform a self-review. Board Bylaw 9400 calls for an annual Board Self Review.