



# **Governance Team Policy Handbook**

**Board Approved: February 23, 2017  
Revision Approved June 14, 2018**

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## INTRODUCTION

The members of the Board of Education and the superintendent have mutually agreed to collaboratively conduct the business of the district based on the California School Boards Association (CSBA) Governance Team model, in which the board members and superintendent work within their roles and responsibilities for the benefit of all students.

The Governance Team seeks to establish agreed upon and clearly understood operational and procedural practices for both the current and future Governance Teams, in order to support and maintain high functioning, effective and efficient teams that benefit the students, their families, the staff, and the community of the Castro Valley Unified School District (CVUSD). This *Handbook* supports and reinforces the practices of the Governance Team and are aligned with Board Bylaws (BB), Board Policies (BPs), Administrative Regulations (ARs), Educational Code and Government Code

This *Handbook* will also assist and support the smooth transition of new board members and superintendents as effective members of the Governance Team as well as serve as a resource for reviewing protocols, policies and Bylaws for the current Governance Team.

It is the responsibility of the board president to schedule an annual review of this *Handbook* by the Governance Team to ensure that it remains a viable and useful document to the operation of the Governance Team (BB 9400).

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# UNITY OF PURPOSE

## *STRATEGIC PLAN*

### *Mission*

In partnership with the community, Castro Valley Unified School District educates students in a learning environment that is safe, nurturing and culturally responsive. Students are guided by excellent inspired staff, utilizing innovative instruction, curricula and technology.

A board member will read the mission at the start of every regular board meeting.

### *Vision*

Castro Valley Unified School District educates students to become adaptable, critical thinkers who explore their passions and contribute as active members of our evolving world.

### *Core Values*

- Student success is the responsibility of all.
- We nurture the gifts and talents of all students.
- Our schools are safe spaces for all.
- Our commitment to equity ensures that our educational system is responsive to all students regardless of personal and social circumstances.
- All students, families, and staff are valued and treated with respect and dignity.
- **ALL means ALL.**

### *Priorities*

#### **Academic**

- All CVUSD students will graduate from high school prepared for college with a career plan.
- Every third grader will read at or above grade level.
- Every student will be supported to meet or exceed grade level expectations.
- All students will have access to and utilize technology safely and responsibly to collaborate, communicate, and seek knowledge relevant to our evolving world.
- We will maximize learning opportunities for all grade levels.

#### **Social/Emotional**

- Every student will feel safe and valued in our schools.
- Every student will have at least one staff member whom they identify as their advocate.

#### **Learning Environment**

- All staff will embed culturally responsive, research based, effective practices in their daily work.
- CVUSD will recruit and retain diverse highly qualified professionals to serve and support students, staff and parents.
- CVUSD is committed to ongoing collaborative conversations.

#### **Fiscal**

- All fiscal decisions will support the mission and vision of our school district.
- CVUSD will be fiscally prudent and build and maintain responsible reserves to protect our students.

Board Approved: April 28, 2016 & May 12, 2016

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## GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

The Castro Valley Board of Education is an active, participating member of the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and has formally adopted the *Professional Governance Standards for School Boards* (See Governance Standards Section A) as well as the *Superintendent Governance Standards* (See Governance Standards Section B) developed by CSBA and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). Board Bylaw 9005 further defines the Governance Standards. Each member of the Governance Team is expected to agree and adhere to the Professional Governance Standards.

The board will use these *Professional Governance Standards for School Boards* to guide its annual self-evaluation (BB 9400) and the *Superintendent Governance Standards* as part of the superintendent's annual evaluation (BP 2140).

The Governance Team also supports and operates under the CSBA Effective Governance System model (See Governance Standards Section C).

The board supports the active participation of board members in both the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and the Alameda County School Boards Association (ACSBA). At the Board's Annual Organizational Meeting (BB 9100), the board will appoint a board representative and alternate representative to the ACSBA (BB 9140). The board will consider nominating members for the CSBA Delegate Assembly, whenever there is an open position.

Many of the documents in this *Handbook* have been adapted from CSBA's *Maximizing School Board Leadership* curriculum. CSBA is currently revising the Masters in Governance (MIG) program; therefore sections of this *Handbook* will be updated as new materials are made available by CSBA.

## BOARD BYLAWS

The Board of Education adopts all Board Policies (BP) and reviews all Administrative Regulations (AR). Adopted BPs along with ARs are maintained on the district website <http://gamutonline.net/district/castrovalley/>. The BPs and ARs are divided into the following series:

- 0000 - Philosophy, Goals, Objectives and Comprehensive Plans
- 1000 - Community Relations
- 2000 - Administration
- 3000 - Business and Noninstructional Operations
- 4000 - Personnel
- 5000 - Students
- 6000 - Instruction
- 7000 - Facilities
- 9000 - Board Bylaws

The Board of Education operates and conducts its business is outlined in the 9000 Series and are referred to as Board Bylaws.

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## ROLES OF THE BOARD

The Board of Education represents the community in the conduct of public education within the Castro Valley Unified School District. The Board's specific responsibilities include establishing a vision for the schools, setting policy and allocating resources to realize that vision, monitoring progress towards that vision, and reporting to the community. Authority for these responsibilities is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually.

### *Establishing the Vision*

The board establishes the district's vision and, therefore, its direction. It represents all of the various constituencies within the district, and therefore, it is the one entity within the district that must see the big picture and align all of its parts.

A vision is translated into a strategic plan by engaging input from all stakeholders. The strategic plan is the roadmap for the current and future programs and should be a vital, living document. The plan should be frequently evaluated and modified if necessary. This information is a regular part of the board's plan of work.

The vision of the district also provides the board with the critical guidance for decision making. Budget, curriculum and staffing will be determined by adhering to the strategic plan. This process will allow transparency for the district, staff and community as they will be able to understand the rationale for board decisions.

### *Allocating Resources*

The board allocates resources to support the vision and strategic plan to best facilitate student achievement. The Board is the first and last step in determining funding for the district. In consultation with the superintendent and district staff, it first gives guidance for priorities for the budget, and the board approves the final budget.

It also establishes policies for the distribution of all other resources, such as personnel and facilities. Frequent monitoring of these policies happens throughout the year at Board meetings.

### *Ensuring Accountability*

It is the obligation of the board to hold all parts of the district, including itself, accountable for the adherence to the vision, mission and strategic plan of the district. The board is responsible for frequent self-evaluations and reviews on direction with the LCAP, LCFF and other measures. These occur regularly at meetings with updates and data provided by staff.

The board evaluates the superintendent yearly. This evaluation includes a review of the accountability of the individual to the goals and expectations jointly established at the beginning of the school year.

### *Community Leadership*

The board has a responsibility to communicate fully and often with the community. The community should be included and involved in understanding the workings and procedures within CVUSD to understand board actions.

The board's role in community leadership begins with efforts to provide a quality educational program and create a positive climate in the district. Community leadership is based on long-term thinking about

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the needs of schools and the direction set forth in the district's vision. It is the board's role to ensure that the community has accurate information. Effective communication increases the public's knowledge and understanding of plans for meaningful action to improve schools. Community members need to know that the board is listening to them, cares about their opinions and will be responsive.

Effective community leadership also requires paying attention to the demeanor in the board room and the community. Board members must recognize that they are "always board members" and cannot separate their private and public images. The behavior of board members affects the board's credibility, which affects the support the community has for the district's schools.

To fulfill the board's role in community leadership, the board:

- builds and maintains community awareness and support by working to provide a quality education program, being responsive to the concerns and interests of the community, and encouraging active community involvement in the schools;
- establishes effective community communications systems;
- establishes sound media relations practices;
- engages in effective governmental relations and advocacy efforts; and
- ensures accountability for community leadership efforts.

### *Collective Bargaining*

The Board strongly supports the right of its employees to collective bargaining and recognizing its own responsibility to ensure the financial stability of the district. The Board's overarching interests in collective-bargaining are to:

- Provide high- quality education for all students
- Make progress toward achieving the district's vision
- Fulfill all legal requirements concerning the education of the students
- Represent the community
- Recruit and retain a high-quality staff
- Oversee financial and human resources
- Garner and maintain the goodwill and support of the community.

To fulfill the board's role in collective bargaining, the board

- understands the collective-bargaining process and becomes knowledgeable about the history of negotiations in the district;
- understands the different approaches to negotiations;
- understands the programmatic and fiscal implications of collective-bargaining contracts;
- understands the importance of an effective communications plan and see that one is in place;
- creates a framework for negotiations by determining the district's approach to bargaining;
- Provides direction for initial collective-bargaining proposals by reviewing staff recommendations, establishing specific collective-bargaining goals, priorities, positions or interests, and parameters that will help achieve the district's vision
- monitors contract negotiations and continues to provide policy direction throughout the process;
- provides leadership if there is an impasse or strike;
- votes on acceptance of the contract; and
- monitors administration of the contract and plan for future negotiations.

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### *Effective and Efficient Decision-Making Process*

The Board of Education's role is to enhance the academic achievement of the students. To this end, they must function at a high level of effectiveness and efficiency. This requires that the board maintain a focus on students and weigh the impact on students with each and every decision.

The decision-making process must be marked by respectful conversation and input of relevant data and information. Board members will engage in civil discourse and allow all perspectives to be heard from the community and the governance team. Differing ideas will be shared prior to the vote so that all members of the team are knowledgeable with the same information. Once a majority decision is reached, it will be supported by all members of the team.

The Board works with the superintendent as a governance team. It is also important that the members of the governance team understand and adhere to their specific roles. The board sets policy but does not play a role implementing that policy. In turn, the superintendent implements the policies and ensures that questions involving policy are referred to the board for consideration. The superintendent also handles all communications and contacts involving personnel. Issues raised to board members will be communicated to the superintendent as quickly as possible. The superintendent will provide data and details to all board members as appropriate.

Board members will follow board policy, board protocols, consensus agreements and understandings that are outlined in the *Governance Team Policy Handbook*. This will allow the team to function optimally and create the trust necessary to have difficult conversations. Consistency and reliable governance will increase the team's efficiency and effectiveness.

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# PROTOCOLS OF THE GOVERNANCE TEAM

Members of the Board of Education need not be educational experts, but need to understand and be committed to effective governance. Establishing well-defined protocols that are agreed to and understood by all members of the Governance Team is critical to maintaining effectiveness and efficiency. In addition to the Board Bylaws (BB), Board Policies (BPs), Administrative Regulations (ARs), Education Code and Government Code, these protocols include the formal, agreed upon and understood operational procedures that will create an effective and efficient Governance Team. Establishing, reviewing, revising and institutionalizing these protocols assures that each board member has a clear understanding of how the Governance Team conducts business and has an equal opportunity to affect the governing process.

These protocols should be regularly reviewed, discussed and revised by the entire Governance Team at a regular board meeting or a board study session with sufficient time dedicated to the process.

## *Goals and Expectations*

**Goal 1: To recognize that the integrity of the district’s educational program is dependent upon the professional and responsible manner in which members of the Governance Team and the Governance Team as a whole collectively fulfill the governance roles and responsibilities (BB 9000).**

### Expectations:

- Each member of the Governance Team accepts the responsibility to dedicate the necessary time and effort to being effective leaders of the community’s schools by fully participating in governance activities.
- Each member of the Governance Team commits to professional expectations including adherence to protocols and procedures; timeliness in responding to requests; and, advanced preparation for meetings, including appropriate contact with staff for clarification prior to the meeting.

**Goal 2: To engage in positive, collaborative decision-making that includes clear and open communication of each member’s analysis of issues; and**

**To collaboratively evaluate all policy decisions to ensure that the decisions reflect the mission of the district and are focused on student learning and achievement.**

### Expectations:

- All interactions of the Governance Team shall be respectful and conducted in an appropriate and positive manner.
- All members of the Governance Team will be prepared for and actively participate in discussions and decisions.
- The superintendent will provide all board members with sufficient information in a timely manner in order to make effective decisions.
- The board will “set policy” and the superintendent will “implement policy.”
- Each board member brings unique skills, values and beliefs to the board table. The best possible decisions are likely when all members of the team have been part of the discussion and everyone is operating within the same parameters. The board welcomes

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all viewpoints, thus ensuring greater community and staff acceptance of board decisions.

- Board members do not have different values; they have different value priorities. Since there are rarely single-value problems, they seek the best rather than the right solution.
- An individual board member is entitled to his/her opinion/point of view, but once the board establishes a policy or sets the direction, all board members are expected to support the policy and/or board direction.
  - 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.
  - This 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.
- If misunderstandings arise, team members are expected to lead by example and bring up the issue one on one and ask for clarification prior to bringing up the issue in a public forum.

**Goal 3: To strengthen each board member’s commitment to increase his/her knowledge and skills regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Governance Team, and educational issues.**

**Expectations:**

- Members of the Governance Team are committed to both individual and team professional growth and will pursue opportunities to strengthen the knowledge and skills of each member and the team through involvement with district, community, county and state professional development opportunities.
- The Governance Team will use third-party facilitators (e.g., CSBA consultants) to assist with board workshops, study sessions and annual board goal setting and evaluation.
- Prior to serving as the board president or vice-president/clerk, board members shall have completed the California School Boards Association (CSBA) Masters in Governance program or its equivalent (BB 9100).

**Goal 4: To communicate openly, factually and honestly through appropriate communication channels to address questions, concerns and/or requests for information to ensure that there are no unwarranted surprises for any member of the team (“no surprise rule”).**

**Expectations:**

- Each member of the Governance Team shall communicate in timely and professional manner with other members while adhering to the Brown Act (e.g., no serial communication).
- Each member of the Governance Team agrees to debate the issues, not the individual, and to explain his or her votes at board meetings.
- Each member of the Governance Team agrees to the “no surprises” rule – requesting and sharing information in advance with team members while adhering to the Brown Act.

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- The superintendent will provide all members of the Governance Team with the same information on district-related issues.
  - The superintendent will inform the board of pertinent activities of the district. If it's likely to be in the media, the board should know about it. The superintendent will communicate routine matters to the board on a regular basis.
  - During crisis situations, the superintendent will send out an email/text or attempt to reach board members via telephone beginning with the board president if necessary.
  - Each member of the Governance Team commits to listening to his/her district voicemail at least once a day. The use of voice mail shall be used in accordance with the Brown Act. (Note: All voice mails are archived under the law.). Each member of the Governance Team commits to reading his/her district email at least once a day.
    - The district will provide each board member with a district email account.
    - The district will establish an auto-reply message for board members.
    - Board members may respond to individual emails, but under the Brown Act will not copy other board members, except the board president.

**Goal 5: To identify and offer ongoing support for and build partnerships with organizations and public agencies that provide funding for educational purposes.**

**Expectations:**

- The Governance Team recognizes and supports the need to actively investigate all sources of additional funding and supports efforts to build partnerships that support the district mission.
- Each member of the Governance Team will be actively involved in district and community organizations and partnerships that support the mission of the district.
- Each member of the Governance Team will provide a report at the next regular board meeting whenever the member has formally represented the board at a meeting of another organization.

**Goal 6: To actively and positively promote the district throughout the community.**

**Expectation:**

- All members of the Governance Team shall initiate and respond to networking and communication both within and outside of the district and community.

**Goal 7: To actively, integrate a new board member into the Governance Team.**

**Expectations:**

- Prior to the election or appointment of a new board member, the superintendent will hold an informational meeting with all candidates/applicants of the board seat to review the roles and responsibilities of a board member.
- Upon election or appointment of a new board member, the board president and Superintendent will meet with the new member to provide an orientation to the roles and responsibilities of a board member, and to review this Handbook.
- The superintendent and staff will be available to meet with a new board member to review policies, procedures and practices.
- All new board members are expected to participate as soon as possible in CSBA training for new board members.

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## CONSENSUS AGREEMENTS and UNDERSTANDINGS

Based on the Goals and Expectations, the Governance Team has agreed to the following Agreements and Understandings to ensure effectiveness and efficiency as a team:

Each member of the Governance Team agrees to:

1. Arrive ten (10) minutes prior to the start of Closed Session in order to sign documents.
2. Request permission from the board president in advance to be excused from a board meeting. (BB 9250)
  - a. At the following Regular board meeting, the board will adopt a resolution excusing the board member. Education Code § 35120.9(c)
3. Allow only one person at a time to speak during board discussion. Sidebar conversations are strongly discouraged.
  - a. Members will wait until recognized by the board president to speak.
  - b. Members will not engage in sidebar conversations.
  - c. If a board member is not seen by the board president, the board member will get the attention of the superintendent or vice president who will inform the president.
4. Refrain from using any electronic devices for personal use during the board meeting. Computers are solely used for reviewing board packets in part with the board presentation and/or discussions.
5. Listen to understand, give each idea its full consideration and suspend judgment until all points of view have been expressed.
6. Be open to the ideas of others and paraphrase for understanding.
7. Respect differences while seeking common ground.
8. Express interests without attacking or blaming others, and address process – not personalities, while maintaining a civil discourse with the Governance Team and all stakeholders.
9. Take time to explain “No” votes prior to the vote.
10. Keep the focus on the best interests of the students.
11. Use meeting time wisely and take individual responsibility for the success of each meeting.
12. Will contact staff and superintendent with questions prior to the board meeting, whenever possible. Staff will respond to questions prior to the board meeting to allow the board time to review the information. Staff will make every effort to provide information to the board in a timely fashion prior to the board meeting. (i.e., the “no surprises” rule).
13. Will check district voicemail and email at least once per day.

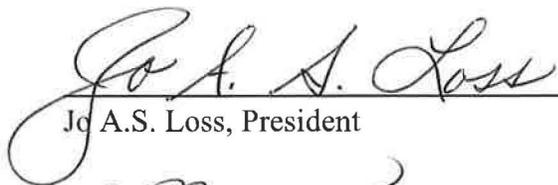
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- a. If a member of the Governance Team will not be able to check voice and email for three or more days, the individual will notify the other members of the team.
14. Work towards the future while learning from the past.
  15. Participate in the superintendent's annual evaluation by completing the evaluation form, providing additional input to the board president as part of the process and participate in the discussions regarding the final evaluation.
    - a. The board president will establish the timeline for and coordinate the evaluation process in order to complete the evaluation process by the last regular board meeting in June.
    - b. At least three (3) board members must support anything included in the superintendent's annual evaluation
    - c. The board president will meet with the superintendent to review the annual evaluation with the superintendent.
  16. Each member will re-read both the Governance Handbook and the 9000 Board Bylaws at least once each year.

Additionally, the Governance Team has agreed to the following Agreements and Understanding:

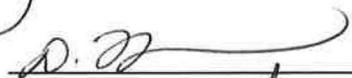
17. Board mail and other board materials will be distributed at the end of Open Session.
18. The superintendent will provide the board members with the board packet the Friday before the board meeting or notify board members of any delay.
19. Board members will email the board president and superintendent if any issues/concerns arise during the board meeting that cannot or should not be discussed in public.
  - a. The board president will work with the superintendent to follow-up on any issues identified and/or requests for information.
20. The Governance Team will establish a yearly schedule of visits to PTAs/Parent Clubs, and Parent Leadership Council.
  - a. There will be one board member per visit.
  - b. There will be an equal distribution of visits per board member, wherever possible.
  - c. Board members will provide a brief report of the visit at the next regular board meeting.
21. All requests to place an item on a board agenda or provide information that requires additional work by staff requires the support of at least three (3) board members.
  - a. Board members can request an item be placed on the board agenda during the end of the board meeting comments and reports. If three board members agree, the item will be placed on a future agenda.
22. When information is requested by a board member, the superintendent will provide the requested information to all board members.
23. The superintendent will provide all board members with an annual report on the status of all expelled students.

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24. All members of the Governance Team are expected to attend the middle school promotions and the high school graduations.
    - a. A student graduating during the year has the option of receiving their diploma at a regular board meeting.
  25. All members of the Governance Team are expected to attend board-conducted expulsion appeal hearings. Any request to be excused from an expulsion hearing shall be made to the board president.
  26. At the Annual Organizational meeting, the board will appoint board representatives and alternates to district, county, state, and community organizations.
    - a. Representatives of these organizations will provide a summary report at the next regular board meeting.
    - b. As appropriate, decisions by these organizations, especially organizations with Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the district should be reviewed with the Governance Team at a regular board meeting.
    - c. If the appointed representative is unable to attend the meeting, the representative will contact the alternate representative and provide the alternate with all necessary information as well as inform the board president and the president/chair of the organization that the alternate representative will be representing the district.
  27. Attendance at a conference/workshop not listed in the Board Bylaws must be approved in advance by the board president in order to be reimbursed for the cost of the conference/workshop.
  28. The board president will be the official board contact person for any media contacts. All other board members shall refer contacts to the board president.
  29. In order to ensure fairness during board deliberations, board members will seek permission to speak. The president (or vice president) shall maintain a list of members who desire the floor, calling on individuals in turn.
  30. A Board member may respond, as appropriate, to an electronic communication received from a member of the community and should make clear that his/her response does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board as a whole. Any complaint or request for information should be forwarded to the Superintendent in accordance with Board bylaws and protocols.
    - a. While a board member may respond appropriately to a group email, emails requesting information or appearing controversial should be forwarded to the board president and superintendent. They will determine the appropriate response for the Governance Team. Once the superintendent and/or board president has responded they will forward a copy of the response to the Governance Team for information.

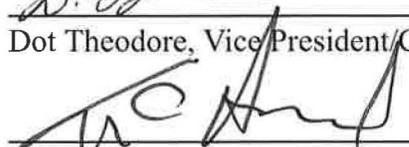
We have reviewed and agreed to the aforementioned governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Castro Valley Unified District Board of Education, staff, students and the community. We shall review and renew these agreements annually.

  
Jo A.S. Loss, President

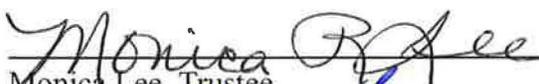
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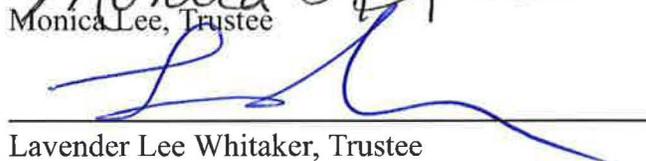
6.28.18  
Date

  
Gary Howard, Trustee

6/28/18  
Date

  
Monica Lee, Trustee

6/28/18  
Date

  
Lavender Lee Whitaker, Trustee

6/28/18  
Date