

Saugus Union School District

Board Governance Handbook

RESPECT | INTEGRITY | LEARNING
TEAMWORK | ENTHUSIASM



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

Governing Board Members

Katherine Cooper

Patricia Garibay

Anna Griese

Christopher Trunkey

Matthew Watson

Superintendent

Colleen Hawkins, Ed.D., Superintendent

Building a Governance Team

Unity of Purpose

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

In a school district, the Governing Board Members and Superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work together effectively, members need to:

- Maintain a unity of purpose
- Agree on and govern within appropriate roles
- Create and sustain a positive governance culture
- Create a supportive structure for effective governance

The following are the mission, vision, core values and beliefs of the Saugus Union School District:

Mission Statement:

The Saugus Union School District in partnership with the home and community is committed to excellence in elementary education.

Vision Statement:

Excellence in Elementary Education

Core Values:

- *Respect*
- *Integrity*
- *Learning*
- *Teamwork*
- *Enthusiasm*

Core Operational Belief:

Together WE achieve more.

Governance Team Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board Members 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 Governing Board is to govern the school district by creating/implementing applicable laws, codes, and policies associated with TK-6 education as per the state of California, providing oversight and accountability for the district, and selecting/hiring the Superintendent for the school district.

The Superintendent is hired by the Governing Board to provide the professional expertise in the day-to-day management of the district. The role of the Superintendent is to:

- Work with the Governing Board Members to develop an effective governance team
- Serve as the chief executive officer for the school district for the daily management of staff, programs, etc.

Governing Board Members Responsibilities:

The role of a Governing Board Member is to stay focused on the big picture of school district governance while working with their fellow members to fulfill the responsibilities detailed below:

1. Set the direction for the school district
 - Focus on student learning and achievement
 - Assess district needs through analysis of data (quantitative & qualitative), reports from staff, and listening to educational partners
 - Generate, reviewing, and revise district guidance documents (i.e., beliefs, vision, policy, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators, etc.)
 - Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop these documents-
 - Ensure that these documents are the driving force for all district efforts-
2. Establish an effective and efficient structure for the school district ~~by:~~
 - Select/hire/evaluate the superintendent
 - Set policy for hiring of other personnel
 - Set policies for operation of the school district
 - Setting direction for and adopting the school district curriculum aligned with state standards
 - Establish budget and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) priorities and adopt the budget and LCAP annually
 - Oversee facilities master plan
 - Provide direction for and approval of collective bargaining agreements
3. Create a supportive school environment through the Governing Board Members' behaviors and actions
 - Act with a professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and vision
 - Make decisions and providing resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
 - Uphold Governing Board approved district policies, practices, and procedures
 - Ensure a positive personnel climate exists within the Governance Team and is created within the school district as a whole. The Governing Board values each and every employee.
 - Be knowledgeable about district efforts and able to explain them to the public.

Governing Board Members Responsibilities (continued):

- Actively listen to educational partners – parents, community members, students, staff (certificated & classified), administrators, and labor partner leaders-
4. Ensures accountability to the public
- Evaluate the superintendent (biannually minimum)
 - Monitor, review, revising, create Board policies
 - Serve as a judicial and appeals body as directed by Board policy
 - Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness
 - Require program changes as indicated to meet District achievement goals
 - Monitor district finances to meet District goals and provide sound fiscal management
 - Review facilities needs and maintain the Facilities Master Plan to meet District needs
 - Monitor and provide direction in the collective bargaining process
5. Act as community leaders
- Speak with a common voice about district priorities, goals, and issues
 - Engage and involve the community in district schools and activities
 - Communicate clear information about policies, programs, and fiscal conditions of the district
 - Educate the community and the media about issues facing the district and public education
 - Advocate for children, district programs and public education to the general public, community, and local, state, and national leaders

Creating and Sustaining a Positive Governance Team Culture

Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten and written 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.

In addition to meeting expectations of the norms, protocols and Board Bylaws include in this handbook to create a positive culture and atmosphere, we agree to act in ways that will help us meet the California School Board Association (CSBA) Professional Governance Standards.

Governance Norms

General Expectations of Governing Board Members Behavior:

WE AGREE TO:

- Keep our focus on the best interest of our students
- Respectfully listen, actively and openly, to the ideas of others
- Communicate openly and honestly with each other
- Respect differences. We will show respect – never dismiss or devalue others
- Support individuals and ideas rather than judge them
- Discuss issues and not personalities
- Participate equally and addressing concerns
- Work toward the future – learning from the past
- Work as a team and be responsible for the decisions of the team
- Focus on our goals and avoid getting sidetracked

Expectations of Behaviors for a Board Meeting:

WE AGREE TO:

- Be on time, focused and prepared for our meetings
- Respect and learn from differences of opinions and philosophies
- Treat each other and our constituents with respect and courtesy
- Recognize and appreciate the professional judgment of our staff and their commitment to our schools, our programs, our stakeholders and our students
- Communicate openly and with integrity
- Debate issues not personalities and respect differences of opinion and philosophy professionally
- Put aside personal and political preferences and opinions in our deliberations
- Make our decisions based on priorities and needs of each and every student
- Acknowledge that the majority rules. Be supportive of final decisions made by the majority of the Governing Board.
- Maintain confidentiality of closed session issues
- Review all provided documents and back up materials before debating or deliberating agenda issues
- Listen to and understand the recommendations presented or the implications of our pending decisions during presentations of agenda items
- Ask questions for clarification and extended understanding
- Focus on the agenda issues at hand and not have side discussions or involve other issues
- Focus on the Governing Board's role in making decisions
- Address agenda issues (i.e., the "what" of an issue) and ensure that the Superintendent and their staff will address the implementation process for issues (i.e., the "how" of an issue)

Board Bylaws (BB) 9005 Governance Standards

The Governing Board believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board also has major commitments to parents/guardians, all members of the community, employees, the state of California, laws pertaining to public education, and established policies of the district. To maximize Board effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

The Board expects its members to work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. Each individual Board member shall:

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus
2. Value, support and advocate for public education
3. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community
4. Act with dignity, and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior
5. Keep confidential matters confidential
6. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader
7. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management

functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff

8. Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals

Board members also shall assume collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture. To operate effectively, the Board shall have a unity of purpose and:

1. Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students
2. Communicate a common vision
3. Operate openly, with trust and integrity
4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures
6. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance
7. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness
8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations

PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

Board Policies and Bylaws are designed to assist the Governance Team of a school district in implementing the many varied laws, rules, and procedures needed in the operation of a school district. Board Bylaw 9005 provides guidance related to Governance Standards, but many other bylaws and policies provide information related to the interactions of the Governance Team. For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the Board and between the Board, the Superintendent, and the administration, the Saugus Union School District Governance Team (Board Members and Superintendent) is committed collectively and individually to the following operating protocols:

- **Ensure children's interests come first.** The needs, interests and achievement of all the children in our district will be represented, considered, and valued. *(BB 9000)*
- **Clearly state and adhere to District goals.** The Board and Superintendent will work together to establish a vision and set clear goals for the District. The Superintendent and staff will be responsible for the day-to-day program implementation to meet that vision and those goals. The vision and goals will be used as the core of all decisions made by the Governing Board and Superintendent. *(BP 0000, BP 0100, BP 0200)*
- **Exemplify leadership in the governance role.** The governance team (Board and Superintendent) will support District policies, practices and protocols. The Board will continue to review policies for effectiveness and legality. When appropriate, key stakeholders will be included in the development, revision or deletion of policies. *(BB 9005, BB 9010)*
- **Use social media to support District efforts appropriately.** Board members, the Superintendent, and Cabinet members shall use social media tools as outlined in Board Policy. These individuals may express their personal ideas or opinions through use of personal social media, but must explicitly acknowledge that those ideas or opinions are from them as an individual and are not those of the Board or of the District. Board members must always remember that while they are private citizens they are also always viewed by the public as Board members who represent the views of the entire school district they serve. *(BP 4040, BB 9010, BB 9012)*
- **Own the collective decision making process.** The Governance team, as well as all District leadership, will support decisions made by the Board and/or the Superintendent. While Board members may disagree on an issue, they will support the collective decision of the Board. *(BB9200)*
- **Act as a collective body.** The authority of the Board is founded in the collective and not the individual. An individual Board member shall not take unilateral action or instruct the Superintendent or staff to take unilateral action. Actions include items formally presented on a Board Agenda as well as any directive issued for a program, process, procedure within the District. Direction will be given to the Superintendent by a majority of the Board through formally agendized actions or directives. Staff members shall take direction through the Superintendent. *(BP 2110, BB9200)*
- **Utilize COO input.** The superintendent is the chief operating officer (COO) of the senior leadership team and should make recommendations, proposals or suggestions on most matters that come before the board. *(BP 2110)*
- **Follow the chain of command.** While the Board is eager to listen to its constituents and staff, each person is to be referred to the person department, site, or administrator who can properly and expeditiously address their individual issue. Board requests that will likely require considerable time or are sensitive in nature are to be directed to the Superintendent. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the Board or its individual Board members will be directed to the Superintendent. *(BP/AR 1312.1, BP/AR 1312.2, BP/AR 1312.3, BP/AR 1312.4, BP 2110, BB9005)*

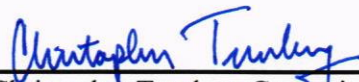
PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE STANDARDS (continued)

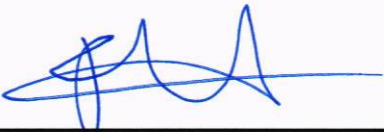
- **Encourage communication between Superintendent and the Board.** Communication must follow Board Policy and District protocols. The Board President is considered the Board spokesperson and will communicate the adopted position(s) of the Board and other related information on issues to the media and public. The Superintendent shall also have the ability to communicate District information with the media and public. In addition, the Superintendent will strive to anticipate issues which may become important or are sensitive to our school district and communicate those directly to the Board. *(BP 2110, BB 9010)*
- **Consult the Board President or Superintendent on issues.** Board members who wish to place an item on the agenda will communicate that desire to the Board President and/or the Superintendent in advance of the meeting in which they wish to discuss the issue. Board members will prepare for meetings in advance and will make every effort to ask questions and seek clarification from the Superintendent and/or Cabinet members in advance of the meetings to ensure the necessary responses are made and shared with all Board members. *(BB 9121, BB 9320, BB 9322)*
- **Conduct efficient and effective meetings.** Board meetings will be conducted in an organized and efficient manner to ensure that district business is completed while still preserving the right of the public to participate. Board members will avoid language and actions that may be considered derogatory to fellow Board members, members of the Cabinet, and other District stakeholders. Board members should consider the comments of all speakers/presenters but should avoid attempting to resolve a complaint in an impromptu manner during the meeting. Board members may refer the issue to the Superintendent who will direct the appropriate staff to address the concern. The Board recognizes that meetings should be utilized for rendering action on issues agendized by the District. Board members will engage in discussion relevant to the issues but will endeavor to avoid repetitive discussions that do not contribute new information or further understanding of the issue. *(BB 9323, BB 9323.2)*
- **Address agenda issues.** During a Board meeting, Board members will only discuss agenda items. Board members will avoid directly addressing individual audience members or groups during public comment, during Board comments, or during discussions on agendized issues. If additional information is needed during discussions or public comments, the Board member will ask the Board President to request the information from the Superintendent. *(BP/AR 1312.1, BPAR 1312.2, BP/AR 1312.3, BP/AR 1312.4, BB 9323, BB 9323.2)*
- **Keep closed session information confidential.** We will adhere to The Brown Act standards regarding all Open and Closed session items. Closed session topics and discussion will be strictly confidential. *(BB 9011, BB 9321)*
- **Avoid use of electronic communication during meetings.** Board members, the Superintendent, and Cabinet members will follow established law pertaining to in-meeting communications and refrain from use of cellphones, text messages, social media, and/or emails. Emergency phone messages will be the exception to this protocol. *(BP 4040, BB 9012)*
- **Conduct a self-assessment/evaluation and Superintendent evaluation annually.** The board will conduct an annual self-evaluation of its performance. The self-evaluation will be a collective reflection of the Boards areas of strength and/or success as well as a reflection of areas of growth and/or need. The Board will also regularly evaluate the Superintendent in implementation of his/her goals. *(BP 2140, BB 9400)*


PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE STANDARDS (continued)

- **Use Board position/title for Board or District related business only.** Board members will not use their title, District business cards, District letterhead, District emails, etc. when conducting any personal business. This includes advocacy of positions for city, county, state, or federal initiatives, political advocacy, and/or advocacy related to private entities. Only official Board positions (e.g., actions taken by the Board) may be endorsed using Board titles. *(BB 9270)*
- **Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.** Board members will encourage parents/guardians and community members to participate in District/school level committees, study sessions, and workshops to ensure engagement in District/school related programs and/or activities as well as provide the Board with information for its deliberations. Information gathering to inform the Board on deliberations will also include use of polls, surveys, individual emails/Parent Square posts, and Public Comments provided during regular and/or special board meetings. *(BB 9323)*


Katherine Cooper, Governing Board Member


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Matthew Watson, Governing Board Member

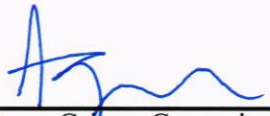

Anna Griese, Governing Board Member

Exhibit
Adopted: November 6, 2012
Revised: February 27, 2024

SAUGUS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Santa Clarita, California

Additional Agreements

The following agreements further detail previously mentioned policies, practices, responsibilities, and protocols included in this document. The purpose is to highlight them as part of the agreed upon practice of the Governance Team members.

Agree to Disagree

Recognizing that leaders have different management styles and philosophies, differences of opinion are expected. When a controversy or split vote occurs on a significant issue, the Governance Team agrees to disagree out of respect for the other person and his/her right to that opinion. We also understand that majority rules.

Recognizing that district improvement requires change, the Board welcomes different opinions and ideas. However, the Board also takes great effort to avoid lingering animosities which can result from different viewpoints.

The Board actively solicits input and listens to all perspectives. The Board values diverse opinions among its members and realizes that by respecting that diversity and seeking common ground it becomes a more effective Board.

The Board recognizes that it represents all students and all facets of the community and, as such, it has an obligation to pursue different points of view with honesty and vigor. Each Board member commits to hearing one another out. By doing so Board members model for students the honest and respectful expression of different points of view.

If a member of the Governance Team cannot support the decision of the Board because it offends a moral/personal code, the member is expected, at a minimum, to refrain from undermining the decision or directive.

The above commitment to either support or refrain from undermining majority decisions does not preclude the member from asking for consideration at a future time of a more acceptable alternative. However, the decision of the Board should be considered final.

Handling Concerns and Complaints from the Public and Staff (BB 9200, BP/AR 1312.1, BP/AR 1312.2, BP/AR 1312.3, and BP/AR 1312.4)

When someone complains to us, we will listen carefully, remembering that we are hearing only one side of an issue. We will direct the person or persons to the staff member most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. We will make sure that they understand the appropriate order of whom to contact and will make them aware of any formal policies or procedures.

We will endeavor to ensure that everyone who brings a concern to us be treated fairly, equally, and expeditiously. We will work to maintain the proper adherence and implementation of district procedures and policies. We understand that as individuals we have no power to fix the problems. As representatives of the public, it is important that we invite the person with the complaint or concern to ultimately get back to us if the issue is not resolved.

If a Board Member receives a complaint, they will refer the complainant to the appropriate staff member. Afterwards, the Board Member will report the complaint to the Superintendent.

While Board members may listen to complaints from staff regarding policies or procedures; members must be careful not to usurp the chain of command. Complainants are encouraged to discuss the matter with their supervisor or union representative. If an email is sent to the Board as a whole, the Board President will work with the Superintendent for a response.

However, with regard to the Board's Court of Appeals role, Board members will not listen or respond to complaints against personnel.

Individual Board Member Requests for Information (BB 9200)

When an individual Board member requests information, it will be provided to all Board members. An individual Board member will - insofar as possible - work to let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request will be made in public. This will allow the staff member to be prepared to answer any questions or to prepare materials.

We will self-monitor our own requests to ensure that one member's requests will not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals. We recognize the concept of "Nice to Know vs. Need to Know" information and will seek information only as needed for effective decision-making.

Any individual Board member who desires a copy of an existing written report or survey will make such a request to the superintendent. A copy of the material may also be made available to each member of the Board.

The Superintendent takes directions from the Board as a whole; therefore, requests for the generation of reports or information must be placed on a meeting agenda for Board consideration and approval. Because the Board also believes in "no surprises", Board members agree to notify the superintendent of the information request discussion prior to the meeting.

Board member questions concerning material in the Board packet should be referred to the Superintendent in a timely manner to afford staff the opportunity to prepare a response during the meeting. If the information requested requires an inordinate amount of staff time to generate, the Superintendent will place the request on the next Board meeting agenda for discussion. District staff is not expected to respond to direction or requests from individual Board members.

No Votes or Abstentions (BB 9323)

When a member of the Saugus Union School District Governing Board casts a "no" vote or "abstains from voting" on a particular issue; as a courtesy, the member may offer a short statement as to the reason for their action. Governing Board Members are expected to cast their vote unless a conflict of interest is present which would require an abstention.

Orientation of New Members (BB 9230)

Immediately following the selection of a new member, members will be seated following the oath of office. As soon as possible, the Governance Team will schedule an orientation session with the newly constituted Board. The orientation session will include but not be limited to:

- Review the Governance Handbook protocols and agreements including the BB 9000 series
- Review of Board agenda process and meeting procedures
- Review of the Brown Act and discussion of confidentiality
- Review of CSBA Professional Governance Standards
- Review of ACSA/CSBA Professional Standards and job description for the Superintendent

- Review contract provisions and evaluation procedures for Superintendent
- Discussion of pending litigation and critical issues
- Review of major programs and projects currently operating within the district
- Meet with Superintendent and CBO to gain better understanding of the budget

Request for Items to be Agendized (BB 9322)

Board Bylaw 9322 Agenda/Meeting Materials details the process and procedures for the content of a Board agenda, the preparation of agenda, and the dissemination of the agenda to the Board Members and the public. According to BB 9322, a Board Member or member of the public may request that an item/matter, that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Governing Board, be placed on the agenda for discussion or action. Board Members and/or members of the public may make their request in writing to the Superintendent or designee. The written request should include any appropriate supporting documents and/or information.

The Board President and Superintendent shall decide whether the item/matter submitted is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. They will also determine if the item/matter submitted is one requiring action or a request for information. Finally, the Board President and Superintendent will decide if the item/matter is one for open or closed session as well as the date it will be agendized.

No items/matter outside of the subject matter jurisdiction may be agendized. Should an item/matter be denied to be agendized, the Board Member or member of the public may submit a written request to have the Board take action to determine whether the item shall be placed on the agenda in the future. This would include the Board considering to agendize the item at a future board meeting and if supported by a majority of the Board, the item will appear on the next agendized regular meeting.

Site/Programs Visitations

When visiting a program or school site on behalf of the Governing Board, as a courtesy, we inform the Superintendent and staff involved of the date and time of our visit. It is our desire to observe and support our programs and courses, not interfere with the operation.

Board members may visit any campus after checking with the Superintendent and Principal about the best time to visit. Board members are required to check in with the site Principal's office and follow campus guidelines for visitors.

Such visits are for the purpose of becoming acquainted with school programs, personnel, operation, and facilities. Board members shall not go into teachers' classrooms or campuses for the purpose of evaluation or investigation. Board members will not give directions or make suggestions to personnel during their visit.

When visiting with teachers of their own children, Board members will make it clear that they are acting as parents rather than Board members.

Superintendent Evaluation (BP 2140)

We recognize the value and importance of a comprehensive and formal evaluation process for the Superintendent. We agree to abide by all contract terms and will conduct a formal evaluation of the Superintendent annually.

We have reviewed and agree to abide by and institutionalize the aforementioned governance team standards and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Saugus 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 12th day of March 2024.

Katherine Cooper, Governing Board Member

Patricia Garibay, Governing Board Member

Anna Griese, Governing Board Member

Chris Trunkey, Governing Board Member

Matthew Watson, Governing Board Member

Colleen Hawkins, Ed.D., Superintendent

Saugus Union School District

Board Bylaws

The following list of Board Bylaws are governance polices for the school district governance team. Full copies of each policy can be found on our website.

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/PolicyListing.aspx?S=36030440>

BB 9000 – Role of the Board	BB 9223 – Filling Vacancies
BB 9005 – Governance Standards	BB 9223E – Filling Vacancies
BB 9005E – Governance Standards	BB 9224 – Oath or Affirmation
BB 9010 – Public Statements	BB 9230 – Orientation
BB 9011 – Disclosure of Confidential/Privileged Information	BB 9240 – Board Training
BB 9012 – Board Member Electronic Communication	BB 9250 – Remuneration, Reimbursement and Other Benefits
BB 9100 – Organization	BB 9250E – Remuneration, Reimbursement and Other Benefits
BB 9110 – Terms of Office	BB 9260 – Legal Protection
BB 9121 – President	BB 9270 - Conflict of Interest
BB 9122 – Secretary	BB 9310 – Board Policies
BB 9123 – Clerk	BB 9320 – Meetings and Notices
BB 9124 – Attorney	BB 9321 – Closed Session
BB 9130 – Board Committees	BB 9322 – Agenda/Meeting Materials
BB 9140 – Board Representatives	BB 9323 – Meeting Conduct
BB 9200 – Limits of Board Member Authority	BB 9323.2 – Actions by the Board
BB 9220 – Governing Board Elections	BB 9323.2E – Actions by the Board
BB 9221 – Recruiting New Board Members	BB 9324 – Minutes and Recordings
BB 9222 – Resignation	BB 9400 – Board Self-Evaluation