



Eastside Union School District
Governance Handbook 2025

Board of Trustees

Mrs. Julie A. Bookman, President

Ms. Lenzie L. Huffmon, Vice President

Ms. Doretta N. Thompson, Clerk

Mr. Joseph “Joe” Pincetich, Member

Mr. Shawn M. Cannon II, Member

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Jezelle A. Fullwood

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VISION

“Everyone contributes, every student achieves.”

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a rigorous education in a safe, inclusive learning environment with caring, passionate professionals who prepare students to reach their highest potential.

CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

Student Success: Every student is provided tremendous opportunities to learn, to achieve, and to reach the highest potential and all staff members are focused on that success.

Expectations: Student, parent, staff and community expectations are well-defined and shared. Our community members are supported in order to achieve these high expectations.

Collaboration and Teamwork: We work collaboratively, as a team, to ensure our students succeed in a supportive climate. Key decisions are informed by stakeholder feedback and input. We celebrate our successes!

Respect and Trust: Communication and interaction in our community are guided by mutual respect, trust, integrity and support.

Districtwide Safety and Security: Our schools and district sites operate effectively to ensure the safety and security of our students, families, staff and all community members.

Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency: Fiscal and human resources are well-managed and prioritized to meet our instructional and operational goals.

Improvement and Monitoring: Community members work as a team to review our progress, celebrate our successes and use data to address our changing needs.

Equity: Stakeholders are entitled to access and opportunities in a bias-free, socially and emotionally supportive environment for all to be successful.

DISTRICT GOALS

- Goal 1:** Improve teaching for student learning, achievement, and success
- Goal 2:** Promote a safe and caring learning environment
- Goal 3:** Foster a team commitment
- Goal 4:** Operate with increasing efficiency and effectiveness
- Goal 5:** Improve outcomes for low-performing student groups

TRUSTEE GOVERNANCE MINDSET:

The Board of Trustees recognize and understand to be effective to do the job of governing, all trustees have to be leaders working together toward the same goals. This understanding is governance mindset. The Board determined that the following characteristics describe a Trustee with a governance mindset:

Systems Thinking

- Achieve by understanding how decisions impact others, avoid unacceptable outcomes
- Familiarize ourselves of how other systems (and broader society) impact the educational system
- Direct resources to achieve the mission, vision, goals (from macro viewpoint)
- Take actions that will most positively influence the system as a whole
- Understand everything is connected and that school districts are complex systems

Strategic Focus

- Focus our energy on strategic oversight
- Willingness to engage in complex education issues in a real, authentic manner
- Provide support from a strategic context rather than tactical or administrative

Deep Learning

- Commit to understand the challenges facing the students we serve
- Commit to understand major innovations and rapidly changing teaching and learning
- Understand the global competencies for learning
- Open dialogue to acquire access to quality data and evidence by asking questions and seeking the right information

Manner

- Discussions are conducted in a clear, concise, and purposeful manner
- Empathetic listening with intent to understand the speaker's point of view
- Manner can/will change the perception of your message (tone, body language)
- Be conscientious and self-aware of the context of our messages we are delivering in public

SUPERINTENDENT GOVERNANCE MINDSET:

It's not just high-performing trustees who govern with a well-developed governance mindset; effective superintendents do so as well. Highly successful superintendents act in a way that reinforces their recognition of governance as both a necessity and an asset to district-wide coherence. The Trustees and Superintendent determined that the following characteristics describe a superintendent that reinforces a governance mindset:

Systems Thinking

- Makes the district-wide connections and impacts visible to the board.
- Helps keep the board's focus on district-wide impacts as part of an integrated education program rather than only on single, narrow interests.

Strategic Focus

- Facilitates open, clear discussions about the administration-governance relationship.
- Engages the board in the tough discussions over difficult issues.
- Structures meeting agendas around strategic goals rather than operational issues.

Deep Learning

- Provides high quality data that promotes quality decision making by trustees possible.
- Provides the most accurate, high quality information as one of the highest priorities.
- Identifies and provides quality data and information in supporting the rapidly changing needs of the district.

Manner

- Models the behavior and demeanor expected from trustees and staff.
- Supports the establishment of a governance infrastructure that includes adopted norms and protocols.
- Supports trustees to maintain focus on agreed upon norms and behaviors.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Role of the Board and Superintendent:

School board “trustees” are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure that the district schools educate the children in consideration of the interests of the local community. The role of the School Board is to govern the school district.

The superintendent is hired by the school board to provide the professional expertise in the day-to-day operations of the district. The role of the Superintendent is:

1. To work with the school board to develop an effective governance leadership team.
2. To serve as the chief executive officer for the school district.

Governance Responsibilities of the Board

Set Strategic Direction:

- Focusing on and supporting the non-negotiable goals for effective instruction, student achievement and well-being.
- Adopting well-developed, easily understood, measurable strategic goals and success indicators designed to achieve our mission, vision, and core values.
- Ensuring an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop these documents and they are the driving force for all district efforts.
- Maintaining a long-term focus while comprehending the rapidly changing dynamic world we live in.

Policy Direction and Approval:

- Leveraging program plans and frameworks to keep the district focused on achieving mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals.
- Approving budget priorities, adopting the budget, and tracking implementation plans as a systems review and keeping the district focused on the strategic agenda.
- Adopting and approving a wide variety of program plans and frameworks such as:
 - Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)
 - Collective Bargaining Agreements
 - Facilities Plan
 - Transportation Plan
 - Communications Plan
 - Board Policy Updates

Stewardship and Support:

- Creating and supporting a positive organizational culture in the district by:
 - Acting with professional demeanor that models the board-adopted norms and protocols.
 - Making decisions and providing resources that support board-adopted priorities and goals.
 - Standing by decisions made by the board.
 - Upholding board-approved district policies.
 - Ensuring a positive personnel climate exists.
 - Celebrating board progress in student learning, while identifying lack of progress as an area of concern and action.

Oversight and Accountability:

- Working together with the superintendent to ensure that individual and collective responsibility is built into the culture of the district.
- Ensuring the quality of information in order to make strategic decisions to support our strategic goals.
- Monitoring student achievement and program effectiveness and requiring program changes as indicated.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of policies adopted by the board.
- Implementing a superintendent and board evaluation system.

Community Leadership Throughout:

- 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 conditions of the district.
- Educating the community and the media about issues facing the district and public education.
- Advocating for children, district programs and public education to the general public, community, and local, state and national leaders.

GOVERNANCE CULTURE

The Board of Trustees serves as a model of the collaboration and mutual respect it encourages throughout our system. Our Governance Team believes in a shared belief to support all our students to be successful, meeting their diverse needs, and creating conditions in which all employees are valued and supported. The trustees determined three important processes to assist them in developing the governance infrastructure that is essential to fostering and sustaining a positive governance culture: Meeting Behaviors, Meeting Norms, and Protocols

Meeting Norms

The following Norms are a set of commitments created by the Governance Team to guide behaviors and maximize opportunities for success for formal gatherings.

- We will have solution-based, concise conversations that move towards an established goal of student success and well-being, and we will consider all perspectives before making important decisions.
- We will focus on the task at hand, understand the message and content without regard to the messenger. We will focus on others' assets and capabilities and offer our perspectives in a calm, positive, and professional manner in regard to the work and not the person.
- We will actively and empathetically listen, without interruption, to understand and contribute by being attentive and open-minded.
- We will indicate to the Chair from time to time to comment and wait to do so until called on by the chair. We limit our comments to 3 minutes. The time limit may be altered by the Chair on request of the Board member. At the conclusion of comments, the Board member will yield back any remaining time.
- We will each be responsible for the success of the meeting, contribute equally, address concerns, support majority decisions, and respect minority opinions.
- We will appreciate diversity and acceptance, and we will embrace the diverse experiences of individual trustees.

Meeting Behaviors

- We stay focused on the organization's goals while setting clear goals and accepting accountability for achieving them.
- We stay positive and approach our work with a sense of possibility and positivity.
- We make sure the energy we bring into the room, meeting, or situation is aligned with our core values.
- We are willing to put ourselves out there even though it may not be what others want or understand.

- We choose courage over comfort by fully engaging in conversations that may challenge the status quo or traditional way of doing things and are open to new ideas even when things are going well.
- We are aware of our competencies and limitations, reach out for help when we need it, and don't judge others when they ask for help.
- We show up for meetings on time and well prepared.
- We stay out of comparison and competition with our fellow trustees.

Board Protocols

Board Member Site Visits

Principles:

We believe that site visits are important; they provide Trustees with the opportunity to see the programs that are happening in our schools and help stay informed.

When visiting schools, we need to remember the following:

- Remember that we are always a Trustee. "A Board member whose child is attending a district school should be aware of his/her role as a Board member when interacting with district employees about his/her child. Because his/her position as a Board member may inhibit the performance of school personnel, the Board member should inform the Superintendent before volunteering in his/her child's classroom" (Board Bylaw 9200: Limits of Board Member Authority)
- School principals need to know that we are coming so that we do not catch people off-guard, which can create a sense of mistrust. Notification is respectful to staff and allows Trustees the quality time at the sites that they deserve.
- We need to be respectful to staff.
- We believe that visits should not be disruptive to school staff.
- Remember that what you see is a snapshot.

Protocols:

- We will contact the Superintendent to schedule the visit.
- The Superintendent or designee will then notify the school principal.
- Scheduling then takes place.
- Trustees will sign-in at the office upon arriving at the school.
- The school principal is responsible for the visit.

Handling Concerns/Complaints from the Public

Principles:

Trustees 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. Trustees need to stay within their function and not attempt to personally "fix" the problem (BB 9200). There are staff members whose role it is to remedy 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 involved early in a situation may not be able to participate in a final hearing.

It was agreed that the President will read the statement, as stated on the speaker card, in full at the time of Public Comment.

The following Language was agreed upon:

"Board members should not respond to the speakers either at the time of public comment nor during Board member comments. After each public comment, the Board president thanks the speaker and, if appropriate, directs the superintendent to arrange for follow up on the concern.

Protocols:

- When someone expresses a complaint or concern in private to a Trustee, the Trustee should listen politely and ask clarifying questions as appropriate, remembering that the Trustee is hearing only one side of the story.
- The Trustee 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 Trustee should clarify that "Individual Board members do not have the authority to resolve complaints" per Board Bylaw 9200: Limits of Individual Board Member Authority.
- As a representative of the public, it is important that the Trustee invite the person with the complaint to get back to him/her if the issue is not resolved.
- If through conversation a Trustee becomes aware of issues of concern to members of the community or staff, the Trustee should contact the Superintendent and Board President to explain the issue.

How to Handle Board Member Concerns when Staff Makes Board Meeting Presentations

- Board member clarifying questions that are related to the content of staff presentations are welcome during and after the presentation. Board members' concerns about the presentations and/or about the staff member presenting are to be conveyed directly to the Superintendent in a timely fashion.

Board Member Comments

- At the end of each Board meeting, Board members are welcome to convey observations relevant to his or her role as a Board member. Board members should avoid addressing topics not on the agenda. Board members should strive to be brief, concise and attempt to limit comments to no more than 5 minutes.

Requests for Information

Principles:

It is important for the Board to make well-informed decisions. In order to respond to requests for information and be informed in policy deliberations, it is important for individual Trustees to be knowledgeable and up to date on major issues. Quality information helps the Board move forward.

It is important that individual Trustee requests not burden staff. Trustees 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. The superintendent should be honest in assessing the impact of Trustee requests on staff workload and resources.

Protocols:

- Individual Trustee requests directly to staff for information should be restricted to those requests that do not require allocation of staff time or district resources to develop a response.
- Individual Trustees requests will be directed to the Superintendent and Board President.
- If the Superintendent and Board President agree that staff should take the time necessary to answer the question, the Superintendent will direct staff to do so.
- If the Superintendent and Board President decide the request for information is not necessary, the president should talk with the individual Trustee to resolve the issue.
- If no resolution can be found (or if the person making the request is the president), then the Trustee should request that the question be agendized using the procedure described in "Bringing Up New Ideas or Agenda Items", in this handbook.

- When requested information is not readily available, the Superintendent will provide a time frame for when to expect the request to be fulfilled.
- Answers to information requests will be distributed to all Trustees.

Bringing Up New Ideas or Agenda Items

Principles:

Trustees and the public should 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 that might have merit. Staff focus, energy, and time, as well as other district resources must be focused on achieving the agreed upon district vision, goals, and objectives and should not be diluted by new projects. We must honor the intent of the Brown Act and provide opportunities for members of the staff and the public to inform and hear Board deliberations on all agenda items if they choose to do so.

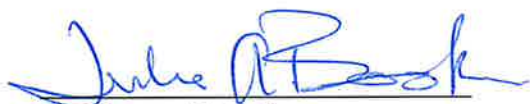
Protocols:

- A Board member's first step may be to discuss the new topic or idea with the Board President and the Superintendent.
- Individual Trustees may bring up a new idea or request a future agenda item by explanation during "Items for Future Board Meetings". The Board President will ask the Superintendent for any comments on the item. If there are at least two Trustees who wish to place the item on a future agenda, it shall be placed on a future agenda in a timely manner. All new ideas or agenda item topics will be weighed against their impact on staff's ability to accomplish the district vision and goals.
- When a member of the public speaking at a Board meeting asks that a topic be agendized, the Board President shall first determine whether the item is within the purview of the Board. If it is, the President shall ask the Board whether anyone wants to sponsor that item. If the item is sponsored and seconded, it shall be added to a future Board meeting agenda.
- If no one on the Board is willing to sponsor a topic request by a member of the public, the Board President shall ask the member of the public to contact the Board President or Superintendent, formally requesting that the item be added to the agenda. Written clarification may be requested.
- Upon receiving any request to agendize an item, the Board President shall consider the item and decide whether to agendize it in accordance with Board Bylaws. The Board President shall respond to the correspondent with the decision and, if the item is to be agendized, with the date on which it will be on the agenda.

We have reviewed and agree to follow the aforementioned governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Eastside Union School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students and the community.

We shall renew this agreement at each Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education.

Affirmed on this 5th day of March, 2025



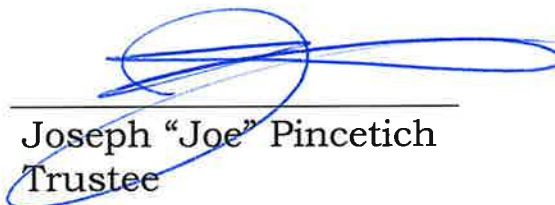
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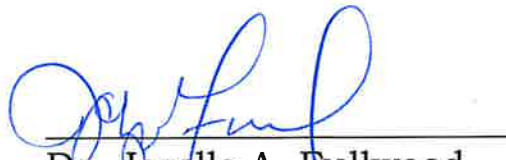
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