



Governance Handbook

December 13, 2023

Board of Trustees

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Elements of Effective Governance

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. The actions of an individual, a group coming together to govern, and the performance of governance responsibilities by the group.

For a governance team to work 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.

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.

Unity of Purpose

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

Who Are We?

We are a governance team responsible for the realization of the vision of the school district.

What Is Our Purpose?

Our purpose is to ...

- Set the direction for the District, focusing on short and long-range planning
- Promote the success of every child in the educational system
- Establish District goals with clear measurements
- Develop a culture of mutual respect at all levels for the execution of the goals
- Report to the community on progress and results toward the district goals
- Work together to become aware of any gaps in the services; listen, be aware, seek understanding
- Consider all perspectives in decision making, paying close attention to impact and unintended consequences
- Focus on continuous quality improvement of the education and the organizational efficiency being mindful of available resources
- Establish and maintain a positive educational culture
- Maintain and retain quality staff; recognize and acknowledge quality
- Engage students as enthusiastic learners, promote service learning
- Promote our district, the benefits and attributes of the

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community and the environment

- Promote community leadership and involvement
- Advocate for identified needs of our students
- Always focus on the best interest of students

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District Vision

All Tahoe Truckee Unified School District scholars will be provided challenging and engaging learning opportunities in order to thrive and to be successful in a globally competitive age. This goal will be accomplished through collaboration with students, parents, staff, and the community, united in dedication to our children's future. Highly skilled, motivated, and caring principals and teachers will engage scholars in effective and innovative instruction through a rigorous and relevant curriculum that promotes mastery of meaningful content, creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, problem-solving, respect for diversity, the ability to communicate in multiple languages, and the effective use of technology. A culture of quality, accountability, responsibility, and respect shall characterize the school district.

Tahoe Truckee Unified School District Beliefs

1. Students are the focus of all decisions.
2. A culture of accountability shall drive excellence and promote the district vision of teaching and learning.
3. Open, honest, respectful, and responsive communication is fundamental to the collaborative process.
4. The physical, social, and emotional well-being of students results from a partnership between families, the school staff, and the community.
5. Learning is a process that combines nurturing, creativity, imagination, honoring a sense of wonder, and exploration of individual interests.
6. We believe in embracing the diversity embodied within our community and appreciating the richness it adds to life.
7. The Lake Tahoe region is precious, and we value our physical environment and integrate this element into our educational goals.
8. Schools, families, and the community are partners in helping students develop a sense of ownership for their learning.
9. Teachers are passionate professionals entrusted with the duty of ensuring the highest level of learning for all students.
10. School principals are passionate professionals who are leaders of leaders and accountable for the success of the school.

11. All district staff members contribute to a safe environment conducive to providing challenging and engaging learning opportunities for students
12. The Superintendent Chief Learning Officer has a critical responsibility to communicate a vision of the future and to initiate and support action toward the vision.
13. The board of education is entrusted with the responsibility for setting policies and strategies that are consistent with these beliefs and assures the district meets its vision.

Governance Culture

Board Meeting Guidelines

- Focus on students' best interest!
- Show respect – never dismiss or devalue others.
- Agree to disagree.
- No surprises.
- Stay on track and keep on subject.
- Review materials prior to meeting and submit questions in advance to the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer.
- Participate in the discussion equally.
- Listen and seek to understand.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Paraphrase for understanding.
- Hold to agreements we have made collectively until the agreements are changed collectively.
- Work toward the future - learning from the past.
- Avoid directing/requesting action from staff members from the dais. Requests should be directed to the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer.

Board Meeting Agendas

- Closed session will be scheduled before the general meeting. A second closed session will be scheduled after the general meeting to address any issues not completed in the closed session prior to the meeting.
- An initial public comment session will be scheduled for 30 minutes and, if more time is needed, carried forward to the end of the meeting. A second public comment session will be placed on the agenda at the end of each meeting. The rules for public comment will be announced at each meeting.
- As per Board Bylaw 9323, individual speakers shall be allowed three minutes to address the board on each agenda or non-agenda item.

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- The board shall limit the total time for public input on each item to 20 minutes. With board consent, the president may increase or decrease the time allowed for public presentation, depending on the topic and the number of persons wishing to be heard.
- The president may take a poll of speakers for or against a particular issue and may ask that additional persons speak only if they have something new to add.
- Time limit guidelines may be placed on all items.
- The Superintendent Chief Learning Officer shall introduce all items after being recognized to do so by the President of the Board of Education.
- The Superintendent Chief Learning Officer shall include a brief review of board members' questions submitted in advance of the meeting, and the answers supplied to all members during the introduction of agenda items.
- When addressing items on the agenda that require action, the president will facilitate board member questions.
 - The public will then be given the opportunity to make comments following the guidelines in Board Bylaw 9323.
 - The board will be given an opportunity for discussion prior to a motion and vote. No further comment will be accepted from the public.
- Handling Complaints from the Community at a Board Meeting
 - Trustees will listen to the issue/complaint at a board meeting.
 - When appropriate, trustees will ask the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer for follow-up and/or to have the issue placed on a future board agenda.
 - The board president will facilitate any response to the community members, such as acknowledging and thanking the community member for input. If the comments/concerns are specific to a past board decision, the board president will confirm that the board stands by its decisions.

Protocols and Norms to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the trustees and the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer in their operations. Protocols are the agreements that ensure that everyone is operating within agreed-upon roles.

The following protocols and norms were developed to support and promote the effectiveness of the governance team.

- Questions about agenda items from board members prior to a board

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meeting are to be directed to the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer only. The Superintendent Chief Learning Officer will direct the questions to the appropriate staff for a response as required.

- All board members have equal access to information provided to individual board members.
- Cabinet members may be contacted by board members regarding questions concerning the departments they supervise, but trustees should avoid direction of specific action.
- Questions and comments from board members regarding community and district issues should be directed to the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer and not to other staff members. The Superintendent Chief Learning Officer will pass them to the appropriate staff member(s) and provide a response in a timely manner.
- Board members should not go directly to principals on an issue; that is the role of the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer.
- Emails from parents/community members asking questions or for information should be referred to the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer for a response. The President of the Board will acknowledge receipt and indicate referral to Superintendent Chief Learning Officer. Or The President of the Board will respond after consulting with the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer. All board members and Superintendent Chief Learning Officer will be copied on the response.
- Handling Individual Complaints from community members
 - Step 1: Listen openly and assist the community member in articulating the issue/concern and what he/she has done.
 - Step 2: Communicate the role of the trustee as having no individual authority to “fix things” to facilitate the next steps in addressing the issue/concern. This may include direction to the appropriate staff person or an explanation of the established complaint/grievance procedure.
 - Step 3: Recommend documenting the issue/concern as appropriate.
 - Step 4: Following the conversation with the community member, the board member will notify the Superintendent Chief Learning Officer of the conversation as soon as possible.
- Board members will use prudence and good judgment when entering into dialogue with individuals or groups on pending agenda items prior to public board meetings.
- While negotiations with employee groups are being conducted, individual board members will not meet with members of union negotiations teams to discuss issues related to the current negotiations process.