



## ***(Draft)* Governance Handbook**

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February 2, 2016

### **Board of Education**

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Date Approved by Board: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

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

*These workshop notes reflect the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This process involves **ongoing** discussions and agreements about unity of purpose, roles, norms and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.*

*On February 2, 2016, South Pasadena Unified School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent participated in a workshop on Effective Governance with the California School Boards Association. These workshop notes reflect the governance team's discussions about developing and sustaining a framework for effective governance. The notes reflect 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.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### UNITY OF PURPOSE

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What We Are Proud of.....	2
What We Want to Accomplish ( <i>not in priority order</i> ) .....	2
Vision .....	2
Mission, Operating Principles .....	3
Core Values, Strategic Goals .....	4-5

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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A Discussion of Roles.....	5
The Board's Responsibilities .....	6-7

### POSITIVE GOVERNANCE TEAM CULTURE

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Norms .....	7-8
Board Meeting Guidelines .....	8

### SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES (Protocols)

---

Protocols .....	9-14
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<u>GOVERNANCE AGREEMENTS SIGNATURE PAGE</u> .....	15
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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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#### **What We Are Most Proud of About this District:**

- The breadth and quality of the education that we provide our students
- The array of opportunities and support available to our students
- Our ability to attract top talent
- An amazing teaching force
- The leadership group and the trusting relationship that has been created between our leadership team and our bargaining groups
- The willingness of the Board to allow leadership to think outside the box so that we can provide these opportunities for our students.

#### **What We Want to Accomplish as a Team:**

- Synergy
- Create an inclusive culture in our district so that every student feels validated
- Launch a successful bond campaign
- Achieve financial stability so that we can focus on programs, particularly 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning and skills.
- Have all students acquire skills that will help them succeed in life
- Prepare all students to be optimally successful and effective in life

### **Our Vision**

Our students reach their individual potential by developing intellectual abilities, emotional maturity, unique talents, love of learning and responsibility for their own learning. They confidently participate in the complex, global environment.

## **Mission**

The SPUSD will provide:

- Challenging, rigorous and relevant curriculum that prepares students for college and the world of work.
- Formative experiences that develop the physical, social, emotional, ethical, linguistic, creative and cognitive pathways of learning.
- A commitment to recognizing and valuing the abilities of all students and to providing them the encouragement to reach their full potential.
- Effective teaching in an environment that is intellectually stimulating, as well as physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
- Qualified, caring and motivated adults who are inspiring and encouraging.
- A professional environment that attracts, supports and retains the highest quality professionals in every position in the District.

## **Operating Principles**

- We use evidence to focus on results.
- We act ethically and with integrity, and treat everyone with courtesy and respect.
- The equitable and equal distribution of resources (time, expertise and revenue) is considered during the decision making process.
- The boundaries defining organizational roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated and honored.
- Individual and team accountability is indispensable to our work and is supported through the evaluation process with clearly defined and achievable goals.
- We confer and collaborate with our community partners on issues of mutual interest.
- We provide efficient and effective services to all stakeholders.
- Professional development focused on district priorities is offered in a systematic and timely manner to all employees.
- All employees work as a team to realize District mission and goals.

## **Core Values**

Equity

Integrity

Respect

Accountability

Transparency

Collaboration

Service

Teamwork

Continuous learning

## **Strategic Goals**

### **2014-2018**

Enable Greater Achievement for All Students

1. Evaluate and modify existing intervention programs to close the achievement gap for identified sub-groups.
2. Enhance offerings in the visual and performing arts at all levels in all mediums to amplify student achievement.
3. Expand world language and cultural experiences for students who desire to gain proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing a language other than English.
4. Develop relationships with active and supportive regional businesses and educational institutions to provide students with real world experiences.

### Offer State-of-the-Art Curriculum & Instruction

1. Identify, develop, and implement articulated Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade curricular pathways to strengthen student engagement for college and career readiness.
2. Develop course offerings, curriculum, and resources to support the implementation of the common core in mathematics, language arts, and writing with an emphasis on the 4 c's – communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.
3. Differentiate instruction in order to respond to individual student instructional levels.
4. Provide ongoing professional development and training to support the performance of all employees and to maximize rigor and meaningful engagement for all students.

### Achieve Financial Strength and Sustainability

1. Pursue alternative sources of revenue to sustain and expand student programs.
2. Research and consider potential cost saving measures in order to sustain and expand student programs.
3. Develop and implement a plan to eliminate the operational deficit.

### Provide Facilities that Support Educational Excellence

1. Provide and maintain instructional facilities that support a safe, healthy, and productive learning environment.
2. Enhance the technological infrastructure to support instructional practices.

## 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, mission, 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.
- Recognizing that the Board takes action as a team; not as individuals.

### **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.
- Evaluating our progress as a Board.

## Performing Board Responsibilities – CSBA, *continued*:

### **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.

## **South Pasadena Unified School District Governance Team**

### **AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP**

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

The Board of Education for the South Pasadena Unified 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 South Pasadena USD 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**

**In support of our Core Values, our Governance Team developed the following Norms in order to create a culture that models...**

- Open, honest communication
- Respect
- Trust
- Integrity
- Authenticity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- And is student centric

*To this end, we have adopted the following Meeting Guidelines:*

### **Meeting Guidelines**

- We will stay focused on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked.
- We will keep our focus on the best interest of **all** of our students.
- We will respect differences; we will show respect and never dismiss or devalue others.
- We will work toward the future – learning from the past.
- 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.
- We will each work to ensure the success of our Superintendent, Cabinet and other administrative staff.
- We will all work to ensure that there are no hidden agendas.
- Everyone's opinions count; we will be open to the ideas of others.
- We will build upon the ideas of others and look for common ground; we will paraphrase for understanding.
- We will communicate openly and honestly with each other.

# 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 Workshop:

### ***Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership:***

TOPIC:	PROTOCOL:
<b>Responding to Staff or Community Concerns or Complaints</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We care about our constituents' thoughts and concerns,</li> <li>• But we understand that individual Board Members do not have the authority to resolve issue and concerns, as stated in Board Bylaw 9200.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Therefore, when we are approached by a community or staff member with an issue or concern, we will:</u></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 for the following circumstances – Board Members will refrain from conversations:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Regarding negotiations</li> <li>✓ Closed session items</li> <li>✓ Issues that may come before the Board in its judiciary</li> <li>✓ capacity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b><u>Repeat</u></b> – When it is appropriate for the Board Member to listen to the concern, he/she will 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>

<b>Campus Visits</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> We believe that site visits are important, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They provide us with firsthand knowledge about our schools and programs.</li> <li>• They afford us the opportunity to let people know that we care and value them and their work.</li> <li>• They provide us with the opportunity to recognize District programs.</li> </ul> <p>When visiting schools, we wish to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be considerate of staff and student needs.</li> <li>• Not disrupt school activities and classrooms</li> <li>• Not create speculation as to why we are there.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Therefore, we agree that when we wish to visit a campus during the school day, we will:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the Superintendent a reasonable time in advance.</li> <li>• The Superintendent will then notify the principal in order to share the timing and purpose of the visit.</li> <li>• The Superintendent may accompany the Board Member on the visit.</li> <li>• Board Members will sign-in at the office upon arriving at the school.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda Preparation</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> Because we wish to build a culture of trust by implementing a policy of “No surprises” and because we recognize the importance of having all necessary information in order to have effective deliberation and to be ready vote at our meetings...</p> <p><b><u>We agree that:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ask all possible questions in advance,</li> <li>• And we will inform the Superintendent in advance if we plan to pull an item off of Consent.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication with our Community</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> We believe that it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our responsibility to keep our community informed and that it is important to keep our constituents engaged in our schools</li> <li>• Important that we speak with “one voice” and prevent miscommunication and divisiveness in our community</li> <li>• Important to maintain trust and a healthy organization.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Therefore, we agree that:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board President is the Spokesperson for the Board and the Superintendent is the Spokesperson for the District.</li> <li>• Board Members will refer all media inquiries to the</li> </ul>

	<p>appropriate spokesperson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Superintendent will provide Board Members with talking points in order to ensure a consistent message.</li> <li>• Community correspondence may be forwarded as originally written by Board Members through a variety of media.</li> <li>• Board Members will not divulge their positions on controversial issues before the vote.</li> </ul>
<b>Bringing up a new idea</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> Because we want to manage our meeting time wisely and comply with all noticing requirements...</p> <p><b><u>Therefore, we agree that:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual board members may introduce new ideas during board member comments at a board meeting and may request to have the item listed by his/her name if it is time sensitive/safety issue.</li> <li>• When board members have a new idea they'd like to introduce they should let the superintendent or board president know ahead of time.</li> <li>• If exploring this idea is the consensus of the board, the superintendent can bring it back as an agenda item.</li> <li>• A board member may also ask the superintendent to send information out in the Friday update about something he or she would like discussed.</li> </ul>
<b>Acting as Parent/Relative</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> Because board members may also be parents of SPUSD students and find themselves in the position of interacting with staff on behalf of their children...</p> <p><b><u>Therefore, we agree that:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members shall not attempt undue influence for personal gain.</li> <li>• When a situation arises with a board member's child that requires parental attention, the member will use his or her best judgment to determine how to work through the situation and will notify the Superintendent of any exchanges with staff about the situation.</li> </ul>

**“Micromanaging”/  
“Microparticipation”/  
Active Involvement**

**Rationale:** Because excessive involvement can both lead to and be perceived as inappropriate participation in the operations (‘how’) of a district....

**Therefore, we agree that:**

- If the board gets too involved in operations, it will not be able to hold the superintendent accountable for results.
- It’s important to be very careful about how and when they get involved with an issue,.
- We’ll remember that the main role of the board is to bring the values and priorities of the community to the board table, to set direction based on this, to focus in detail on desired results and evaluate in detail results achieved.

**Electronic  
Communication**

**Rationale:** Because a tremendous amount of critical information is shared electronically and it’s important that this communication be handled with care

**Therefore, we agree that:**

- A majority of the Board shall not, outside of an authorized meeting, use a series of electronic communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board.
- Board members shall make every effort to ensure that their electronic communications conform to the same standards and protocols established for other forms of communication.
- A Board member may respond, as appropriate, to an electronic communication received from a member of the community and should make clear that his/her response does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board as a whole.
- Any complaint or request for information should be forwarded to the Superintendent in accordance with Board bylaws and protocols so that the issue may receive proper consideration and be handled through the appropriate district process.
- As appropriate, communication received from the press shall be forwarded to the designated district spokesperson.
- In order to minimize the risk of improper disclosure, Board members shall avoid reference to confidential information and information acquired during closed session.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board members may use electronic communications to discuss matters other than district business with each other, regardless of the number of members participating in the discussion.</li> </ul>
<b>Board Reports</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> Because board reports are an important communication vehicle for keeping the community and each other informed...</p> <p><b><u>Therefore, we agree that:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not required or necessary to provide a report during a Board meeting.</li> <li>Reports are for communicating to the community and other Board members relevant information about district, school and public education matters.</li> <li>Board reports should be brief.</li> </ul>
<b>Orientation of New Board Members</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> Because it's essential that new board members have the opportunity to learn as much as possible about their role so they can quickly begin contributing to the board's effort...</p> <p><b><u>Therefore, we agree that:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new Board member orientation meeting will be scheduled with the District Administrative staff and the Board President prior to the swearing-in ceremony.</li> <li>A New Board Member will be encouraged to attend the California School Boards Association Conference in December of the year they are elected, at the expense of the District.</li> </ul>
<b>Allowing Majority Vote to Set the Direction</b>	<p><b><u>Rationale:</u></b> Because there will not always be agreement across the entire board and because even so, direction must be set and action taken...</p> <p><b><u>Therefore, we agree that:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In situations where the vote of the Board is not unanimous, the Board agrees that the vote of the majority is the decision of the whole Board.</li> <li>Questions about the vote by the public should be directed to reference the meeting minutes.</li> </ul>

**Self-monitoring  
of Governance  
Team  
Effectiveness**

**Rationale:** Because a well-functioning board is essential to a well-functioning district and because reflection and structure support effective relationships and operations...

**Therefore, we agree that:**

- The Board will schedule meetings to discuss Board protocols on a regular basis.
- The Board will complete an annual self-evaluation.
- The Board will evaluate the Superintendent annually.

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 South Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students and the community. We shall renew this agreement annually.

Affirmed on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2016.

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Julie Giulioni, Board President

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Elisabeth Eilers, Clerk

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Suzie Abajian, Ph.D., Member

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