



## Eastside Union School District

### **Governance Handbook**

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#### Board of Trustees

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Vacant

#### Superintendent

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Dr. Joshua L. Lightle

### **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.*

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## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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We Value and Believe that:

- All students have a right to equal educational opportunities in order to lead successful lives.
- All children can learn to their fullest potential.

## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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What We Hope to Accomplish:

- To work as a team with the Superintendent
- To accomplish our goals to better our children's education and to support the Superintendent's efforts to build a district team in order to move the district forward.
- To better utilize our assets and strengths to serve our stakeholders.
- Open communication.
- To empower the Board.
- 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.

## **D**istrict Goals

- Improve Student Achievement
  - Ensure a Safe and Caring Learning Environment
  - Promote a Team Commitment
  - Operate with Increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness
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## 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 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 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 characteristics 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 falling into the weeds.
    - Providing the needed next steps for the students.

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 – as needed.
- 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 weekly packets.
- Including pros and cons, as well as, recommendations on agenda items to help us think through issues.
- Meeting individually with Board Members on a regular basis.

What the Superintendent needs from the Board:

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

- As much as possible, ask 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.
- Appreciate and recognize accomplishments while focusing on continuous improvement.

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.
- Respecting each other by holding discussions, not working behind the scenes.
- Communicating with each other in a manner to avoid surprises.



# **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.
- We will not criticize each other in public.
- 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:***

#### **Site Visits**

Principles: We believe that site visits are important; they provide Board members with the opportunity to see the good things that are happening in our schools and help stay informed.

When visiting schools, we need to remember the following:

- Remember that we are always a Board Member.
- 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.
- We need to be respectful to staff.
- We believe that visits should not be disruptive to school staff.
- Remember that what you see is a snapshot.

#### Protocols:

- We will contact the Superintendent except when attending special events by invitation.
- The Superintendent or designee will then notify the principal.
- Scheduling then takes place.
- Board Members will sign-in at the office upon arriving at the school.

The principal is responsible for the visit.

## **Bringing Up New Ideas or Agenda Items**

Principles: board members and the public should have the opportunity to bring up new ideas or subjects of interest for future Board meeting agendas and must understand the process in order to do so. Creating a clearly defined process develops consistency, maintains trust, and provides a process to think through issues that might have merit. Staff focus, energy, and time, as well as other district resources must be focused on achieving the agreed upon district vision, goals, and objectives and should not be diluted by new projects. We must honor the intent of the Brown Act and provide opportunities for members of the staff and the public to inform and hear Board deliberations on all agenda items if they choose to do so.

### Protocols:

- A Board member's first step may be to discuss the new topic or idea with the Board President and the Superintendent.
- Individual Board members may bring up a new idea or request a future agenda item by explanation during "Items for Future Board Meetings". ---The Board President will ask the Superintendent for any comments on the item. ---If there are at least two Board members who wish to place the item on the agenda, it shall be placed on a future agenda in a timely manner. All new ideas or agenda item topics will be weighed against their effect on staff's ability to accomplish the district vision and goals.
- When a member of the public speaking at a Board meeting asks that a topic be agendized, the President shall first determine whether the item is within the purview of the Board. If it is, the President shall ask the Board whether anyone wants to sponsor that item. If the item is sponsored and seconded, it shall be added to a future Board meeting agenda.
- If no one on the Board is willing to sponsor a topic request by a member of the public, the President shall ask the member of the public to contact the President or Superintendent formally requesting that the item be added to the agenda. Written clarification may be requested.
- Upon receiving any request to agendize an item, the Board President shall consider the item and decide whether to agendize it in accordance with Board bylaws. The president shall respond to the correspondent with the decision and, if the item is to be agendized, with the date on which it will be on the agenda.

## **Handling Concerns/Complaints from the Public and Staff**

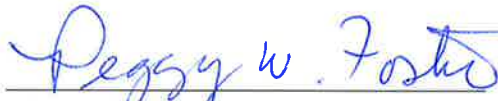
Principles: Board members should be responsive to the community and be good listeners. It's important for members of the governance team to be consistent in their responses to staff and the community. Board members need to stay within their function and not attempt to personally "fix" the problem. There are staff members whose job it is to remedy or deal with student and staff situations. Students and staff members have due process and confidentiality rights that cannot be violated. Keep in mind that the School Board is potentially the "Court of Last Resort" and members who have been too involved early in a situation may not be able to participate in a final hearing.

### Protocols:


- When someone expresses a complaint or concern in private to a member of the Board, the member should listen politely and ask clarifying questions as appropriate, remembering that the member of the Board is hearing only one side of the story.
- Then, depending on the severity and nature of the complaint, the member should either refer the individual to the appropriate staff member, such as a teacher or principal, or ask for permission to share the complaint with the Superintendent.
- If no permission is given, the member should suggest that the individual talk with the Superintendent and not share the information. If permission is given, the member should communicate with the Superintendent the conversation s/he had with the individual.
- The Member should make sure the complainant understands the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principal, then district staff) and is aware of any formal forms or policies that might assist them (e.g., the uniform complaint form on the website).
- The Member should clarify that one Board member has no individual authority to fix a problem.
- As a representative of the public, it is important that the Board member invite the person with the complaint to get back to him/her if the issue is not resolved.
- If through conversation a Board member becomes aware of issues of concern to members of the community or staff, the Board member should request to talk to the Superintendent or should contact the Superintendent to explain the issue. Unless the individuals who raised the issue have given their permission to do so, the Board member should not include their names when reporting the conversation to the Superintendent.

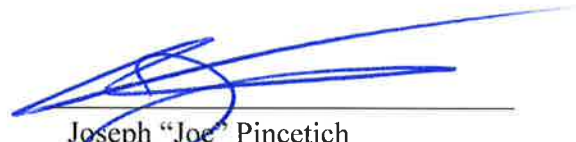
We have reviewed and agree to follow the aforementioned governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Eastside Union School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students and the community. ***We shall renew this agreement at each Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education.***

Affirmed on this day of February 7, 2018

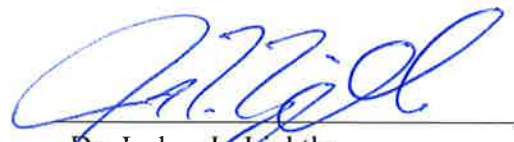
  
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Vice President

  
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Clerk

  
Joseph "Joe" Pincetich  
Trustee

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Vacant  
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Dr. Joshua L. Lightle  
Superintendent