TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Governance Handbook 2019-20

Table of Contents

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE
_____

1. The board has five major governing responsibilities:

2. Setting the direction for public school in the community

3. Establishing an effective and efficient structure

4. Providing support

5. Ensuring account ability to the public

6. Demonstrating community leadership

UNITY OF PURPOSE

Unity of purpose of the governance team (trustees and superintendent) include a common focus, agreement on priority goals, and shared values about students, the district and public education that transcend individual differences and fulfill a greater purpose.

A unity of purpose exists when the commitment to achieving these goals becomes the guiding principle of all trustees and the superintendent. The focused efforts of the Tamalpais Union High School District are reflected in the mission and strategic plan adopted by the board.

GOVERNANCE ROLES
_____

All board members are equal under the law, and authority rests with the board as a whole, not with individual members. The Board of Trustees sets direction and operates at a governance level. Direction is given to the superintendent only at board meetings through actions taken by the board. It is important for the board members and the superintendent to understand and respect the separate roles, yet work together as a "governance team" taking collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture. The superintendent and trustees commit to sharing information with each other in order to avoid surprises to any member of the team.

GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP CULTURE
_____

The following governance norms and protocols were developed to support and promote the effectiveness of the district governance team and to ensure a positive and productive working

relationship among board members, the superintendent, district staff, students, and the community. The norms and protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team, and may be modified over time as needed.

Governance Team Norms

Generally, the Board will:

1. Come prepared and be fully present and engaged
2. Deliberate effectively and listen openly without interrupting
3. Work collaboratively
4. Build towards consensus
5. Maintain persepctive with a sense of humor
6. Not repeat each other or ourselves
7. Not have side conversations
8. Give full attendtion to the proceedings (no cell phone use)
9. Focus on the best interest of ALL students
10. Commit to no surprises

Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Topic 1	Board of Trustee Meeting Agenda Development
Rationale	• Effective meetings are the result of well-planned agendas. • Adequate time is needed for staff members to develop agenda items thoroughly and to post agendas in compliance with the Brown Act. • The consent agenda includes items concerning normal operations that require board approval but are not expected to require explanation or discussion. • Study sessions will be developed throughout the year to ensure coverage of both timely and urgent issues that require extensive discussion before a possible board action is taken.
Protocol	• All agenda items must be submitted to the Executive Assistant of the Superintendent and Board of Trustees by noon on Monday the week prior to a board meeting. • The board president, clerk, and superintendent will meet the week prior to the board meeting to determine the closed, open, and consent agendas. • All back up material for agenda items must be submitted by 12:00pm. on the Thursday prior to the board meeting. • All agendas must be publically posted 72 hours prior to the meetings. Most often, agendas will be posted Friday afternoon. • All agendas and back up materials are posted on the district's Agenda Online website. A link is available on the front page of the district website. • Generally, agenda items will be discussed by the board at a meeting and brought back for action at a future meeting.

	• Study sessions will be organized with a brief staff presentation followed by board discussion.
Topic 2	**Meeting Preparation and Attendance**
Rationale	• The purpose of a board meeting is to conduct board business in public. • Board of Trustees represent the community and provides oversight • Issues are regularly discussed over a series of board meetings. • Only a majority vote of the board at a board meeting provides direction to the superintendent. • Board members should be equally informed. • Compliance with the Brown Act and public meeting requirements.
Protocol	• The board president, board clerk, and superintendent plan each board meeting agenda to promote and support thoughtful deliberation and effective use of time • The board president facilitates the board meeting and manages the public input. • The board will strive to keep open session meetings to no more than four hours. When possible, discussion on a topic should occur prior to action to take place at a subsequent board meeting. • Board members will read the posted agenda and accompanying material. • Board members will attend regularly scheduled board meetings unless an emergency situation occurs that makes attendance impossible. • Members will cooperate in scheduling special meetings and work sessions. *Managing Action items* 1. The board president introduces the action item. 2. Superintendent or designee presents the item, background information and a recommendation. 3. Board members and the student trustees ask clarifying questions and/or make brief comments. 4. The board president asks for public comment & manages public input. 5. The board discusses the item again if necessary. 6. A motion and second are made. 7. The board votes.
Topic 3	**Closed Session Practices/Confidentiality**
Rationale	• The Brown Act established conditions for discussion of some board business in confidential, closed sessions. The Brown Act strongly supports the "public's right to know" but recognizes that some highly sensitive matters must be discussed in a confidential setting, in part to protect the legal rights of other parties.

	• The public's trust and the trust among board members are breached if confidential matters are shared in a public manner. • When closed session discussions are shared, there is potential for liability and violation of employee and student rights.
Protocol	• Only matters legally allowed by the Brown Act will be discussed in closed session. These matters include but are not limited to employee contract negotiations, district litigation, personnel matters, and the substance of the superintendent evaluation. • The board will maintain confidentiality around all matters discussed in closed session. • If a board member violates the legal requirement to keep all closed session discussions confidential, the board president and superintendent will take immediate action to rectify the matter.
Topic 4	**Communication: Questions To/From Board Members**
Rationale	• It is essential that important and accurate information be communicated to members of the board, the staff, and the community in as timely a fashion as possible. • The governance team recognizes that some situations have legal or other considerations that may place restrictions on what may be told to the media or public.
Protocol	The governance team commits to speaking with one voice. The designated spokesperson will vary depending on the issue or situation: • **Crisis/Disaster:** The superintendent is the primary spokesperson and may involve the board president at his or her discretion. The superintendent will also coordinate with the county office of education for additional information and resources. • **Non-Crisis:** The board president and the superintendent will serve as primary spokespersons or may choose a designee. • **Controversial Topics**: All governance team members may serve as spokespersons utilizing developed and agreed upon key messages. When possible, the trustee should consult with the superintendent or board president prior to responding. • **Emails/documents to Board:** If a communication is sent to a quorum of the board that affects an area of their jurisdiction, the District may include the item with the next regularly scheduled Board meeting under Board Communications. The board president will respond notifying the party(ies) that this will take place and limit response to prevent further dialogue in accordance with the Brown Act. The remaining 2 board members will be provided the communication.
Topic 5	**Establishing Goals and Evaluation of Superintendent**
Rationale	• Establishing district multi-year and annual goals is critical to a forward thinking, proactive board that is committed to continuous learning.

	- Important to the work of the board is the ability to track progress over multiple years. - Critical to governance work is data driven decision-making that promotes clarity of direction, focus and alignment. Setting goals ensures that the work of the district is focused. - The governance team will establish annual goals for the superintendent that are tied to district goals, can be measured, and are ongoing.
Protocol	- Progress on the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is updated annually at an open session meeting. - The board will evaluate the superintendent's performance each year based on his established annual goals and the contractual agreement.

Topic 6	Responding to Complaints and Concerns from Staff and Community
Rationale	- The board values open communication and timely resolution of issues. - The board wishes to be accessible, consistent, and fair in dealings with all complaints and concerns. - The board represents the community. The board's role in hearing complaints and concerns is as a listener and to provide education that empowers a community member with potential next steps.
Protocol	When approached with an issue or concern from staff or a community member trustees agree to utilize the 6 R's to ensure active listening: - **Receive**—listen to what the person has to say without preparing a response. Be careful to remain neutral. - **Repeat**—paraphrase or ask a question to clarify for understanding. Ask the person to identify those to whom they have spoken about the matter prior to contacting a board member. - **Request**—ask what the person would like the board member to do with the information and/or what they see as a solution to the problem. - **Review**—go over the real options available to the person to remedy the situation. - **Redirect**—put the person back into the system at the appropriate place—remembering lines of authority and chains of command. - **Report**—maintain open lines of communication between the board and superintendent and notify the superintendent of the conversation as soon as possible. If the concern is shared via email, the trustee will copy the superintendent and board president on his/her response. Superintendent will let trustee know of resolution as appropriate.

Topic 7	Visiting Schools
Rationale	• The board wants to be visible to staff, and informed about instructional practices and the needs of the students and staff. • Visits include school events, meetings, and classroom visits
Protocol	• The superintendent will keep trustees informed of events and opportunities for board presence whenever possible. • If Trustees wish to visit a campus at a time that has not been pre-arranged by the superintendent, they will contact the principal and superintendent informing them when they plan to visit the campus. • Trustees will give the superintendent and principal a reasonable amount of lead time prior to the visit. • The purpose of classroom visits is <u>not</u> to evaluate teachers. • School and community invitations for trustees to attend events will be coordinated through the superintendent's Executive Assistant. • Trustees will be introduced at all school and district events unless they are attending only as a parent or spectator.

Topic 8	Board Governance Self-Assessment
Rationale	• Conducting a governance self-evaluation demonstrates accountability to the community and the willingness of the governance team to strengthen and improve governance practices.
Protocol	• The board supports continuous improvement through an evaluation of governance practices and effectiveness. • Annually, the board will schedule time to reflect on governance practices and participate in a self-evaluation process in open session. • The process will identify commendations and recommendations for improvement. • The board may identify one or two annual governance goals for strengthening the governance team's performance.

Appendix A

PERFORMING GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

The California School Boards Association recommends the following descriptions of the responsibilities of school boards.

Set the direction for the community's schools
- Focus on student learning
- Assess needs/ obtain baseline data
- Generate, review or revise setting direction documents (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used
- Ensure these documents are the driving force for all district efforts

Establish an effective and efficient structure for the school district

- Employ and support the superintendent; set policy for hiring of other personnel
- Oversee the development of and adopt policies
- Set a direction for and adopt the curriculum
- Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues
- Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

Provide support through our behavior and actions

- Act with professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and vision
- Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
- Uphold district policies the board has approved
- Ensure a positive working climate exists
- Be knowledgeable about district efforts

Ensure accountability to the public

- Evaluate the superintendent
- Monitor, review and revise policies and serve as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated
- Monitor and adjust district finances
- Monitor the collective bargaining process
- Develop and implement board self-evaluation

Demonstrate community leadership

- 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 condition
- Educate the community and the media about the issues facing the district and public education
- Advocate for children, district programs and public education to the general public, community leaders and local, state and national leaders

Link to Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) document