



ESCALON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Governance Handbook, 2019-2020

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Mrs. Kate Powell, President
Mr. John Largent, Vice President
Mr. Nicholas Caton, Clerk
Mr. Richard Thompson, Trustee
Mrs. Martha Coelho, Trustee

SUPERINTENDENT:

Mr. Ron Costa

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

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PUBLIC EDUCATION and CITIZEN GOVERNANCE in the US - NSBA

Principles behind public education in the United States:

- A tuition-free education for all students.
- The promise of equal educational opportunities no matter race, religion, or ability.
- A commitment to high standards and high expectations for all students.
- A system of governance that ensures public accountability.
- A benefit to society by teaching democratic principles and common values.

Escalon USD Governance Team members agree that it is the Board and the Superintendent, operating as a governance team, who are the “keepers of the promise” of the five principles that are the founding concepts of public education in the United States.

There are certain core decision-making functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public that, in our system of democracy, they can be performed only by an elected governing body. They are:

- The establishment of a long-term vision for the school system;
- The establishment and maintenance of an effective organizational structure for the school system, including employment of a superintendent, adoption of an annual budget, adoption of governance policies, etc.;
- The creation of a climate that promotes excellence for students and staff;
- The establishment of systems and processes to ensure accountability to the community, including fiscal accountability, accountability for programs and student outcomes, staff accountability, and collective bargaining; and
- Advocacy on behalf of children and public education at the community, state, and national levels.

PUBLIC EDUCATION and CITIZEN GOVERNANCE in the US - EUSD

ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION:

- Require an equitable opportunity for a free education for all students
- Provide a benefit to our society, and will help our society thrive
- Provide for a common understanding of the principles upon which this country was founded
- Level the playing field for all students
- The education of students is the only focus of locally elected Board members – unlike the city, state and federal governments.
- Schools are the heart of the community.
- The locally elected governing body provides accountability back to the community.

–EUSD Governance Team

WHY SCHOOL BOARDS ARE IMPORTANT:

- School Board Members come from the community and can be the eyes, ears and voice of the community.
- School Boards are the body that holds the district accountable to the community and the taxpayers.
- School Boards are accessible to the community and accountable for the performance of the district.
- A School Board's only function is the education of our students.
- The Board sets the direction, (the vision), and the standards for the district through collaborative processes with the community, and makes decisions so the vision can be achieved and standards upheld.

–EUSD Governance Team

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE - CSBA

THREE DIMENSIONS OF GOVERNANCE:

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. They are (1) The actions of an individual; (2) a group coming together to govern; and (3) the performance of governance responsibilities by the group.

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 (1) Maintain a Unity of Purpose, (2) Agree on and govern within appropriate roles, (3) Create and sustain a positive governance culture, (4) Create a supportive structure for effective governance, (norms and protocols). Effective 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.

DEFINING SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE:

Locally elected school board members provide citizen oversight of the community's schools, and protect the public's interest in preserving a free and equitable education system in the United States.

When governing effectively...

School boards ensure success for all students by making decisions that support the attainment of the district's vision, mission and goals, align district systems and resources, ensure the long-term fiscal stability of the district, and fulfill legal requirements.

In order to govern responsibly...

Boards must act collectively and openly, be guided by community interests, and informed by recommendations of the superintendent and professional staff.

–CSBA

ESCALON USD GOVERNANCE TEAM UNITY OF PURPOSE

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, overarching goals, and the values and beliefs governance team members share about children, the district and public education that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

–CSBA

OUR MISSION:

We will ensure that all students learn at high levels.

OUR VISION STATEMENT:

We maintain high expectations and a rigorous and relevant academic focus for all learners through purposeful, collaborative relationships. Our students are highly literate, innovative thinkers who understand the need for continuous self-improvement in their pursuit of excellence. They are socially responsible, and value working with others to build positive and productive relationships. They are inspired and prepared to thrive amidst the challenges of the 21st century.

WE VALUE:

Collaboration

We collaborate to promote a shared responsibility and accountability so that all students learn.

Effective teaching

We provide structured ongoing staff development to improve professional practice so that all students learn.

Rigorous/relevant curriculum

We prioritize our resources to provide challenging and meaningful learning experiences so that all students learn.

Professionalism

We hold ourselves to a high professional standard so that all students learn.

Community

We partner with our community as fellow stakeholders so that all students learn.

WHAT WE ARE PROUD OF ABOUT ESCALON USD

Each Governance Team member brought a list of the things that they are proud of about Escalon USD to a governance workshop. The list below is a compilation of the individual lists based on agreements reached during the governance workshop.

We are proud to have...

- A consistent focus on student learning, and a history of maintaining strong programs throughout the district – we always put our students first!
- Safe schools
- Great parent and community support
- Amazing students
- A dedicated, innovative, strong, creative and supportive Certificated staff that always strives for excellence
- Competent, dedicated Classified and Confidential employees who genuinely love our students and the district
- A great Leadership Team that is motivated, progressive, and innovative, and brings new ideas to our schools for the benefit our students
- Robust systems of support and intervention for our students
- A modernized Escalon High School
- Small country schools with great families and kids
- Generations of families who have attended Escalon USD schools - our history brings a strong sense of tradition to our schools

Escalon Unified School District LCAP Goals for 2019-2020

- Goal 1 – Provide the necessary resources and staffing to make all students career and college ready.
State Priorities: Priority 1 – Basic Services, Priority 2 – Implementation of State Standards, Priority 7 – Course Access
- Goal 2 – Provide a rigorous academic program, accessible to all students, so that all students develop the requisite skills to be career and college ready.
State Priorities: Priority 4 – Pupil Achievement, Priority 8 – Other Pupil Outcomes
- Goal 3 – Enlist all stakeholders to create learning environments that are effective and engaging.
State Priorities: Priority 3 – Parent Involvement, Priority 5 – Pupil Engagement, Priority 6 – School Climate

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – CSBA

Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. The role of the trustees who sit on locally elected school boards 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; and providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district and public schools.

These five responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public that 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 will best serve all the students in the community.

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. The following page provides more detail on how the board performs its governance responsibilities in each job area. It's important to remember that boards who inadvertently get involved in staff functions undercut their ability to hold the superintendent accountable for the results of those efforts.

–CSBA

THE FIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD:

1. Set The Direction
2. Establish The Structure
3. Create A Supportive Environment
4. Ensure Accountability
5. Demonstrate Community Leadership

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – EUSD

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- The board sets the direction for the district through inclusive processes that involve the external and internal district communities.
- Always maintains the focus on student learning and achievement
- Employs and works with the Superintendent as a Governance Team
- Maintains fiscal solvency while providing safe and adequate facilities to support student learning
- Evaluates the Superintendent to ensure that goals and action plans have been effectively implemented
- Ensures accountability to the public for the performance of the district

– EUSD GOVERNANCE TEAM

LIMITS OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY

- The Board is a body with collective authority – Board members have no individual authority.
- Board members should shall not go outside of the lines of authority or chains of command identified in District Policies.
- Board members have no authority to resolve complaints – should refer to Superintendent or designee.

– EUSD GOVERNANCE TEAM

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – EUSD

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

- Works together with the Board as part of the Governance team
- Provides administrative support and leadership to the Board and district
- The Superintendent is the only “direct” employee of the Board and is selected and evaluated by the Board.
- Develops a productive working relationship between the Board and Superintendent by maintaining timely and effective communication.
- The Superintendent's focus is on student learning and achievement - the attainment of the district vision and goals.
- As part of the Governance Team, the Superintendent supports operations and the decision-making of the Board.
- Implements the direction of the Board
- The Superintendent can delegate responsibility for any of his/her responsibilities, but still retains accountability.

– EUSD GOVERNANCE TEAM

PERFORMING OUR GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Escalon USD Governance Team agrees with the responsibilities of school boards as described below by the California School Boards Association:

Set the direction for the community's schools

- Focus on student learning
- Assess needs/ obtain 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
- Establish a human resources framework that includes policies for hiring and evaluating other personnel
- Oversee the development of and adopt policies
- Set a direction for and adopt the curriculum and require data-producing assessment systems
- Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues
- Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

Create a supportive environment 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 board-approved district policies and support staff implementation of board direction
- Ensure a positive working climate exists
- Be knowledgeable enough about district efforts to explain them to the public

Ensure accountability to the public

- Evaluate the superintendent
- Monitor, review and revise policies
- Serve as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated
- Monitor and adjust district finances and periodically review facilities issues
- Monitor the collective bargaining process

Demonstrate community leadership

- Speak with a common voice about district priorities, 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, the district and public education
- Advocate for children, district programs and public education to the general public, key community members and local, state and national leaders

OUR POSITIVE GOVERNANCE TEAM CULTURE (norms)

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.

Because the community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, and the district superintendent translates all efforts into action, it is vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

–CSBA

Our Agreements to Facilitate Governance Leadership:

Norms

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

- **Trust**
- **Open, Honest Communication**
- **Respect**
- **Accountability**
- **Empathy Toward Others**

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

Escalon USD - MEETING GUIDELINES

We agree to...

- Keep our focus on the best interest of our students
- Work toward the future - learning from the past
- Stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked
- Show respect: respect differences, and never dismiss or devalue others
- Listen openly without preparing a response
- Be open to the ideas of others
- Bring all issues and concerns to the team so we can communicate openly and honestly
- Each take responsibility for the work of the team

OUR PROCEDURES TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE (norms and protocols)

Effective governance teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the trustees and the superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., processes or structures for agenda setting, set-up of board room and table, agenda structure, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how governance teams operate, how they do business. These agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

–CSBA

Board and Superintendent Operating Procedures

Purpose:

The Board of Trustees is the educational policy-making body for the District. To effectively meet the District's challenges, the Board and Superintendent must function together as a leadership team. To ensure unity among team members, effective operating procedures or protocols, must be in place. Listed below are general norms and protocols, and others that are specific for the Board or Superintendent.

General – The Board and Superintendent will:

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.*
2. Value, support, and advocate for public education.*
3. Operate openly with trust and integrity.*
4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility, dignity, and respect*, while honoring the right to disagree with each other.
5. Define and respect the difference between administration and policy-making and respect the roles of each.
6. Keep confidential matters confidential.* Uphold the legal requirement for confidentiality on all matters arising from Board Meeting Executive Sessions; keep all conversations taking place in Closed Session absolutely confidential. We understand that maintaining confidentiality:
 - a. Builds trust within the Governance Team
 - b. Allows the open sharing of confidential information thus allowing the Board to be better informed and all members of the team to speak more freely.
 - c. Protects the privacy rights of students and staff
 - d. Prevents litigation
 - e. Protects district resources from misuse and waste and ensures that the maximum amount of resources are used to benefit students

Board Members will:

1. Work with all members of the Board and the Superintendent to become a team devoted to success for all students.
2. Be dedicated to making all members of the team successful.
3. Act with dignity, and understand the implication of demeanor and behavior.*
4. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.*

5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.*
6. Communicate a common vision.*
7. Understand authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals.*
8. Acknowledge that decisions are made only at properly noticed meetings.

* denotes that the item is included in the CSBA Professional Governance Standards

9. As an individual Board member, not make or appear to make a decision that appropriately should be made by the entire Board.
10. Support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions.
11. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.*
12. Attend regularly scheduled Board meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible; cooperate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.
13. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.*
14. Acknowledge individual requests for reports and projects will be directed only to the Superintendent.
15. Understand that the Board as a collective body must give clear signals to its professional staff through the Superintendent.
16. Participate in establishing annual expectations and goals for the Superintendent.
17. Objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance and provide appropriate feedback.
18. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance.*
19. Whenever a student, parent, or staff, or community member raises a question or concern, explain district processes and procedures, and direct them to the staff member most likely to be able to assist them – then inform the superintendent of the conversation.
20. Contact the Superintendent whenever contacted by the media regarding an incident, event, or agenda item.
21. Communicate directly with the Superintendent prior to Board meetings to address questions and/or concerns about agenda items; honor the "no surprises" rule with the Superintendent and fellow Board members.
22. Communicate one-on-one with the Superintendent when an individual concern arises; and not allow matters to fester.
23. Cast a vote on all matters except when a legally defined conflict of interest arises.
24. Recognize the individual role of constituents and special interest groups, while understanding the importance of using one's best judgment to represent all members of the community.
25. As time permits, visit school sites with the Superintendent and attend school functions, but avoid interrupting employees at work.
26. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.*

* denotes that the item is included in the CSBA Professional Governance Standards

The Superintendent will:

1. Work with the Board to create an effective governance team that is dedicated to success for all students.
2. Respect and acknowledge the Board's role in setting policy and overseeing the performance of the Superintendent.
3. Work with the Board to establish a clear vision for the school district.
4. Communicate the adopted vision, mission and goals of the district.
5. Recognize that the Board/Superintendent governance relationship requires support by the District's management team.
6. Understand the distinction between Board and Staff roles, and respect the role of the Board as the representative of the community.
7. Accept leadership responsibility and be accountable for implementing the vision, goals, and policies of the District.
8. Prepare preliminary goals annually for the Board's consideration.
9. Make personnel recommendations to the Board.
10. Communicate with Board members promptly and effectively.
11. Inform the Board prior to critical information becoming public; apprise all Board members in a timely manner of any major incident or when they may be called on to answer or explain.
12. Distribute information fully and equally to all Board members.
13. Distribute the Board agenda in a timely fashion and with enough time for Board study.
14. Be responsive to Board member questions about agenda items prior to scheduled meetings.
15. Provide information requested by one Board member to all Board members.
16. Never bring a matter to a public meeting that is a surprise to a Board member or Cabinet member.
17. Provide requests for additional information through a Board update, special report, Board agenda items, or as a Board workshop.
18. Present a major topic or issue initially as a discussion item, (perhaps at a study session), then place the item on a future Board agenda for action.
19. Treat all Board members professionally.
20. Communicate with individual Board members to determine if concerns exist prior to a possible problem developing, and respect the right to disagree with each other.
21. Keep the Board informed regarding issues and/or situations that could possibly concern parents, students, staff or community.
22. Bring to the attention of the Board matters that affect relationships.
23. Visit school campuses regularly.
24. Represent the School District by being visible in the community.
25. Model the value of lifelong learning.

PROTOCOL FOR AGENDA PLANNING

The Board President and one other Board member, on a rotating basis, will participate in agenda planning meetings. Schedule the rotation so Board members can plan their time accordingly.

PROTOCOL FOR THE PUBLIC COMMENT SECTION OF BOARD MEETINGS

The Board President will read a statement prior to the Public Comment section of the agenda that explains the process for public comment, and the reason for the Brown Act restrictions that do not allow Board members to engage in conversation about any subject matter that is not included in the published agenda.

The time allotted to speakers will be consistent with BB 9323, Meeting Conduct, and will be monitored with a timer.

The Superintendent will direct a district administrator to have immediate contact with a speaker who is visibly upset following his/her public comments.

PROTOCOL FOR BRINGING UP NEW IDEAS OR AGENDA ITEMS

Board members will speak with the Superintendent before bringing up any new idea or agenda item

Consideration of new ideas or agenda items will be based on:

- The effect of the new idea on the ability of the district to serve each child

- How the idea affects the district's ability to achieve the adopted vision, and goals of the district

- The effect on district resources: people, time, materials, finances, space, etc.

PROTOCOL FOR VISITING SCHOOLS

The Superintendent will send notices in the Friday letter to the School Board about planned visits to the school sites.

Board members will contact the Superintendent's office to schedule their official site visits

PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

We will always consider the lines of authority and chains of command defined in district policies when listening to a concern or complaint. District staff is best informed about district complaint policies, and should always have the opportunity to resolve concerns or complaints. We will bear in mind our obligation to be fair and impartial when we are carrying out our Judicial Review responsibility, and will not engage in conversations about student or staff situations that could come before the Board for final resolution. We will remember that there is often more than one version of a story.

When listening to a community or staff member's concern or complaint we will follow the 6 R's:

Recieve – Listen to what the person is saying without preparing a response

Repat – Repeat back, paraphrase, or ask questions to clarify for understanding – without agreeing or disagreeing with what was said

Request – Ask if they have spoken to anyone else about this matter – and/or, (as appropriate), what they would like you to do with this information

Revue – Give them advice that will assist them to resolve their own situation by providing information about how they can access the system appropriately

Redirect – Redirect the person to the staff member closest to the situation – following district lines of authority (*for example: if they are angry with a teacher the first person to talk to is the teacher, if still not satisfied, the next person would be the principal*)

Report – Report the conversation to the superintendent so he is aware of the situation and can follow-through as necessary

Governance Agreements (norms and protocols)

Effective governance teams create a framework within which they can work respectfully and competently with each other, district staff, parents, students and the broader community. The team does this by developing, agreeing on, and committing to standards for behavior, (norms), and processes, (protocols), that describe the structures and procedures used by the trustees and the superintendent in their operations. Norms and protocols are the agreements that ensure governance team members are operating within district policies and defined roles and responsibilities.

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

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 behaviors and actions among team members. The purpose of the Escalon Unified 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. The protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team, and may be modified over time as needed.

Our Agreements to Facilitate Governance Leadership:

NORMS:

- Escalon USD Meeting Guidelines
- General Operating Procedures (norms & protocols)

PROTOCOLS:

- Agenda Planning
- Public Comment Section
- Bringing Up New Ideas or Agenda Items
- Visiting Schools
- Responding to Concerns or Complaints

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 Escalon Unified School District Board of Education, Superintendent, district staff, students and the community. We shall renew this agreement at the annual governance workshop of the Board of Education.

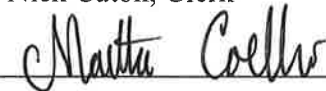
Affirmed on this _____ day of _____, 2019




Kate Powell, Board President



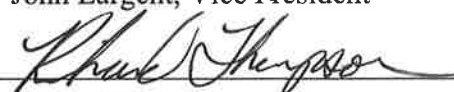
Nick Caton, Clerk



Martha Coelho, Trustee



John Largent, Vice President



Richard Thompson, Trustee



Ron Costa, Superintendent