

Novato Unified School District

Governance Handbook

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The Novato Unified School District Governing Board collaborated to develop a governance handbook with assistance from Governance with California School Boards Consultant, Babs Kavanaugh. The governance team simultaneously worked with Strategic Planning Consultant Mel Christi, to complete a planning process resulting in confirmation of the mission, vision, values and priority focus areas for the district.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful

committed people can change the world.

Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

--Margaret Mead

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Unity of Purpose

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

The Novato Unified School District governance team's Unity of Purpose includes the governance team's *Core Values and Behaviors* and the district *Mission* statement, which together will become the driving force for all decision-making.

NUSD Mission

Novato Unified School District is an innovative and effective educational system that provides diverse academic experiences to meet individual student needs, and challenges students to realize their educational potential.

Vision

Novato Unified School District is committed to providing an educational experience that will:

- *Ensure students possess academic and technical knowledge to enter successful careers and post-secondary experiences*
- *Prepare all students to be successful, responsible, and productive citizens and leaders in a diverse and global society*
- *Encourage students to embrace a variety of learning opportunities throughout their lifetime*
- *Provide students with tools to unlock their full potential*

District Motto

Achievement for All – Our Call to Action

HUMAN RELATIONS AND RESPECT MISSION STATEMENT

In order to create and sustain a safe, just and respectful learning environment in the Novato Unified School District, all individuals including students, staff, parents and community members:

- shall be treated with dignity, respect and fairness
- shall encourage, develop and nurture collaborative relationships that provide ongoing community support to all students, families and staff
- shall promote positive human relations, value differences and recognize similarities by modeling acceptance and inclusion of all individuals within the school community
- shall create opportunities for all individuals to develop empathy for those whose life experiences are different than their own
- shall advocate for ongoing education, outreach and community action opportunities for all
- shall promote the safety and security of all members of the community by responding swiftly should demeaning or threatening comments or behavior occur
- shall join together to ensure human dignity for all, by creating alliances and developing voice to alleviate injustices in the community

Effective Governance

California School Boards Association

Governance – A Definition

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

As the governance team fulfills responsibilities in the areas of setting direction, human resources, policies, student learning and achievement, finance, judicial appeals, collective bargaining, and community relations and advocacy, the way in which governance team members perform the governance role is critical.

Whether in the boardroom, out in the community or at home, board members are always trustees for the district. The integrity of the school district's educational program is dependent upon the responsible and professional manner in which each board member, and the board collectively, fulfills governance roles and responsibilities with the superintendent. The demeanor of governance team members sends an important message to the public.

Utilizing effective governance techniques, private citizens, once elected to school boards, work with the superintendent to keep all district efforts focused on student learning. 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.

The community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, but the district superintendent will translate all efforts into action. It is therefore vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

Working as a group, board members and the superintendent leverage the efforts of the professional staff by setting a direction for the district reflective of the community's wishes for its children, by creating a supportive framework for action in the district, by holding the system accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms, by providing support to students and staff through behaviors and actions, and by demonstrating community leadership on behalf of children, district schools and public education. When this is done effectively, the chances of a climate for excellence being created in which students thrive increases dramatically.

Working As an Effective Team

To effectively focus all district efforts on student learning and achievement for all students, a governance team needs to have a unity of purpose, a mutual understanding of roles, positive working relationships and supportive structures and processes. One of the chief ways a governance team can strengthen or maintain its effectiveness is to periodically assess its own performance in these areas.

Unity of Purpose

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

Roles

Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent and strive to operate within them.

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.

Structure and Process

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the board and superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., agenda structure, visiting schools, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how boards operate, how they do business.

Core Values and Behaviors

Values

Behaviors

Integrity

- Communicate honestly, openly, and consistently
- Do as you say; say as you do
- Model behaviors that inspire trust in others

Respect

- Listen to understand
- Honor and appreciate differences
- Value other culture

Achievement

- Meet individual goals
- Set high standards
- Reach beyond limits
- Strive toward academic excellence

Commitment

- Dedicate ourselves to lifelong learning
- Devote ourselves to excellence
- Serve through collaboration and teamwork
- Challenge ourselves and others to achieve

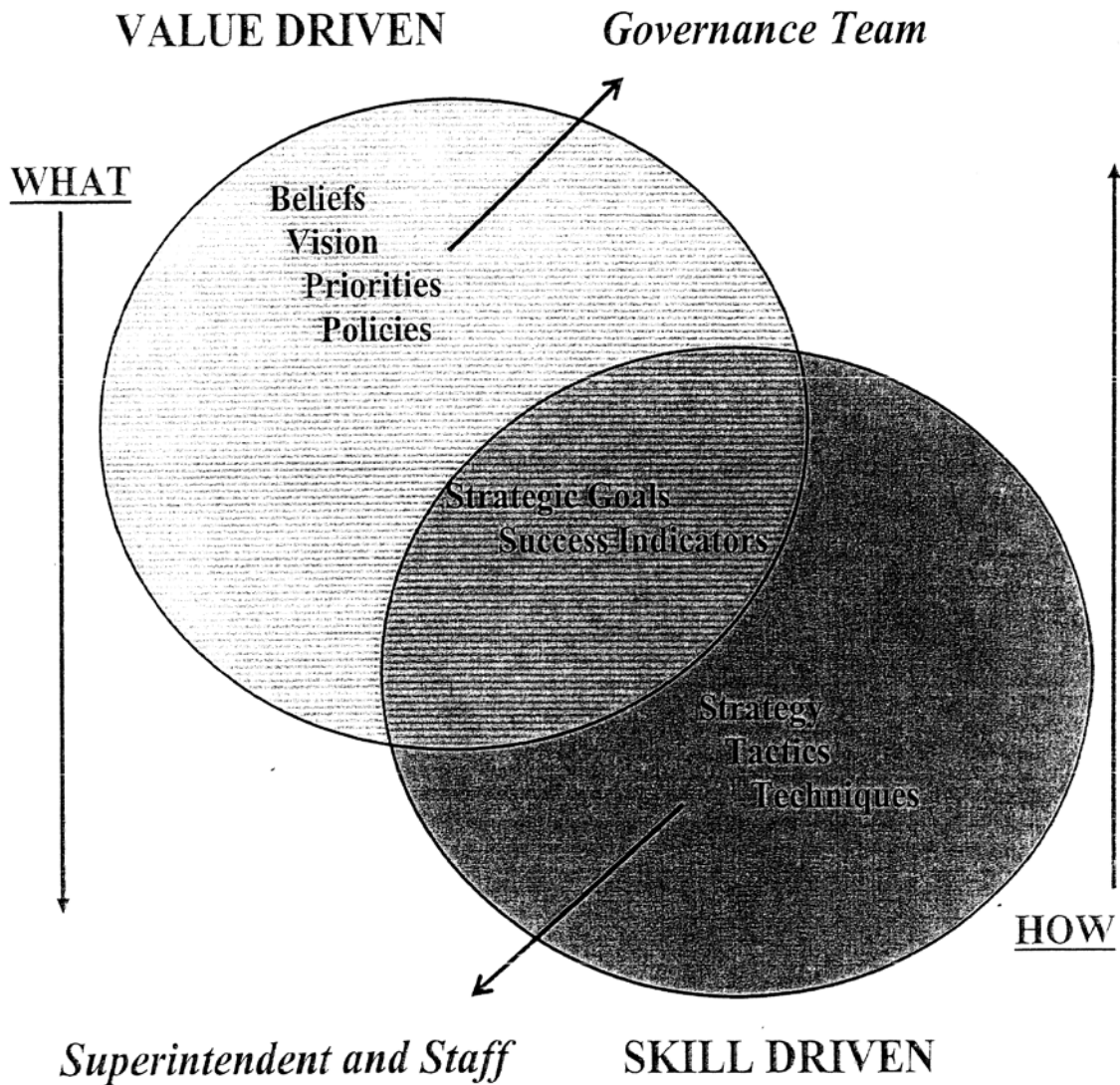
Creativity

- Encourage new visions
- Think without boundaries
- Celebrate self expression
- Dare to build and travel new paths

Inquisitiveness

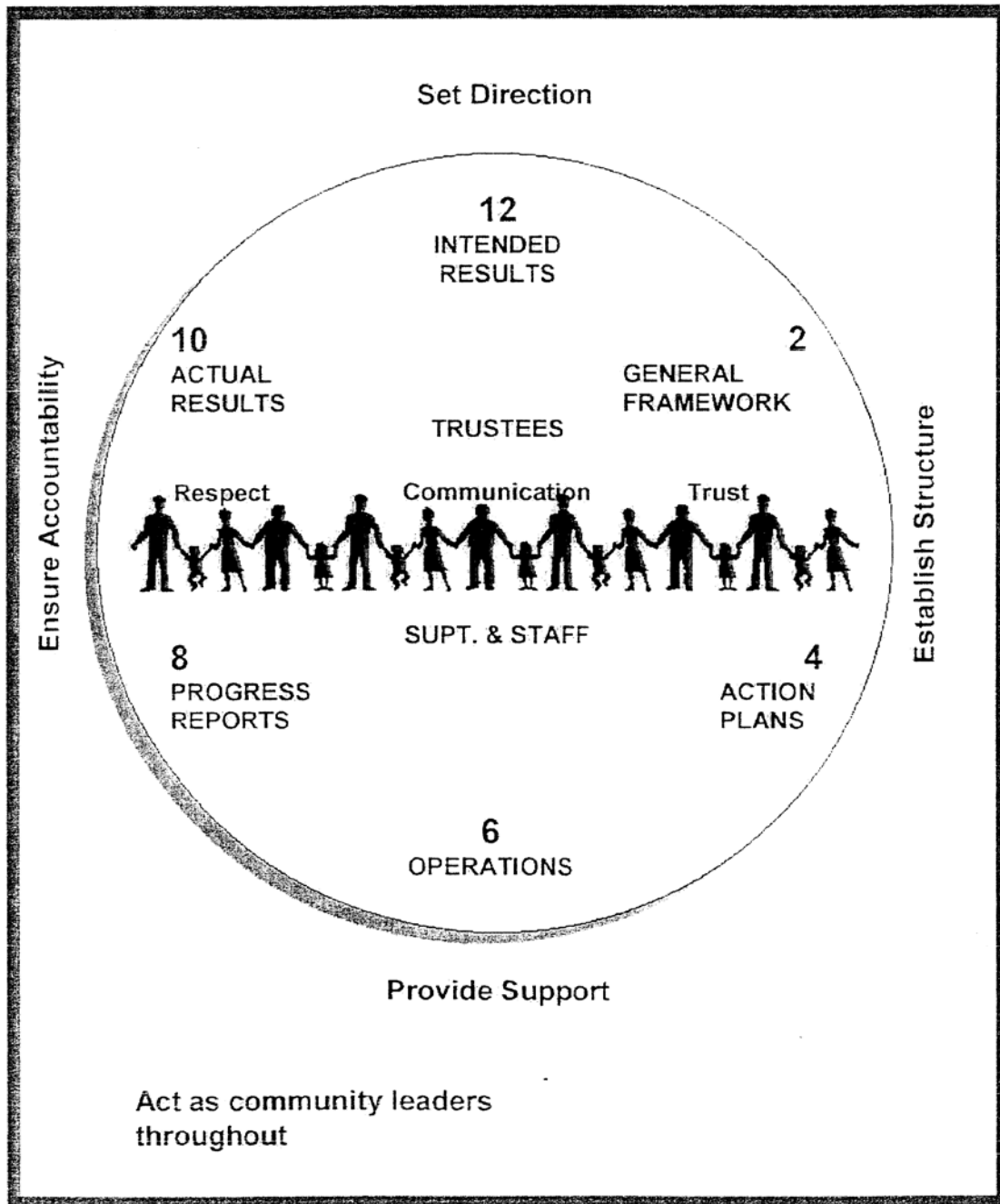
- Dare to ask how and why
- Surpass the sum of what you are taught
- Stretch beyond what you are told or observe

UNDERSTANDING ROLES



California School Boards Association

UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBILITIES



California School Boards Association

Governance Roles

Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent, and are committed to operate within them.

There are important distinctions to be made between the board's role and that of the superintendent and staff. The board and superintendent team together to ensure our district has effective leadership. Just as board members should govern and not manage a school district, a superintendent should not administer a district in isolation from the representatives whom the public has entrusted with the schools. School board "trustees" are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure our community schools educate the children in accordance with the wishes of our community.

Board members have collective, not individual authority. Authority to make decisions is only granted to the board as a whole. The full board gives direction to the superintendent, most commonly at board meetings. Individual board members do not have the authority to direct the superintendent or staff, unless otherwise agreed to by the board and superintendent.

The role of the school board is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are well run.

Defining Roles and Responsibilities

The board sets the tone for the entire district. Through its actions and behavior, the board will establish a climate in which learning is valued, professional growth is enhanced, and the most important goals are student success and making a difference for the community.

1. Set the Direction for the Community's Schools

- Setting the direction involves adopting policies that establish the vision and mission of the district. It requires that trustees are strategic in their thinking and focused on the future learning needs of their community. Trustees must be aware of the broad and diverse community values and needs.

2. Establish the Structure

- Trustees set a positive climate for collective bargaining and dispute resolution and model principled negotiations.
- Trustees make budget allocations in order to achieve the mission, goals, and educational priorities of the district.
- Trustees establish the direction of the curriculum, approve course outlines, and adopt textbooks.

3. Provide Support

- a. Trustees are an essential link to the community and will govern on behalf of the public.
- b. Trustees both represent the community to the district and advocate for the district in the community.
- c. Trustees model a positive work environment through interactions as a board and as individual Trustees.
- d. Trustees model open, straightforward, and tactful communication in order to build trust at all times

4. Ensure Accountability

- a. The board establishes the criteria and indicators used to monitor progress on and adherence to policies and goals prior to the actual monitoring, so that the superintendent and the staff know what is expected of them.
- b. The board establishes the criteria and indicators used to monitor student achievement prior to the actual monitoring, so that the superintendent and the staff know what is expected of them.
- c. The board adopts a budget that provides stability and effective use of funds.
- d. The board promotes a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students and staff by maintaining the district's assets and facilities.
- e. The board selects, evaluates, and works with the superintendent. The board will establish clear parameters and expectations for the superintendent's performance and evaluation.

5. Demonstrate Leadership

- a. Trustees provide positive leadership when they focus on futuristic visions for the district, model integrity and ethical behavior, support risk taking, and positively challenge the superintendent and staff to strive for excellence.
- b. Trustees provide clear information about the fiscal condition of the district.
- c. Trustees provide guidance to the community about the district's policies and procedures such as parental rights, the uniform complaint policy, and specialized programs.
- d. Trustees advocate for children, district programs and public education to the community, local, state, and national leaders.

Board of Trustees - Protocols & Procedures

1. What is the purpose?

- a. Understanding of acceptable behavior by individual trustees
- b. Protocols provide a way to respond; invites dialogue
- c. Guide on how to proceed; use to work within a framework; to respond within appropriate behavior
- d. Agreed upon behaviors; honor Team agreements
- e. Breaking agreements hurts the team and the district
- f. Provide consistency

2. Protocols – Community

- a. Notify the board president or superintendent if attending a community meeting
- b. Be clear to the community if attending a meeting that you are not representing the board
- c. Share pertinent information at board meetings

3. Protocols - Staff

- a. Notify the board president/superintendent if attending a Staff meeting
- b. Be clear that if attending a Staff meeting, that you are not representing the board.
- c. Ask questions of the author of the board report to clarify issues prior to the board meeting
- d. Staff needs to provide ample time to review agenda items, prior to final decision being made

4. Protocols – Self

- a. Assume positive intent
- b. Clarify comments to ensure mutual understanding
- c. Clarify issues with the individual, so that they are resolved in a timely manner
- d. Agree to respect the decision and move on together (respectfully agree to disagree & move on)
- e. Take the time necessary to become knowledgeable about the work of the district
- f. Seek to be informed by asking timely and substantive questions
- g. Attend local school events, educational conferences, countywide workshops and training sessions.
- h. Network with community leaders and trustees from other districts
- i. Ensure ample time to review agenda items, prior to a final decision being made

Governance Protocols

Structure and process agreements about how the Governance Team operates and conducts business

Procedure	Agreement/ Written Protocol
1. Individual board member requests for information	<p>The intention of the protocol is to keep the superintendent informed of requests for information; to encourage efficient and effective flow of information; and to ensure that information requests are relevant to the mission of the district.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Trustees are encouraged to directly ask questions of district office staff. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A trustee will ask the superintendent for assistance when additional information is needed. b. The staff being asked should be prepared to provide available and relevant information. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff will notify the superintendent and the trustee if a question or request is overly time-consuming. Superintendent will discuss this with the individual trustee. 2. All safety issues are immediately directed to the principal and superintendent. c. Individual relevant questions and responses will be distributed among all trustees. d. If question is from a trustee/parent, the question is between the school and the trustee/parent. (refer to 3 below) e. Trustees will attempt (in so far as possible) to let the superintendent or staff know when requests for information will be made in a public forum so the staff can be prepared to provide a thorough response.
2. Individual board member requests for action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. When an individual trustee requests an action, he/she will present that information to the superintendent/board president to determine the appropriate next steps. b. The trustee may request that an issue or action be placed on the board agenda.
3. Board members dealing with staff about their children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. When a situation arises with a school board member's child that requires parental attention, the board member will use his/her best judgment on a case-by-case basis to determine how to work through the situation with site or district staff. Board members will start at the most appropriate level in attempting to find a solution to the situation, and will honor district lines of authority and chains of command. In some situations the board member

Procedure	Agreement/ Written Protocol
	may decide to confer with the superintendent to determine the best or most sensitive way to approach a situation.
<p>4. Use of district committees. All groups listed make recommendations to the Board.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board only Committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Golden Bell b. JLAC c. Marin County School Boards Association d. North Marin Council PTA e. Novato Blue Ribbon Coalition for Youth f. Safe Routes to Schools g. School Fuel 2. Board appointed Committees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Citizen's Parcel Tax Oversight 3. District appointed Committees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Budget Advisory b. District Advisory c. DELAC d. Health Benefits e. Equity Design Team f. Facilities g. Technology Advisory h. District Safety i. GATE Leadership Team 	<p>Attendance, participation, and reporting out at board meetings are the responsibility of individual board members.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board only committees are community-wide committees not appointed by Trustees or the district, but require Trustee representation. North Marin Council PTA and School Fuel are not voting members. All other committees may require a voting member. 2. Board appointed committees are appointed by NUSD Trustees and the committees must follow the Brown Act meeting guidelines. Trustees are non-voting members. (President makes assignments) 3. District appointed committees are either required by state or federal guidelines and/or deemed necessary for district operations. Trustees are non-voting members. (President makes assignments)
<p>5. Board/superintendent communications</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The superintendent will prepare the weekly written communication. b. Superintendent will be available to meet as needed with individual trustees. c. Superintendent will respond in a timely manner to board members' emails.

Procedure	Agreement/ Written Protocol
6. Response to emails or other communications sent to all board members	a. All emails or other written communications received by all board members about school district business or situations will be handled by the superintendent and/or board president. The superintendent or board president will follow up with all members of the board so they are aware of the status of the situation.
7. Handling complaints from the community	a. Compliance with policy (BP 1312.1, 1312.2, 1312.3, 1312.4) b. Uniform Complaint Policy required by law c. Listen carefully. Clarify comments to ensure mutual understanding. Explain that as individuals, board members do not have authority to fix the problem. Direct the person to the appropriate staff member in the district that will be able to help them solve their concern (teacher, principal, then superintendent). Make them aware of the Uniform Complaint Policy. As representatives of the public, invite the person with the concern to ultimately get back to you if the issue is not resolved.
8. Handling complaints from the staff	a. Compliance with policy (BP 1312.1)
9. Welcome new board members to the team	a. New board members should feel welcomed, and have opportunities to get to know other members of the governance team. They will be provided educational support and training from the governance team, district staff and outside sources. New board members should learn about the district and understand the district's vision, purpose and culture. The board president or designee will provide support as new board members become familiar with governance team operations, roles and responsibilities. The superintendent and each department will meet with each new board member to answer any questions and familiarize him/her with district operations.

The Role of the Board President

The role of the board president is very important to the effectiveness of the board, the superintendent/board relationship, and the organization. Careful thought must be given to the selection process for and expectations of the position. The board president is the leader of the board and facilitator of board process.

Responsibilities

The board president, as all trustees, has no legal authority as an individual other than that delegated by the trustees. He or she is a member of the board team, but has greater responsibility to create a positive climate, lead the board, and work closely with the superintendent.

1. Develops the board team

Trustees who work together well contribute to the effectiveness of their board.

The board president:

- a. builds a sense of team
- b. assists in having trustees work together
- c. ensures respectful and ongoing communication among trustees
- d. assists in helping trustees understand their roles and responsibilities
- e. applies conflict resolutions skills to prevent discord that can hurt the organization
- f. works directly with individuals who are being disruptive or do not work as a unit (refer to Board Policy 9271 p. 5 of 6 Procedures for Violation of the code of Ethics Policy)
- g. reminds trustees of legal, ethical, and appropriate behavior
- h. orients new trustees on procedures and responsibilities
- i. encourages all board members to participate in development activities
- j. ensures the board engages in regular self-evaluation and uses the results of the evaluation to improve effectiveness
- k. assigns the clerk/vice president or designee to lead or serve in his/her absence.

2. Represents the board and district

The board president often acts as the lead spokesperson for the board. He/she must be knowledgeable about the district, board policy, and external issues and trends.

The board president:

- a. communicates board decisions and district actions
- b. has a thorough grasp of issues
- c. advocates for district issues with locally-elected officials, community, state, and national governments
- d. is articulate, informed, and willing to represent the board's actions, not personal views
- e. performs ceremonial duties, such as community events, graduations, fund raisers, speaking in the community
- f. has excellent public relations skills and is comfortable dealing with the media
- g. communicates with the media in writing once all trustees have thoroughly reviewed the document

3. Works closely with the superintendent

The board president is a major support and counsel to the superintendent. He/she communicates regularly with the superintendent and shares information on behalf of the board.

The board president:

- a. fosters an environment of communication
- b. promotes a culture of “no surprises”
- c. shares responsibility with the superintendent to make contact with trustees
- d. prepares the board agenda with the superintendent and vice president, **and on Board meeting nights, schedules a guest Trustee to attend the agenda planning session**
- e. makes committee assignments
- f. ensures the superintendent is regularly evaluated and facilitates the process which ensures trustee input

4. Presides over board meetings

The board president presides over the board meetings.

The board president:

- a. ensures that discussion and decision-making are orderly, deliberate, and appropriate
- b. seeks balance between facilitating open exploration of diverse opinions
- c. runs the meeting efficiently
- d. seeks to reach closure on issues
- e. handles disorderly audience conduct
- f. has knowledge of the Brown Act
- g. has knowledge of parliamentary procedure
- h. sets the meeting agenda with the superintendent
- i. is familiar with all agenda items

Other Board President Responsibilities

- encourages trustees to stick to policy making, and avoid administrative-type actions
- supports the district’s mission, vision and goals

The beneficiaries of a well functioning board are students, citizens, and employees.

The Role of the Vice President/Clerk

1. Reports closed session items at a public meeting in accordance with the law.
2. Presides in the absence of the president. In the event that the office of the president becomes vacant, the vice president assumes the president's duties.
3. Signs all required documents.
4. Certifies or attests to actions taken by the board when required.
5. Attends agenda planning meetings with board president and superintendent.
6. Assists the president in providing leadership to the Board of Trustees.

The Role of the Superintendent

The overarching role of the superintendent is to lead the district in the direction set by the board. There are several areas of focus for the superintendent. These include:

1. Strengthening the board and superintendent relationships
 2. Organizational leadership
 3. Educational Programs and Services
 4. Fiscal Management
 5. Human Resources
 6. Community Relationships
 7. Legislative Relations
 8. Legal Management
-
1. Strengthening Relationships
 - a. Maintains ongoing communication by providing trustees with pertinent information and no surprises
 - b. Provides information to ensure trustees have enough information to come to a decision
 - c. Provides information and counsel to the board
 - d. Communicates with trustees – up-to-date/hot buttons/heads up
 - e. Prepares agendas with the board president and vice president (with input from the board); coordinates meeting details
 - f. Provides clarification of agenda action items
 - g. Provides advance notice and public information on meetings
 - h. Serves as board secretary
 2. Organizational leadership
 - a. Leads and administers the district
 - b. Implements board policy
 - c. Creates a positive climate
 - d. Articulates future trends, needs, and opportunities
 - e. Ensures alignment of all district plans
 - f. Informs trustees on progress toward accomplished goals
 - g. Is an active community leader, and participates in county, state, and national conferences
 - h. Serves as chief executive officer
 3. Educational Programs and Services
 - a. Administers the delivery of high quality programs
 - b. Seeks board approval of curriculum
 - c. Ensures student progress and achievement
 - d. Ensures standards based instruction
 - e. Ensures accountability
 - f. Carries out the vision with ongoing dialogue and accountability

- g. Annual performance measures are completed for district, state and federal mandated assessments
4. Fiscal Management
- a. Ensures legal, ethical, and prudent management of resources
 - b. Presents clear and informative budget reports
 - c. Ensures a budget development process
 - d. Seeks board approval for the adopted budget, 1st interim and second interim and budget revisions
 - e. Develops long range financial plans
 - f. Monitors financial adherence
 - g. Ensures accurate information is shared with trustees regarding parcel tax and bond
 - h. Supports school foundations and fundraising
5. Human Resources
- a. Ensures fair and legal hiring practices
 - b. Implements personnel practices
 - c. Ensures grievance procedures are followed
 - d. Provides timely information to trustees
 - e. Engages in positive bargaining practices
 - f. Informs trustees of contract proposals
 - g. Ensures the employee evaluation process is completed
6. Community Relations
- a. Ensures district programs align with community needs
 - b. Advocates for the district
 - c. Maintains links with business, government and community leaders
 - d. Ensures responsiveness to the community
 - e. Participates in community events
 - f. Keeps trustees informed of issues that may result in media coverage
7. Legislative Relations
- a. Stays up to date on policy, issues, and trends
 - b. Keeps trustees informed on the impact of legislation
 - c. Makes key contacts with legislators
 - d. Provides opportunities for trustee advocacy
8. Legal Management
- a. Informs trustees about major laws and regulations
 - b. Ensures procedures comply with law
 - c. Monitors compliance
 - d. Recommends appropriate legal counsel
 - e. Informs trustees of legal action and lawsuits
 - f. Ensures appropriate liability insurance

Trustee/Cabinet Relations and Protocols

1. Priority/Focus

- a. Goal Setting
 - 1. Vision
 - 2. Strategic Plan
 - 3. District Priorities
 - 4. Superintendent's Goals (e.g., San Andreas, Hamilton, Parcel Tax, Bond)
- b. Prioritize goals and activities to effectively move the district forward.
- c. Align costs with what is realistic to accomplish.
- d. Be realistic about enough personnel resources to accomplish goals.

2. Roles – What and How

Mutual Expectations

- a. Board sets policy and direction; staff implements and executes
- b. Overlapping responsibilities (what and how) will be discussed with board and Cabinet/Admin jointly to determine how to proceed
- c. Staff provides comprehensive plans and clear recommendations for board consideration in a timely manner

Board/Staff Leadership

- a. Develop a timeline and calendar that include board discussion items

3. Teamwork and Communications

Board and Staff

- a. Agreement to ask each other clarifying questions goes in both directions
- b. Give and receive with positive intent
- c. Create opportunities to have more informal interaction

Superintendent's Evaluation

The Governance Team discussed the key elements in the superintendent evaluation.

- 1. The superintendent's priorities are aligned with district goals
- 2. The priorities are measurable, qualitative, and realistic
- 3. There is available data to use for measurement
- 4. The evaluation process is linked to the superintendent Governance Standards
- 5. The evaluation is based on a multiyear perspective with specific focus areas highlighted annually (e.g. enrollment; financial enhancement / grants; student achievement).

Code of Ethics

Board Responsibility to Community

The Board of Education recognizes that trusteeship brings with it certain responsibilities and expectations. The community expects its leaders and representatives to uphold high standards in the performance of their duties.

Specifically, BP 9271 will address the Board's legal responsibilities and trustee conduct and behavior.

By adopting this policy, the Board expresses its intention that each member will hold him/herself to the highest standard of ethical conduct.

Trustee Conduct/Behavior

Student/Education Focus

In all actions, a trustee's first commitment is to the education and well being of our youth.

As a trustee I will:

1. Protect the interests of students in every decision and assure the opportunity for a high quality education for every student.
2. Maintain consistent and vigilant oversight of the district as policy setting board with emphasis on instructional quality, operational efficiency, and fiscal stability.

Represent Common Good

Trusteeship is an expression of civic leadership and citizenship.

As a trustee I recognize that:

1. The Board derives its authority from and is accountable to the community as a whole.
2. The Board's primary responsibility is to govern the district with awareness at all times of the needs of all students.
3. I am responsible to all residents of the district and not solely to those who elected me; not solely to any organization to which I may belong, or which may have supported my election.

Board as a Unit

A basic principle of effective trusteeship is the recognition that governing authority rests with the entire Board, not with any individual trustee.

As a trustee I recognize that:

1. As an individual trustee I have no legal authority to direct staff, determine programs and procedures, or represent the district.
2. The Board's voice is expressed through the policies and actions it takes in its official meetings. Once the Board has decided a policy or position, I must be prepared to support its implementation.

Board Relations and Communication

As a trustee I will:

1. Develop and maintain good relations with fellow trustees by recognizing the importance of keeping an open mind and promoting the opportunity to think through other facts and points of view.
2. Work with my fellow trustees in a spirit of cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during vigorous debates of points at issue.
3. Maintain an atmosphere in which controversial issues can be debated openly and fairly, protecting the dignity of individuals.
4. Work with my fellow trustees to achieve common goals, looking beyond self interest and encouraging compromise and positive change when necessary.
5. Set a good example for others by communicating thoughtfully and representing the district well in my interactions.

Advocate/Support District

The Board recognizes that the first and foremost priority of every trustee is to the education and well being of every student in the district.

As a trustee I will:

1. Integrate the wide variety of public and community needs into decisions which benefit the district as a whole.
2. Use the powers of the office honestly and constructively, communicating and promoting the needs of the community to the district and the needs of the district to the community.

Board/Superintendent/Staff Relationship

The Board and Superintendent function best as a team. Board develops policies that set the direction for the district, while the Superintendent implements those policies and leads the district in the direction set by the Board.

As a trustee I will:

1. Respect the delegation of authority to the Superintendent to administer the day to day operations of the district.
2. Promote a healthy working relationship with the Superintendent through supportive, open, and honest communication and regular evaluation.

3. Support district staff in the appropriate performance of their duties and ensure that they have the requisite responsibility, adequate resources, and necessary authority to perform effectively.
4. Recognize that staff time is valuable and is best spent furthering the educational mission of the district. I will avoid making undue demands on staff time and will carefully consider the impact of requests for information on the ability of staff to fulfill their responsibilities to the district.
5. Work with fellow trustees and the Superintendent to establish mutually agreed upon clear descriptions and expectations of roles and responsibilities to ensure open communication, confidence and trust.

Communicating with staff and students

As a trustee I will:

1. Refer any student or employee complaints directly through appropriate channels or to the Superintendent.
2. Encourage and safeguard open access to the Board while maintaining appropriate and well defined communication and decision-making protocols.

Communicating with community members and media

As a trustee I recognize that:

1. As an individual trustee I do not speak for the Board unless specifically delegated to do so.
2. The Board president is the lead media contact on behalf of the Board.

Maintaining confidentiality

While most of what the Board does is public, the law defines specific issues that must be discussed in private.

As a trustee I will:

1. Maintain confidentiality about issues discussed in closed session or as otherwise required by law.

Create a Positive Climate

The Board sets an example for the entire District.

As a trustee I will:

1. Encourage and support innovation and creativity in district programs and operations.
2. Act with integrity and reflect values of trustworthiness, respect, fairness, caring, creativity, and inquisitiveness at all times when performing my responsibilities.
3. Focus my commitment to the achievement of all students
4. Support the district by attending school and community events, expressing appreciation for employee's commitment and accomplishments, and recognizing student success and achievement.

Fiduciary Responsibility

As a trustee I will:

1. Fulfill my fiduciary responsibility for sound budgetary and fiscal management by reviewing financial reports, asking questions, and making decisions that provide direction to the Superintendent.
2. Accurately account for expenses.
3. Establish and uphold fair and prudent expense standards and reporting procedures.

Ethics Laws

In addition to ethical standards of conduct, there are many laws and regulations which affect what the Board does and how individual trustees conduct themselves.

Incompatible activities

Trustees shall not engage in any employment or activity which is inconsistent with, incompatible with, in conflict with or contrary to the Trustee's duty as an officer of the District.

Conflict of Interest Code

Designated employees of the district, including Board members, shall adhere to the district's conflict of interest code adopted pursuant to the provisions of Government Code 87300. (BB 9270)

Financial Interest

Board members and designated employees shall not be financially interested in any contract made by the Board or in any contract they make in their capacity as Board members or designated employees. (BB 9270)

Gifts

Board members and designated employees shall not accept from any single source in any calendar year any gift in excess of the prevailing gift limitation specified in law if the employee would be required to report the receipt of income or gifts from that source on his/her statement of economic interests. (BB 9270)

Use of Public Funds

Trustees shall not use public funds for personal or political purposes. (cf. 9270 – Conflict of Interest)

Honoraria

Board members and designated employees shall not accept any honorarium as defined above if the employee would be required to report the receipt of income or gifts from the source on his/her statement of economic interests. (cf. 9270 – Conflict of Interest)

Confidentiality

Trustees shall maintain confidentiality about issues discussed in closed session or as otherwise required by law.

Procedures for Violations of the Code of Ethics Policy

All board members are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct and adhere to the Board code of Ethics. The Board will investigate the factual basis behind any charge or complaint of trustee misconduct.

- Charges by any person that a trustee has violated laws and regulations governing board behavior or the Board's code of Ethics shall be directed to the Board President.
- The Board President will first discuss the violation with the trustee to reach a resolution. The reasons and motivations for the behavior and of those who have identified the behavior as unethical will be explored.
- If resolution is not achieved and further action is deemed necessary, the Board President may appoint an ad hoc committee composed of two trustees not subject to the complaint. The committee will examine the matter and, if warranted, recommend further courses of action to the Board President. The committee shall be guided in its inquiry by the standards set forth in the Code of Ethics as defined in policy 9721. The trustee subject to the charge of misconduct shall have the opportunity to present information to the committee.

Possible courses of action may include:

- If the alleged behavior violates laws governing board behavior, including but not limited to conflict of interest, open and public meetings (Brown Act), confidentiality, and use of public resources, legal counsel may be sought and the violations referred to the District Attorney or Attorney General as provided for in law.
- If the alleged behavior violates board policy on ethical conduct, the committee will determine the appropriate sanctions, including but not limited to:
 - The Board may in a meeting make a public statement of expected board behavior, adopt a resolution about what expected behavior is, and/or publicly reaffirm the ethics policy.
 - At a meeting, the Board may issue a public statement in which it expresses concern with an individual trustee's behavior.
 - As a last resort the Board may vote to censure the trustee's behavior. Censure distances the Board from the unethical behavior of one of its members and is a clear public statement that unethical behavior is not condoned or tolerated.
- If the Board President is perceived to have violated the code, the Vice President/Clerk is authorized to pursue resolution.

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.

Novato Unified School District Governance Team

Working Agreements

- Respect each other's input
- Contribute with positive intent
- Take responsibility
- Be accountable
- Practice open and honest dialogue
- And above all: **Focus on students' best interest!**

The NUSD governance team's agreements on culture include statements on *How We Want to be Perceived*. These statements will provide guidance for the way governance team members will behave with others and themselves.

Goal Setting Plan

The plan reflects the core values of the community and is a vehicle by which the community holds the board accountable. The plan is visible and is used as a communication tool with the community.

Setting Goals

Introduction

One of the most important aspects of group effectiveness is the group's ability to define its goals and achieve them successfully. Common goals provide:

- a vehicle to focus group energy
- the basis for resolving differences, and
- a means to measure group process toward results.

Smart Goals

The group and the group's tasks become more attractive as the goal becomes clear. Goals become clarified as they are made more specific, operational, measurable, and observable.

Use the SMART Model to distinguish between operational and non-operational goals:

Specific

Explicitly detailing the who, what, and when of the goal gives it substance, clarity, and the "tang" of reality: people can talk about it as if it were an object in the room.

Measurable

Providing clear indicators of what success is – in measurable terms of quality, quantity, costs etc. – leaves no question as to when a goal has been achieved, while providing a frame of reference by which interim progress can be assessed.

Ambitious

Ambitious – not impossible. Impossible goals demotivate and dishearten people, who are set up for failure. A goal can test the limit of courage and faith yet still be achievable; it should be anchored in an opportunistic sense of reality.

Relevant

An effective goal clearly relates to the vision of the team and (ultimately) the organization. It reflects appropriate business priorities and imperatives in the context of reality.

Timely

Effective goals are chronologically linked to the timing and sequencing of critical business functions and outcomes; they are also defined in terms of a specific time frame for accomplishment.