



# COAST UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Governance Handbook

### **Board of Trustees**

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### **Superintendent**

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COAST UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

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## ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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### ***Governance – A Definition***

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

There are four dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. Effective governance tenets encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors that enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in a school district and maintain the focus on improved student learning and achievement. The governance responsibilities of Coast Unified School District are organized into these four elements.

#### **They are:**

1. Governing as a unified team with a common vision
2. Governing within the role of the trustee
3. Creating and sustaining a positive governance culture
4. Protocols and procedures to facilitate governance leadership

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## UNITY OF PURPOSE

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

#### Vision:

Produce healthy, contributing and resilient members of a global society.

#### Mission:

Coast Unified School District will commit their talents and resources everyday to promote and develop tomorrow's leaders today.

#### Core Values:

Respect

Success

Leadership

Opportunity

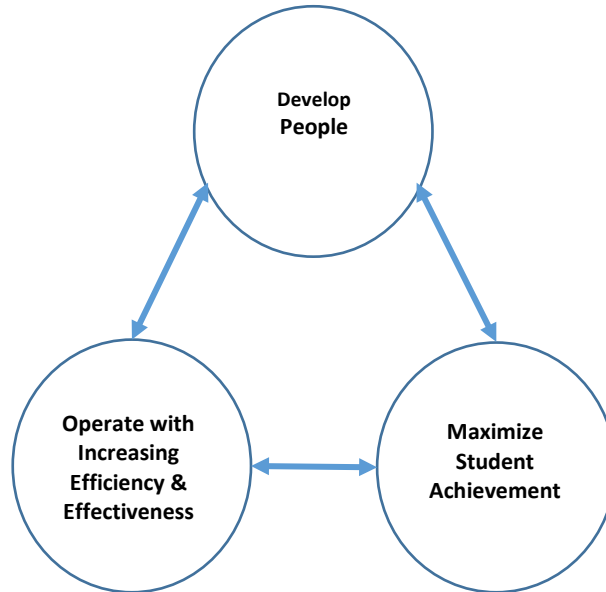
Teamwork

Priorities:

Develop People

Maximize Student Achievement

Operate with Increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness



Strategic Goals

1. To expand students’ communication and critical thinking in literacy
2. To accelerate students’ academic outcomes in mathematics
3. To advance students’ college and career readiness

Graduate Profile

A graduate from Coast Unified School District has opportunities to achieve success in the following areas:

**Academic:**

- To meet or exceed Coast Unified School District graduation requirements
- To be college ready by meeting UC/CSU A-G subject requirements
- To exhibit self-discipline and accountability with educational, vocational and personal goals
- To practice self-management: goal setting, time management, study skills, persistence, task completion and self-direction

**Career Readiness:**

- To explore careers and post-secondary opportunities

- To develop technical skills in an area of career interest
- To possess the skills and attitude to be a productive employee

**Technology:**

- To demonstrate digital citizenship and digital literacy
- To be a responsible user of technology tools and digital information
- To gather, search, research and evaluate electronic information
- To collaborate, connect, produce and share original digital content

**Communication and Critical Thinking:**

- To communicate effectively through listening, speaking and writing
- To express critical, creative and conceptual thinking
- To pursue bi-literacy and bilingualism

**Civic Engagement:**

- To understand how government functions
- To be fully-informed, ethical, responsible, engaged, sympathetic and contributing citizens
- To contribute time and talents to improving the quality of life in their community
- To be environmentally and socially responsible leaders

**Physical and Emotional Wellness:**

- To possess moral integrity, personal motivation and resiliency
- To display behaviors that contribute to physical and mental health
- To be energetic, curious, compassionate and appreciative
- To produce a positive self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy

**Visual and Performing Arts:**

- To gain knowledge of works of art with close observation in order to create and perform
- To expand arts literacy through understanding of the social, political, cultural, scientific and economic contexts of works of art across disciplines
- To develop a lifelong curiosity and appreciation of the arts

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## GOVERNANCE ROLES

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There are important distinctions to be made between the Board’s role and that of the Superintendent and staff. All Board members are equal under the law, and authority rests with the Board as a whole. Direction is given to the Superintendent only at Board meetings through actions taken by the Board. Just as Board members should govern and not manage a school district, Superintendents should not administer a district in isolation from the representatives whom the public has entrusted with the schools. School Board “trustees” are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure that a community’s schools educate the community’s children in accordance with the wishes of the local community.

It is important to understand and respect the separate roles of the Board and Superintendent, yet work together as a “governance team” taking collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture.

**The Governance Team described the ROLE of the Board as...**

*Working in partnership with the Superintendent to provide visionary, strategic transformational leadership for Coast Unified School District by fulfilling the five responsibilities of the Board:*

1. Setting the Direction for the district
2. Establishing an Efficient and Effective Organizational Structure through policies that support enhanced student learning and achievement
3. Ensuring a Supportive Environment within the district
4. Ensuring the Accountability of the district to the community
5. Demonstrating Community Leadership

**The Governance Team described the ROLE of the Superintendent as...**

*Serving as the Chief Executive Officer for the district by supporting student learning and achievement through instructional and non-instructional programs, providing leadership in fulfilling the district’s vision and goals, and supporting the ability of the Board to govern effectively. The Superintendent ...*

1. Maintains clear and effective communication with all stakeholders.
2. Keeps the focus on student learning and achievement
3. Ensures that all district efforts are focused on district vision and goals
4. Implements the decisions of the Board
6. Manages the day-to-day operations of the district

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## PERFORMING GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

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*California School Boards Association defines the five responsibilities of school Boards, as one body, as:*

***Setting the direction for the community’s schools***

- Focusing on student learning
- Assessing needs/ obtain baseline data
- Generating, reviewing or revising setting direction documents (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- Ensuring an appropriate inclusive process is used

- Ensuring these documents are the driving force for all district efforts
- Approving the Local Control and Accountability Plan

***Establishing an effective and efficient structure for the school district by...***

- Employing and supporting the Superintendent; set policy for hiring of other personnel
- Overseeing the development of and adopt policies
- Setting a direction for and adopt the curriculum
- Establishing budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues
- Providing direction for and voting to accept collective bargaining agreements

***Providing support through our behavior and actions by...***

- Acting with professional demeanor that models the district’s beliefs and vision
- Making decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
- Upholding district policies the Board has approved
- Ensuring a positive working climate exists
- Being knowledgeable about district efforts

***Ensuring accountability to the public by...***

- Evaluating the Superintendent
- Monitoring, reviewing and revising policies, and serving as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitoring student achievement and program effectiveness and requiring program changes as indicated
- Monitoring and adjusting district finances as necessary
- Monitoring the collective bargaining process
- Developing and implementing Board self-evaluation

***Demonstrating community leadership***

- Speaking with a common voice about district priorities, goals and issues
- Engaging and involving the community in district schools and activities
- Communicating clear information about policies, programs and fiscal condition
- Educating the community and the media about the issues facing the district and public education
- Advocating for students, district programs and public education to the general public, the community, and local, state and national leaders

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## **GOVERNANCE CULTURE**

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The community elects school Board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, and the district Superintendent translates all efforts into action. To be effective, it is vital that the Board and Superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communication. The Superintendent and trustees agree on these key elements:

**Coast USD Meeting Guidelines:**

***We agree to...***

- Be firm and decisive on issues

- Be open to, and respectful of, the ideas of others
- Be responsible to the team – before, during and after the meetings
- Avoid hidden agendas – put everything on the table
- Work toward the future – learn from the past
- Keep the focus on the best interest of the students.

**The Board supports the Superintendent’s ability to fulfill his/her responsibilities by:**

- *Providing support, trust, respect and honesty in their interactions*
- *Being prepared for Board meetings and asking questions prior to the meetings*
- *Respecting confidentiality*
- *Practicing the “no surprises” rule at all times*
- *Utilizing the chain of command and Board protocols regarding staff, parent or community concerns*
- *Respecting and recognizing staff work*
- *Staying in their role*
- *Informing the Superintendent ahead of time when planning to visit schools or meet with employees*

**The Superintendent supports the Board’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities by:**

- *Providing transparency and making sure all Board members are informed*
- *Providing multi-levels of communication*
- *Offering a balance of perspectives – and pros and cons*
- *Practicing the “no surprises” rule at all times*
- *Collaborating and communicating effectively with stakeholders*
- *Maintaining a formal, respectful demeanor*
- *Providing expertise, creative problem-solving and a variety of options*

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## **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES**

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To effectively meet district challenges, the Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team. The following protocols were developed to support and promote the effectiveness of the governance team and to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among Board members, the Superintendent, district staff, students, and the community. The protocols were developed for and by the members of the governance team, and may be modified over time as needed.



## **A Vision for the Governance Team**

The Board of Trustees and the Superintendent of Coast Unified School District is a dedicated team of caring individuals who base their work together on trust. We are committed to providing a world-class education for all students. We implement policies and procedures to create an environment for every student's path to success.

We develop goals, take actions to achieve them, and hold ourselves, and our staff, accountable for results. We are committed to excellence and to having the highest quality staff to achieve our goals. We will support our decisions following healthy discussions around issues. We believe in the strengths of our community, our staff, our students, and our families.

## **Governance Team Protocols**

### **Communications**

1. The Superintendent and Board members commit to open dialogue with one another in order to avoid surprises to the governance team and staff.
2. The Superintendent will provide relevant, timely and thorough information to Board members through a weekly update.
3. In order to ensure that all Board members receive the same information and to keep the Superintendent informed of Board members' questions and concerns, requests for information should come to the Superintendent's Office. The Board member will receive the information and it will also be provided to the other members through a weekly update or other communication.
4. The Superintendent can be reached by email, cell phone or a message via text if a Board member needs to reach the Superintendent.
5. The Board understands the distinction between Board and staff roles and will refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.
6. The Superintendent will make an effort to meet at least monthly with individual Board members to discuss items of mutual interest and concern.

### **Maintaining Confidentiality**

1. The Board, Superintendent and Cabinet members agree to maintain the confidentiality of all closed session and privileged communication as required by Education Code. Such matters relate to personnel issues, litigations, real property negotiations, and labor negotiations.
2. Board members should address concerns that may arise to the Superintendent and not to individual staff members.
3. Board members will not personally advocate for an individual's hiring or promotion.
4. The Board will provide clear parameters to the district's negotiation team members and will not address issues of negotiations with employee bargaining unit members.

### **Board Member Role in Public**

1. Board members visiting a school will inform the Superintendent and principal in advance.
2. Board members will be introduced at all school and district events, unless they are attending as a parent or spectator.
3. Board members will contact the Superintendent should the media contact them.
4. Individual Board members represent the district in an official capacity only when appointed by the Board in that capacity.
5. Board members will not serve on district committees unless appointed by the Board, which makes the committee subject to the Brown Act.

### **Handling Concerns**

1. The Board and Superintendent are committed to having parent and/or staff concerns handled at the lowest possible level, where those involved in the issue can resolve the matter. Board members should not solicit information from staff regarding other staff members.
2. Board members will listen to and relay any concern to the Superintendent and will not remain directly involved in the complaint process.
3. Board members will refer parent or staff concerns to the Superintendent, and the Superintendent will investigate the concern in a timely manner, respond and communicate back to the complainant and the Board member.
4. A Board member forwarding a complaint will not be perceived as endorsing the complaint.

### **Prior to Board Meetings**

1. Board members will thoroughly read materials before the Board meeting and contact the Superintendent with any questions they have on the agenda 24 hours before the meeting.
2. Answers to Board member's questions will be answered in advance of the Board meeting and provided to all Board members prior to the meeting.
3. Board members will not communicate regarding items that the Board will be acting on with more than one other Board member.
4. Board members will make an effort to notify the Superintendent in advance of their intent to remove an item from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration.
5. Board members may request that an issue be agendaized by making a request to the Board president or Superintendent. The item will be placed on the agenda according to the bylaws and after giving staff time to prepare for the item.
6. When a high profile item is being considered by the Board, any disagreements or concerns should be discussed with the Superintendent before the meeting.

## **Board Meetings**

1. Individual Board members will be acknowledged by the Board President prior to making a comment.
2. Each Board member will respect the right of other Board members to hold an opposing point of view and, following a Board vote, will support the decision made by the Board.
3. Board members will not engage with audience members unless they are speaking from the podium having requested to address the Board.
4. Board members agree that it is a courtesy to each other and to the full Board to share the reason for a dissenting vote during deliberation.
5. All team members will be respectful of each other and recognize the impact of comments made in public toward one another.
6. The Superintendent or a Board member should not bring a matter to a public meeting that is a surprise to the team.
7. Study sessions will be developed throughout the year on issues that require extensive discussion.
8. Board and management team members will be fully engaged at all meetings and avoid electronic or other distractions not related to the meeting.
9. Board members will attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings and study sessions unless there are extenuating circumstances.
10. The individual Board member has the opportunity to share a question or concern in the meeting on an agenda item he/she has discussed with the superintendent prior to the meeting.
11. No Board member may speak for another Board member unless the Board member provides a written proxy on the subject under discussion.