

**Albany Unified School District  
School Board of Education**

**GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK**

**REVISED: November 16, 2020**

**Updated: February 2, 2021**

**(includes updates from BB 9323, approved 9/22/2020)**

## **Thoughts on school boards, education and governance contributed by Albany Unified School Board Trustees**

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.”

—Joel Barker

“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education.”

—John F. Kennedy

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

--- Nelson Mandela

"So much of America's tragic and costly failure to care for all its children stems from our tendency to distinguish between our own children and other people's children--as if justice were divisible."

---Marian Wright Edelman

“Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.”

---Maria Montessori

“Since we have no idea what the world and the job market will look like in 2050...what should we be teaching?”

---Yuvah Noah Harare, 21 Lessons for the 21st Century

ALBANY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK  
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## **I. UNITY OF PURPOSE**

AUSD Mission & Vision Statement  
Created October 2-3, 2009 by the Strategic Planning Committee  
Adopted by the Board on April 20, 2010

Retitled to **Mission & Vision Statement** on August 25, 2015

The mission of AUSD is to provide excellent public education that empowers all to achieve their fullest potential as productive citizens. AUSD is committed to creating comprehensive learning opportunities in a safe, supportive, and collaborative environment, addressing the individual needs of each student.

**Values and Beliefs that helped to form  
The Mission & Vision Statement  
Created October 2-3, 2009  
by the Strategic Planning Committee  
Adopted by the Board on April 20, 2010**

- A safe and supportive learning environment for all promotes student achievement and embraces diversity within our community.
- Teachers, support staff, administrators, families and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school system mission, goals, and promoting learning across the system.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, and emotional needs.
- All students can develop a deep understanding of essential knowledge and skills, apply their learning, produce quality work, think critically, and become contributing members of society.



**ALBANY**  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## **Albany Unified School District Strategic Plan Goals**

Created by the Action Planning Teams – October 2009 to January 2010

Adopted by Board of Education on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010

*Revised and Retitled to Objectives & Commitments February 9, 2016*



**Objective #1:** *Assess and Increase Academic Success. Goal: We will provide a comprehensive educational experience with expanded opportunities for engagement, assessment, and academic growth so that all students will achieve their fullest potential.*

**Commitments:**

- We will implement the California Standards.
- We will provide academic intervention for students who struggle.
- We will continue to provide English Language Development Programs for students who are identified as English Language Learners.
- We will hold ourselves accountable and determine student success based on multiple measures.
- We will provide academically rigorous Career Technical Education programs that engage students in the practice of skills needed in modern work environments.
- We will provide a broad selection of Advanced Placement and honors courses across all disciplines, encourage students to enroll in these and other challenging classes, and provide support for students who do so.
- We will offer an articulated music instructional program to all 1st—12th grade students.
- We will ensure that all students and staff have access to technology sufficient to support learning and assessment.
- We will provide libraries to students and staff in each school to support learning.
- We will attract, hire, train, support, and retain a highly-qualified and diverse staff.
- We will track the college graduation rates and employment rates of former students.



**Objective #2:** *Support the Whole Child. Goal: We will foster the social and emotional growth of all students, implement an array of strategies to increase student engagement, identify individual socio-emotional and behavioral needs, and apply collaborative appropriate interventions.*

**Commitments:**

- We will provide schools that maintain a safe, inclusive, and positive climate.
- We will provide policies and procedures that reflect current research and best practices regarding students’ physical and socio-emotional well being.
- We will increase the number of students who have a positive relationship or connection with staff and peers, feel safe, and have expanded opportunities to be involved at school.
- We will provide time for regular collaboration between district staff, families, and other stakeholders to identify students’ needs and to develop and implement appropriate interventions.
- We will integrate the teaching and practice of social and emotional skills into our schools and evaluate the effectiveness of any adopted programs or curriculum.
- We will provide a robust attendance reporting and intervention program.
- We will provide academic counseling and intervention to students in grades 6th—12th.
- We will provide a mental health services program.
- We will provide a comprehensive “wrap-around” set of services for students who struggle in school.

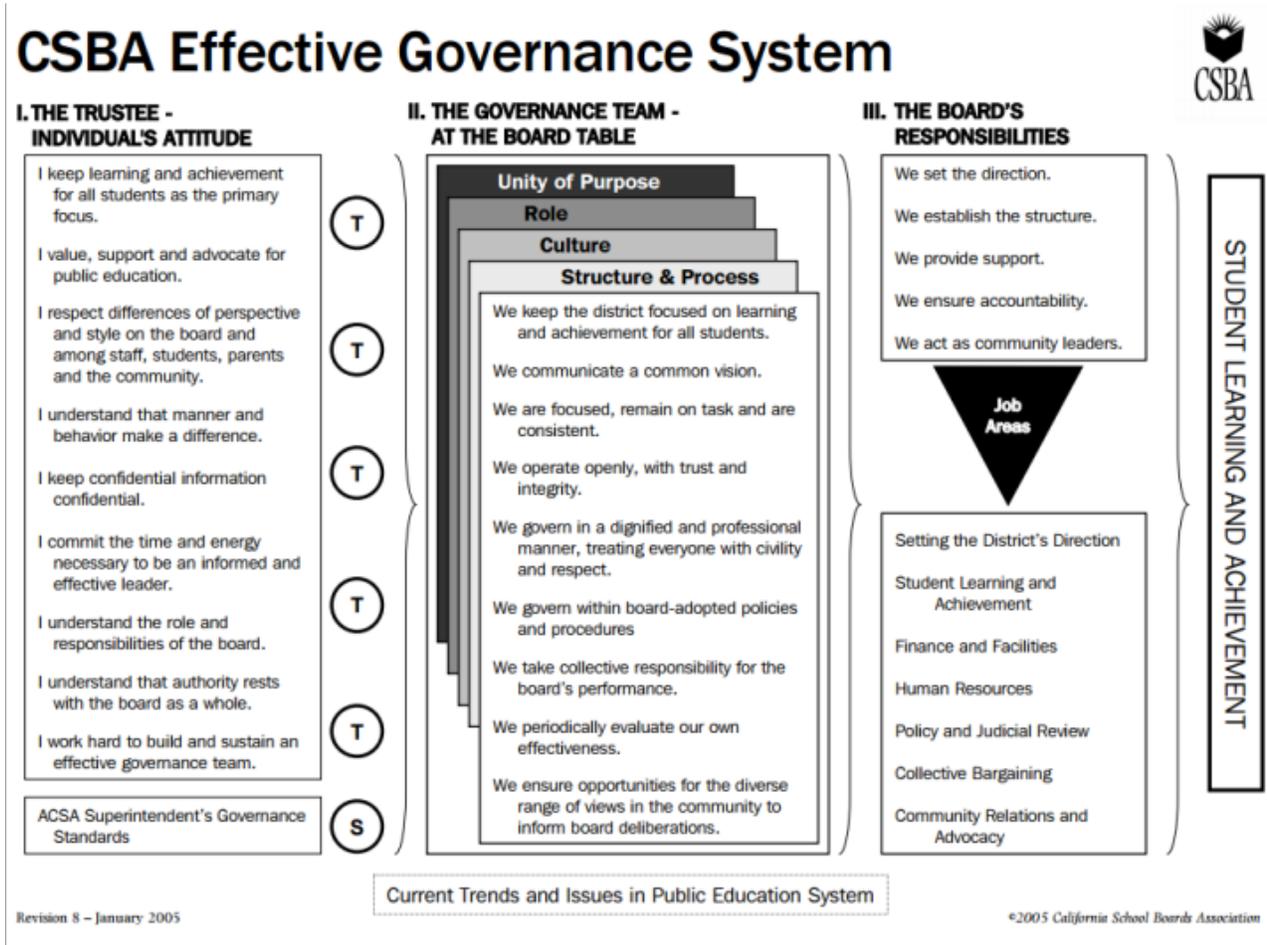


**Objective #3:** *Communicate and Lead Together. Goal: All stakeholders will collaborate and communicate about decisions that guide the sites and district.*

**Commitments:**

- We will establish effective communication among the District, the schools, and the community, and be responsive to the concerns and interests expressed by members of the community.
- We will encourage and support the engagement of parents and community members, and will develop meaningful opportunities at all grade levels for parents/guardians to be involved in district and school activities; advisory, decision-making, and advocacy roles; and activities to support learning at home.
- We will work with city and county agencies and organizations to promote and facilitate coordinated services for children, and will develop partnerships with businesses.
- We will advocate at all levels of government for support for early-childhood education and will explore the availability of grants and other financial support for such programs.
- We will provide highly-qualified clerical support throughout the district.
- We will enhance the leadership capacity at the site, district, and community levels for collaborating on making decisions, communicating, and assessing site and district goals.

## II. CSBA EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM DIAGRAM



### III. AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

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

The Board of Education for the Albany Unified 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 of education is provided to each student. The Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team in order to effectively meet district challenges. Agreed upon behaviors, or norms, and operating procedures, or protocols, support consistent behaviors and actions among team members. The purpose of the governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among Board members, the Superintendent, district staff, students and the community. The following norms and protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team, and may be modified over time as needed.

We have reviewed and agreed to the governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Albany Unified District Board of Education, staff, students and the community. We shall review and renew these agreements annually.

Affirmed on this 31<sup>st</sup> day of January 2011  
Revised on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of April 2012  
Revised on this 8<sup>th</sup> day of January 2013  
Revised on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of February 2013  
Revised on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of March 2013  
Revised on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of May 2014  
Revised on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of August 2015  
Revised on this 5<sup>th</sup> day of April 2016  
Revised on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 2017  
Revised on this 10th day of December 2019  
Revised on this 16th day of November 2020  
Revised on this 2nd day of February 2021  
Revised on this 11th day of January 2022

Sara Hinkley, Ph.D., Board President  
Clementina Durón, Board Vice-President  
Melissa Boyd, Esq., Trustee  
Veronica Davidson, Trustee  
Brian Doss, Trustee  
Frank Wells, Ed.D., Superintendent

## **Meeting Norms**

*We agree to:*

1. Maintain a focus on what is best for our students.
2. Ensure a safe environment for all views to be expressed, treating each other, staff, and the public respectfully.
3. Endeavor to find common solutions to issues through collaboration without sacrificing one's beliefs in what is best for students.
4. Make a commitment to effective deliberation, each one listening and considering with an open mind while others are allowed to express their points of view even if one disagrees.

Meeting Norms will be listed on the first page of meeting agendas and read aloud at each meeting

## **Governance Norms**

*We agree to:*

1. Value, support, and advocate for public education, keeping learning and achievement for all students as our primary focus.
2. Be an effective team with a common focus on achieving District goals--never a distraction to the District or community.
3. Act with dignity, and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior.
4. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, families, and the community.
5. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be informed and effective leaders.
6. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles and refrain from stepping out of our role.
7. Partner with staff for positive change.
8. Accept that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals.

## Protocols to Support Effective Governance

### 1) Issue: Orienting a New Board Member

**Principles:** A new member of the Board will need to invest time in training and understanding the job in order to be effective. Recent or more experienced Board members should mentor and support new members so that the entire Board can be efficient and effective.

#### **Protocols:**

- The president of the Board and the Superintendent should provide the resources and guidance and provide the new member with opportunities for training as soon as possible. The CSBA's workshops for new Board members are one such opportunity.
- The president of the Board should welcome the new member, provide that member with the article, "What New Board Members Need to Learn in Their First 100 Days" [http://www.csba.org/en/NewsAndMedia/Publications/CASchoolsMagazine/2012/Spring/InThisIssue/QAGovern\\_Spring2012.aspx](http://www.csba.org/en/NewsAndMedia/Publications/CASchoolsMagazine/2012/Spring/InThisIssue/QAGovern_Spring2012.aspx) (see **Appendix A**) as well as the most recent copy of the Board's **Governance Handbook**. Then the president should explain that any questions that arise from reading the articles and handbook can be answered by him or herself or the new Board member's assigned mentor.
- The president and vice-president should ask an experienced current or recent Board member to serve as a mentor for the new member and the mentor should meet/talk regularly with the new member to answer any questions and provide any support necessary.
- The Superintendent will meet with each new Board member individually to answer any questions and familiarize him/her with district operations.
- Each seated Board member will arrange a time to have an informal meeting with each new Board member as soon as possible after the swearing in ceremony.
- While ethics training is not legally required for school board members in California at present, the Board recommends all Board members familiarize themselves with the National School Board Association's Code of Ethics and be continually thinking about one's actions and decisions as a Board member by considering what is legal, what is ethical, and what is fair. We also highly recommend reading the brief by the NSBA entitled "Doing the Right Thing," which lists their Code of Ethics (see **Appendix B**).
- Ethics training, which is encouraged but not required, can be accessed at the following website - <http://oag.ca.gov/ethics>.

### 2) Issue: Bringing Up New Ideas or Agenda Items

**Principles:** Board members and the public have the opportunity to bring up new ideas or subjects of interest for future Board meeting agendas and must understand the process in

order to do so. Creating a clearly defined process develops consistency, maintains trust, and provides a process to think through issues.

The Board has an obligation to focus staff time and energy, as well as other district resources, on achieving the agreed-upon district vision, goals, and objectives. While the district recognizes the right of individuals to place items on Board agendas, the following protocols have been developed to review all requests and handle them in the most appropriate and effective manner.

**Protocols:**

- Any individual can request a topic or issue be placed on a future Board agenda at a regular Board meeting, in writing, or by email. It is helpful, but not necessary, to describe how the item fits into the District’s vision, goals, and objectives. In addition, Board members may also request a future agenda item at a regular Board meeting during “Agenda Items/Matters Introduced by the Board”. No motion or second is necessary to start the agendizing process.
- The District shall have an Agenda Committee, consisting of the Board President or their designee, a second Board member, and the Superintendent.
- New issues necessarily displace other business. As part of the public meeting, periodically trustees will rank items in the Issues Bin. The Agenda Committee will make an effort to follow priority rankings, but because of the changing availability of staff and when information pertaining to the item becomes available, it is understood that issues will be scheduled when possible.
- The Agenda Committee makes decisions about what items should be scheduled into a meeting and how items not recommended to be scheduled are handled. The Agenda Committee will consider each request and recommend how it could be addressed most effectively and expeditiously. The recommendation may be to place the item on a future agenda, to integrate it with another item that is similar or related that is already scheduled, to forward it to the district administration for a response, or to refer the item to a standing committee, task force, and/or school committees, or to cause a written report to be submitted to the Board, or to initiate other administrative remedies. The Board is committed to using all resources available to resolve issues and queries.
- The Superintendent will communicate any alternative recommendation to the requesting party within 14 days of the request. If the requesting party still desires the item be heard at a Board meeting, the Agenda Committee will schedule it for a future meeting. The amount of time allotted, the position on the agenda, whether or not it is an action item, the meeting date assigned, and whether it will be integrated into a planned staff presentation will be at the discretion of the Committee. All new ideas or agenda item topics will also be weighed against their effect on staff’s ability to accomplish the district vision and goals (strategic plan) when determining the amount of time allocated and the meeting date assigned. Nothing in this protocol shall require agendizing of an item that has already been agendized and heard by the

Board.

- The Superintendent or his/her designee will communicate to the requesting party how and when the agenda item will be scheduled for the Board.
- The highest priority of the Agenda Committee will be to update the Board and obtain decisions on necessary items. When possible, and if this priority can still be met, the Agenda Committee will attempt to schedule no more than one Staff Report per regular meeting.
- To the extent possible, items will be scheduled onto the agenda to allow items of interest to the following groups to be heard first:
  - Students
  - Parents
  - Teachers/Principals
  - Contractors

### **3) Issue: Agenda Questions Asked Before a Board Meeting**

**Principles:** Staff members' time and expertise should be treated with respect by Board members. Prior to a public Board meeting, if a Board member has questions of clarification or requests for more information about an agenda item, the Board member should let the staff member know ahead of time so as not to surprise them and to allow them to prepare their response for the public meeting.

#### **Protocols:**

- A Board member should read all the information in the agenda packet of a meeting ahead of time.
- If the Board member has questions of clarification or requests for information, the member should first email the question to the Superintendent, copying the President, so that the Superintendent can channel the information to the appropriate staff member.
- The Superintendent should then share the requested information with all Board members.
- To avoid potential violations of the Brown Act, the staff member providing the information should repeat the question only if necessary for context, and if so, should paraphrase the question so that the source is not evident. In addition, any comments from the Board member should be edited out and not included with the response.

### **4) Issue: Purpose of the Consent Calendar**

**Principles:** Board members should keep in mind that the purpose of the consent calendar is to expedite the handling of routine business.

**Protocols:**

- Board members should not discuss or pull any items unless it is very important to do so.
- Questions on the consent calendar, once asked and answered in advance of a Board meeting, should not be asked again at the meeting unless the Board member feels there is information that is important for the public to know, or unless the member wants a separate vote on the item. In the latter case, the member should ask that the item be pulled from the consent calendar.
- Only re-occurring and standard contracts should be placed on the consent calendar. Unique and first-time contracts should be listed as action items.
- Consent calendar items should be routine and non-controversial.

**5) Issue: Using Board Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools**

**Principles:** Board meetings are opportunities to strategically move the district forward, and to communicate direction, district priorities, and progress to the community.

When the public understands the process and the thinking behind Board decisions, there is generally more community support for the decision.

**Protocols:**

- When possible, Board members and the Superintendent will regularly link Board meeting agenda items and discussions to the district vision, goals, and strategic plan.
- Board members will ask clarifying questions about agenda items in order to demonstrate and make as clear and transparent as possible the dialogue leading up to decisions made by the Board.
- At the end of each discussion, the president will sum up the points of view and any consensus reached and ask the members to confirm whether the summary is accurate.
- When a Board member makes a motion, if necessary the president will clarify the meaning of a yes or no vote on the motion. After a vote, the president will clarify for staff and the public the meaning of the vote. This clarification will be memorialized in the minutes along with the numbers of ayes, nays, and abstentions.

**6) Issue: Use of Abstentions**

**Principles:** The public has the right to know how a Board member stands on any issue that comes to a vote. Abstentions should not be used to avoid making a hard choice or taking a definite stand. However, Student Board Members may abstain at will from any vote.

**Protocols:**

- When called on to vote, each member will vote aye or nay unless the member has a

financial conflict of interest, as defined by Board policy and Ed code. Student Board Members may abstain as they deem appropriate.

- If a member feels that there is insufficient information to vote on a motion, that member should move that the motion be tabled for lack of information and placed on a later agenda. If the motion does not pass, the member may abstain from a vote.
- Regardless of whether the Board votes to table the item for later consideration or decides to continue with the vote in the current meeting, the Board member's objection that there was insufficient information on the item will be memorialized in the minutes.

#### **7) Issue: Timing of Board Meetings**

**Principles:** The Board and the public should understand the relative importance of a meeting agenda item and know when to anticipate the discussion of an item of interest.

**Protocols:**

- Each item on the meeting agenda will include the time for discussion and the amount of time reserved for that item.
- The Board president or designee will keep track of the time and if it appears that any item may take substantially more than the time allotted for it, the president may ask the Board to indicate by the showing of hands whether they want to continue discussion of the item and, if so, by how long.

#### **8) Issue: Minimizing Environmental Impact**

**Principles:**

The Board desires to minimize the environmental impact of the printing of Board agendas and ancillary materials.

**Protocols:**

- The district will distribute all Board-meeting-related materials electronically rather than on paper to the degree practicable and allowed by law.
- If a Board member cannot read electronic copies of the Board agenda for any reason, the member, the Superintendent, and the Board President shall reach a mutually-agreeable accommodation for that member.

#### **9) Issue: Board Electronic Communications**

**Principles:** Board members often receive inquiries and requests for action by email or on social media. To make sure responses are consistent and to avoid violations of the Brown Act, it is normally the President who responds to such emails addressed to the Board.

Members should be aware that access to district records is a fundamental public right, and electronic correspondence in general is part of the public record.

Nothing in this Issue or this Handbook should be perceived as restricting a Board member's right to have conversations with community members.

Wherever any of the following protocols indicate that the President should be copied or included in an email, a Board member should disregard that instruction if by doing so a Brown Act violation might result.

**Protocols:**

- When responding to a correspondent, the Board member must always be careful to distinguish among factual information, personal opinions, and positions or policies that have been discussed and adopted by the Board.
- When a Board member receives a request for action not addressed to other Board members, the member should ask permission to forward the request to the President and the Superintendent. If permission is not given, the member shall handle the concern as described in Issue: Handling concerns/complaints from the public and staff.
- When a Board member receives a simple inquiry not addressed to the Superintendent or other Board members, the member should first determine whether it would be important or useful for other Board members to be aware of the inquiry. If not, and if the member has the information sought, the member may respond to the inquiry. If the member does not have the answer, or feels that the Superintendent and President should know of the inquiry, the member should respond to the correspondent to ask whether it's OK to forward the inquiry to the President and Superintendent; then do so, if permitted by the correspondent.
- Emails addressed to the entire Board or to multiple Board members shall be responded to by the Board President or by a member designated by the President. *Any individual board member may also respond if they choose to, but he/she must avoid using "reply-all" or otherwise creating a Brown Act violation.* If the President was not included in the original address list, any recipient of the email should forward the email to the President and Superintendent. The Superintendent might also wish to respond. The Superintendent and President will copy each other on all correspondence that is in response to emails from the public.
- If a Board member becomes aware of issues of concern to members of the community, the Board member should request to talk to the Superintendent and President or should send the Superintendent and President an email describing the issue.
- Board members' electronic correspondence should be sent to and from the district email addresses, not personal email addresses. If a board member receives an email at a personal address, the member may invite the sender to communicate using the district-provided address. In any case, any response shall be from the district address.
- Board members should be aware that all electronic correspondence—including email

and social media—can be reprinted and distributed to the public. Responses should be consistent with other issues covered in the Board Governance Handbook, specifically including protocols under “Spokesperson for the Governing Team, Board, District”, “Board Members’ Role in Public”, and “Handling Concerns/Complaints from the Public and Staff.”

- Conversations on social media are a violation of the Brown Act if more than two Board members participate.
- Board members should avoid sending emails to a quorum of the board. When in doubt, send messages to the Superintendent for possible distribution.
- Avoid “reply all.”
- Emails are part of the public record and all District email correspondence is backed up on a server. Board members should be aware that deleting an email from their email account does not remove it from the server or prevent it from being recovered from the server and disclosed in event of legal proceedings.

#### **10) Issue: Spokesperson for the Governing Team, Board, District**

**Principles:** It is important for the Board and staff to have a consistent, clear message on issues.

#### **Protocols:**

- Board members should refer all members of the press to the Superintendent for comment.
- Should a Board member choose to comment in response to a question from the press or public, the Board member will preface the comment with “I am speaking as an individual and not for the Board of Education. My comments are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect those of other Board members or the Albany Unified School District.” If the Board of Education has made a decision or approved a policy, a Board member may state what the Board of Education’s position is.
- The Superintendent will communicate with members of the Board when issues occur that may entail media interest to explain what is happening and what the Superintendent’s response/message to the community is.
- The Superintendent will communicate with the Board members if it is necessary or appropriate to have a spokesperson for the Board on an issue. In addition, the Superintendent and designated spokesperson for the Board will confer on appropriate talking points.
- If asked to comment on a matter of policy about which the Board has not yet reached a consensus or held a vote, the Superintendent will state only that the matter has not yet been decided by the Board.

## **11) Issue: Board Members' Roles in Public**

**Principles:** Trustees are a resource to the community about pending decisions, issues, and new programs. The final authority rests with the Board as a whole, not individual Board members.

### **Protocols:**

- As new programs and issues are introduced, the Superintendent will prepare talking points for Board members covering the scope of the issue or program.
- The Board and Superintendent will link, when possible, the program and issue to the vision, goals, and strategic plan of the district.
- When a Board member is approached by a community member about a pending decision, issue, or new program, the Board member will provide objective information.
- The Board member will remind the public that the role of the Board and the individual Board members is to make decisions that benefit ALL students and the community.
- The Board member will remind the public that deliberation leading to decision making will take place at open, public Board meetings.
- When the Board has reached a consensus or voted on an issue, any Board member who disagrees with the majority decision will nevertheless work in concert with the majority to implement the decision.
- If asked about the decision of the Board, the Board member should make an effort to convey the Board decision and explain the reasoning of the majority.

## **12) Issue: Acting As a Board Member With a Close Relative In The District**

**Principles:** Board members who have children, grandchildren, or other close relatives enrolled in the district should articulate how their relative's experience in the schools may affect their opinions and judgment with regard to Board decisions. Board members' experience as relatives of students in the district can be helpful in informing the Board as they create policy and make decisions.

### **Protocols:**

- Board members should identify, in open session, any agenda items being discussed and voted upon that may impact the education of their relative(s).
- While Board members have the right to request that their relative's privacy be respected, it is acceptable for other Board members or members of the public to ask a Board member's opinion from a relative's perspective on agenda issues being discussed.
- A Board member should be allowed to recuse him or herself from participation in a vote where his or her relative is directly affected by the issue.

### **13) Issue: Board Members' Participation in Meetings and Other Activities at School Sites**

Principles: The Board protects the right of a parent-board member to participate fully in their children's education, including volunteering in the classroom, being a PTA member, chaperoning field trips, etc. The activities of an involved and supportive parent are available and encouraged for parent-trustees.

Board members are also encouraged to attend meetings at schools such as PTA meetings in their outreach to the community and to better understand what is going on in the schools. Board members may also want, and are encouraged to volunteer to help with school activities to serve the community and learn more about the schools.

#### **Protocols:**

- Annually, at the beginning of the school year, and as needed following Board elections, each Board member will adopt one or more schools in the District, so that every school has such a Board liaison assigned. Board members are encouraged to attend PTA and site council meetings, and other meetings as may be appropriate, at their adopted schools.
- At meetings where discussions about school issues occur, a board member who is present as a Board liaison and not as a member of the organization should primarily be listening to the discussion and learning what community members think. However, when the Board member can provide information about the Board or the District that can inform the discussion, the Board member should do so.
- If a Board member is asked to give an opinion or chooses to give an opinion, s/he should make clear that s/he is speaking as an individual community member, not on behalf of the Board.
- A Board member should explain and clarify decisions the Board has made if asked to, or if relevant to the discussion.
- A Board member who is attending a meeting as a participant rather than as a Board member—for example, a PTA meeting at a school where the Board member has a child—the Board member may participate fully, including voting. However, whenever speaking at such a meeting, the Board member must make it clear whether they are speaking as an individual or as a Board member. Because both situations can occur during the course of a single meeting, the Board member should make this clarification each time they speak.
- A Board member may participate as a volunteer in school activities and may participate in normal conversations as part of the activity. However, when a community member or staff member raises an issue that comes under the purview of the Board, the Board member must make it clear whether they are speaking as an individual or as a Board

member. See also *Issue: Handling Concerns/Complaints From the Public and Staff*.

**14) Issue: Handling Concerns/Complaints From The Public And Staff:  
(Uniform Complaint Policy Required)**

**Principles:** Board members should be responsive to the community and be good listeners. It's important for members of the governance team to be consistent in their responses to staff and the community.

Board members need to stay within their function and not attempt to personally “fix” the problem. There are staff members whose job it is to remedy or deal with student and staff situations. Students and staff members have due process and confidentiality rights that cannot be violated.

Keep in mind that the School Board is potentially the “Court of Last Resort” and members who have been too involved early in a situation may not be able to participate in a final hearing.

**Protocols:**

- When someone expresses a complaint or concern in private to a member of the Board, the member should listen politely and ask clarifying questions as appropriate, remembering that the member of the Board is hearing only one side of the story.
- Then, depending on the severity and nature of the complaint, the member should either refer the individual to the appropriate staff member, such as a teacher or principal, or ask for permission to share the complaint with the Superintendent.
- If no permission is given, the member should suggest that the individual talk with the Superintendent and not share the information. If permission is given, the member should communicate with the Superintendent the conversation s/he had with the individual.
- The Member should make sure the complainant understands the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principal, then district staff) and is aware of any formal forms or policies that might assist them (e.g., the uniform complaint form on the website).
- The Member should clarify that one Board member has no individual authority to fix a problem.
- As a representative of the public, it is important that the Board member invite the person with the complaint to get back to him/her if the issue is not resolved.
- If through conversation a Board member becomes aware of issues of concern to members of the community or staff, the Board member should request to talk to the Superintendent and President or should send the Superintendent and President an email describing the issue. Unless the individuals who raised the issue have given their

permission to do so, the Board member should not include their names when reporting the conversation to the Superintendent and President.

### **15) Issue: Requests for Information**

**Principles:** Board Members should be sensitive to the workload of the staff and as to whether their requests are necessary for effective decision making and to further the goals of the district. Staff should communicate effectively with Board members to clarify the urgency and nature of the Board member's request.

#### **Protocols:**

- Board members will be mindful of the workload of staff and will self-monitor requests to ensure that one member's request will not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals.
- Board members should always direct requests to the Superintendent and ask other staff members for information only if directed to do so by the Superintendent.
- If the Superintendent feels a request is unreasonable or too time consuming, the Superintendent should bring the issue up with the president.
- The president should talk with the Board member to resolve the issue.
- If no resolution can be found (or if the person making the request is the president), then the Board member should request that the question be agendaized using the procedure described in Issue #2, Bringing Up New Ideas or Agenda Items, in this handbook.
- If the majority of the Board agrees that staff should take the time necessary to answer the question, they can direct the Superintendent to do so.
- Answers to information requests will be distributed to all trustees.
- When Board members request information that is not readily available, the Superintendent and/or staff will provide a time frame for when to expect an answer.

### **16) Issue: A District Wide Emergency**

**Principles:** Board Members should be informed and kept updated about the state of emergency by the Superintendent or designee as soon as possible.

#### **Protocol:**

- The Superintendent or designee will inform the president of the Board as soon as possible as to the nature of the emergency and will keep the Board president updated with regard to actions leading to resolution of the emergency. The Board president or designee is responsible for relaying information to all other Board members.

## **17) Issue: District Goals**

**Principles:** The Board provides leadership, sets direction, and instills unity of purpose by reviewing and revising the District's mission and vision statements and by continuously updating District priorities and goals. Priorities and goals are expected to reflect community values and concerns, legal requirements, professional research and literature, and District resources.

### **Protocols:**

- Each year, as noted on the governance calendar, the governance team (the Board and Superintendent) will set District goals and success indicators for the coming year. Annual District goals should reflect the governance team's long-range vision as set out in the District's strategic plan.
- Although there should not be separate Board, Superintendent, and District goals, the governance team should identify specific actions that are the Board's responsibility to implement as well as agreeing on the specific actions to be carried out by the Superintendent in order to achieve the established District goals.
- The Superintendent will create strategies for implementation of the agreed upon District goals and success indicators for those strategies.
- The Superintendent will report to the Board in open session at least twice each year on the District's progress toward those goals with specific reference to the success indicators. At that time, the governance team will evaluate District progress toward the goals and, if necessary, adjust the goals, actions, strategies, and success indicators.

## **18) Issue: Role of Student Board Members**

**Principles:** The Board believes it is important to seek out and consider students' ideas, viewpoints, and reactions to the educational program. In order to provide student input and involvement, the Board includes two student Board members.

### **Protocols:**

- Insofar as is possible, Student Board members are expected to attend all Board meetings except closed sessions. When there is a conflict between student obligations (such as classes or participation in student events such as sports or concerts), the student obligations take precedence and the student Board member is excused from the Board meeting. In that case, the student Board member is responsible for letting the Superintendent and Board President know in advance that the student Board member will not be attending the Board meeting. After missing a meeting, the student Board member should read the minutes and highlights for that meeting so that the student Board member is aware of issues discussed and decisions made. Student Board members may leave the board meeting at the adjourned time for adjournment or after the Student

Board Member Report, if they feel the need to do so.

- Student Board members are seated with the regular Board members. They are expected to participate in discussions and in questioning speakers.
- When the student perspective is especially relevant to a particular discussion, if neither student Board member volunteers an opinion, any other Board member may ask the student Board members to provide that perspective.
  - Student Board members serve as representatives of the student body, and are themselves students. When speaking on matters before the Board, they should state clearly whether a comment or opinion is personal or representing other students.
  - Student Board member duties shall include reaching out and being accessible to students to increase opportunities for student engagement and input, as well as preparing the Student Board Member report at Board meetings.
- Student Board members receive all materials provided to Board members—including agenda packets and communications from staff to the Board—except those related to closed-session items. Student Board members are expected to review agenda backup materials so that they can question or comment on any items of particular interest to students, whether or not they expect to attend the meeting.
- In the interest of avoiding embarrassment or surprises at Board meetings, student Board members should send any questions or comments on agenda items to the Superintendent and Board President in advance of the Board meeting in the same manner as other Board members. Staff should include answers to those questions to all Board members just as they do for other Board questions. Having a question answered in advance does not preclude the student Board member from asking the question in open session so that the public may hear the answer.
- Student Board members may make or second a motion, as any other member, except on matters dealing with employer-employee relations.
- Student Board members may cast preferential votes on all matters before the Board in open session. Preferential votes are recorded in the Board meeting minutes. For roll call votes, student board members shall be called for their preferential votes before the rest of the Board members vote.
- Student Board members may request that items be added to the agenda in the same fashion as other Board members.
- The Superintendent or designee shall provide an orientation for new student Board members, including training in the Brown Act. As necessary, the Superintendent or designee shall, at district expense, provide learning opportunities to student Board members, through trainings, workshops, and conferences, to enhance their knowledge, understanding, and performance of their Board responsibilities.

### **19) Issue: Evaluation of the Superintendent**

**Principles:** The Board uses the Superintendent evaluation as an important leadership tool to focus and align all District efforts. The process should provide an opportunity to acknowledge and commend the Superintendent's accomplishments. The evaluation should support the professional growth of the Superintendent and sustained improvement for the

District and, if necessary, identify areas that need to be addressed by the Superintendent to ensure continuous progress.

**Protocols:**

- The Board will include in the governance calendar an annual evaluation of the Superintendent.
- The Board and Superintendent will agree on an evaluation instrument that includes the Superintendent's actions or strategies in support of District goals, specific success indicators for each action or strategy, and Superintendent governance standards (ref CSBA).
- Prior to the Board's evaluation, the Superintendent will prepare a self-evaluation that 1) discusses progress toward District goals as measured by the agreed success indicators, 2) assesses his/her own performance on governance standards, and 3) reviews any action taken to address the recommendations of the Board from the previous year.
- Board members will individually evaluate the Superintendent's performance, using the agreed evaluation instrument.
- The full Board will hold a closed session without the Superintendent to develop the final evaluation. For expediency, the Board president should, in advance, compile the individual performance reviews from each Trustee to produce a draft evaluation. Minority views may be reflected in the narrative, but the source of individual comments will not be included. The final evaluation must be approved by a majority of the Board.
- The Board president will present the evaluation to the Superintendent in a private meeting.
- The Superintendent will have the opportunity to provide a written response to the evaluation.

**20) Issue: Self-Monitoring of Governance Team Effectiveness**

**Principles:** The governance team should be committed to increasing its effectiveness. In addition, the process of self-monitoring should help raise community awareness about the role of the School Board in the district and the community.

**Protocols:**

- Annually, the Board will conduct a self-evaluation survey such as that published by the California School Boards Association.
- Annually, the Board will review the Governance Handbook.
- Annually, the Board will conduct a survey of management to solicit any feedback they have to the Board with regard to the norms and protocols outlined in the Governance Handbook.

## **21) Issue: Censure Policy**

### **Principles:**

The Board of Education of the Albany Unified School District has a strong commitment to ethical behavior. The public expects and must receive the highest standards of behavior from all of those in public service. In order to be able to enforce conformance to its policies, the Board of Education must have a procedure by which it can censure its own members for violation of the policies or bylaws of the Board of Education. Ethics training, which is encouraged but not required, can be accessed at the following website - <http://oag.ca.gov/ethics>

### **Protocol:**

- Board bylaw BB9005 (a) provides the mechanism by which the Board of Education, acting as a whole, can censure any of its members who violate state or federal laws applicable to the District or for violation of the Board policies or bylaws of the Board of Education.

## **22) Issue: Annual Reorganization of the Board**

**Principles:** It is in the best interest of the Board that its officers be both willing and able to carry out the relevant duties. Effective Board members are not necessarily effective Board presidents, nor do all members have the time needed to provide effective leadership.

### **Protocols:**

- At the first regular meeting in December, the Board elects a president and vice-president.
- Board members should make known at an open meeting before the vote whether they would be willing to retain/assume either office.
- At the reorganization meeting, the Superintendent will preside over the election of the president. The newly elected president will preside over the election of the vice-president.
- Any Board member may nominate any other member, including the current officers, for either office.
- There is no limit to the number of times a member may serve as an officer, nor is there any expectation that all members will serve as officers or automatically rotate into either position.
- The presiding officer shall ask each member whether he or she wishes to nominate someone for the position. The member may nominate him/herself or another member, or

may decline to make a nomination. The nominated member will be asked to accept the nomination.

- If the member declines to accept the nomination, he/she will not be considered to have been nominated. No second is required for a nomination.
- After all nominations have been made, the Board shall take a vote for each nominee. If nominated, a member may vote for him/herself. No member may abstain from voting. In the case of a tie, the presiding officer will hold a runoff vote.

### **23) Issue: Parliamentary Procedures and Conduct of Board Meetings**

**Principles:** It is the purpose of the Board to conduct meetings in a manner that is understandable to the public and other Board members.

#### **Protocols:**

- To allow both trustees and the public to be aware of issues under consideration, the District will make a good-faith effort to publish agendas for Regular Meetings five days in advance of the meeting. (Thursday evening for a meeting scheduled for the following Tuesday.)
- The District will make a good-faith effort to have all presentation materials included in the agenda. If it is not possible to include presentation materials with the agenda, materials will be sent as soon as available to trustees, and posted on the District's website post-meeting for the benefit of all.
- The Board believes that late night meetings deter public participation, can affect the Board's decision-making ability, and are a burden to staff. Regular Board meetings shall be adjourned at 10:00 p.m. unless extended to a specific time determined by a majority of the Board. One extension of no more than sixty minutes is allowed, unless a supermajority of four trustees votes — or if fewer than four trustees are present, all three trustees present vote — for a second extension, which also can be no more than sixty minutes.
- The Board's goal is to limit each Regular Meeting Open Session to no longer than three hours.
- As stated in Board Bylaw 9121, the President of the Board should: (4) "Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference." This bylaw allows each Board member an equal opportunity to communicate (hear and speak) as well the public to hear clearly what the Board expresses in its deliberations.
- Each trustee should limit themselves to five minutes for all of their questions and comments for each agenda item. The Board president may remind any trustee who goes over that they should limit themselves for the purpose of having equitable participation by all trustees.
- The Board meetings shall follow the procedure described in Appendix C.

#### **24) Issue: Restrictions on the Use of Acronyms**

**Principles:** It is the purpose and function of the Board to communicate effectively with the public. Acronyms are understood by those who use the acronym term regularly to describe an organization or function, but the use of an acronym can lead to confusion for those who do not.

#### **Protocol:**

- Restrict the use of acronyms: Request that the acronym be explained when first presented to the public.

#### **25) Issue: Intervention to Assure That the Meeting Guidelines Are Being Followed**

**Principles:** Board members and the public have the right to a safe environment for the deliberations necessary in a meeting. The Meeting Norms will be posted on the Agenda and read at each regular Board Meeting. At times, inappropriate, disrespectful or disruptive behavior may occur at a Board meeting. It is the responsibility of the President of the Board to enforce the adopted meeting norms.

- If, in the opinion of any member of the Board or the Superintendent, a person or group is not adhering to the Meeting Norms, a request can be made to the President to take intervention steps to correct the situation. This request will take precedence over the current business of the Board.
- The President will call for a break and will read the Meeting Norms.
- If in the judgment of the President, Superintendent, or another member of the Board, the situation is overly hostile, demeaning or disruptive the following protocol will be followed in order to insure a safe and productive meeting environment;
  - Option A: The President may call for a break to reduce tension, or to table the item to later in the meeting. No vote of the Board is required.
  - Option B: The President, with a second, can table the item to a future meeting and/or adjourn the meeting if immediate action or discussion on the agenda item is not required. No vote of the Board is required.
  - Option C: If the meeting is being willfully interrupted by a group or groups of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of the meeting infeasible, the Board President may direct the removal of individuals who are interrupting the meeting; if such removal does not resolve the interruption, the Board may clear the room other than news media who are not participating in the disruption, pursuant to Government Code section 54957.9
  - Option D: Immediate Suspension. If a member believes that a point has been reached where Board discussion of an agenda item has become confrontational, or is

in danger of becoming confrontational, and if the member believes that further discussion at that time will be unproductive or likely to lead to further conflict, that member may interrupt the discussion to call for an immediate suspension of that agenda item. If another member seconds that call for immediate suspension, then the matter shall be referred to the Board President for their determination of whether the agenda item requires further discussion or action at that meeting (the Board President may confer with the Superintendent as necessary to make that determination). If the Superintendent and Board President concur that no further discussion or action is required at that meeting, the agenda item shall be continued to a future Board agenda. No vote of the Board is required. An immediate suspension under Option D may only be used one time for a particular agenda item; this option may not be used a second time to further defer consideration of that same item.

## Appendices

**[Appendix A: What New Board Members Need to Learn in Their First 100 Days](#)**

**[Appendix B: Doing the Right Thing](#)**

**[Appendix C: AUSD Rules of Order](#)**