

# Morgan Hill Unified School District Board of Education Self-Evaluation Report 2020



MHUSD [Bylaw 9400](#) stipulates that “[the]Governing Board shall annually conduct a self-evaluation in order to demonstrate accountability to the community and ensure that district governance effectively supports student achievement and the attainment of the district's vision and goals.”

The Board Self-Evaluation is divided into three main sections. Sections I and II focus on BOARD GOVERNANCE and BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES. Each of these two sections cover four domains. Within Board Governance, the first set of questions focuses on *individual* board member performance actions. All other domains in Sections I and II represent an evaluation of the Board as a whole. Section III focuses on overall perceptions of the Board's areas of strengths, improvement, and recommended future focus.

## Survey Data Collection Process

The MHUSD Board Self Evaluation was sent electronically via SurveyMonkey® to each of the district's seven elected board members on October 12, 2020. All responses were received by the deadline of October 26, 2020. This report was prepared for discussion in open session as a general business item on November 3, 2020.

Section I and II used a five-point Likert-style frequency scale format (shown below). Frequency scales are most appropriate for surveys that seek to capture how often people perform certain actions.

Almost Always	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Board members were asked to select the response that most closely represents their perception of the Board's performance. *\*A response for each question in Sections I and II was required.*

## Reporting of Survey Results

For Sections I and II, responses to each question will be reported using a color-coding strategy adopted from the California School Board Association (CSBA) to aid with interpretation. The image below represents how this strategy will be employed. Green and blue will be used for areas of strength, and yellow and red will be used for areas of improvement. The results for each question will be color coded based on the degree of agreement among the board members:

- **GREEN** indicates that all seven trustees rated this question as *Almost Always* or *Often* and should therefore be interpreted as a STRENGTH for all members.

- **BLUE** indicates that four (4) or more trustees rate a question as *Almost Always* or *Often* and should therefore be interpreted as a STRENGTH for a majority of members.
- **YELLOW** indicates that four (4) or more trustees rated a question as *Less Often*, *Rarely* or *Never* and should therefore be interpreted as an area of GROWTH for a majority of members.
- **RED** indicates that all seven trustees rated a question as *Less Often*, *Rarely* or *Never* and should therefore be interpreted as an area of GROWTH for all members.

	= STRENGTH area for ALL members.
	= STRENGTH area for a MAJORITY of members.
	= GROWTH area for a MAJORITY of members.
	= GROWTH area for ALL members.

## SECTION I: BOARD GOVERNANCE

### Individual Role/Responsibilities

1. I familiarize myself with school policies and laws which are important for meetings.	
2. I read the agenda and supporting material prior to the Board meeting.	
3. I use the chain of command and direct questions to the superintendent when contacted by a district resident.	
4. I visit schools within the district.	
5. I am informed about community feelings toward the schools.	
6. I respect the superintendent's office.	
7. I refrain from unwarranted interferences in the administrator's affairs.	
8. I believe in long-range planning and recognize that changing trends change school needs.	
9. I trust the superintendent to provide the Board with accurate information on the school system.	
10. Even though I may disagree, I publicly support positions taken by the whole Board.	

11. I recognize that the governance and policy duties belong to the Board and administrative duties belong to the district's administrators.	
12. I attend Open House, school awards ceremonies, concerts, plays, athletic contests, and other school events.	
13. I am familiar with the budgeting process of the district.	
14. I am familiar with the curriculum and graduation requirements of the district.	
15. I have participated in board discussions about what the board should do differently as a result of mistakes made.	

### Board Culture

16. The Board commits the time to become informed.	
17. Board members agree on the role and responsibilities of the Board and the Superintendent.	
18. The Board treats the Superintendent with respect.	
19. Board members treat each other with respect.	
20. Board's split decisions do not result in a split Board.	
21. The Board manages internal conflicts in a productive manner.	
22. Board members are able to hold confidential items in confidence.	
23. The Board handles conflict openly and constructively.	

## Board/Superintendent Relations

24. The Board keeps the Superintendent informed on issues, needs, and complaints in a manner that allow him/her the opportunity to solve related problems in a professional manner.	
25. The Board clearly communicates its position on controversial matters pertaining to the school district, thereby enabling the Superintendent to properly carry out the wishes of the Board.	
26. The Board supports the Superintendent's administrative decisions to the public and staff members and relays any disagreement in a private or executive session.	
27. The Board questions administrative proposals, requiring the Superintendent to defend or reconsider his/her recommendations.	
28. The Board has a procedure in place for conducting the Superintendent's evaluation.	
29. The Board receives timely information.	
30. Board members receive adequate information to make informed decisions.	

## Reaching Decisions

31. The Board will request a decision be postponed until further information can be obtained.	
32. Board members are able to speak their minds without fear of being ostracized.	
33. The Board does not present new issues of a complex nature for immediate action.	
34. The Board explicitly examines the "downside" or possible pitfalls of any important decision it is about to make.	
35. Before reaching a decision on important issues, the Board requests input from students or staff likely to be affected by the decisions.	
36. The Board handles issues that are ambiguous and complicated by consulting with or appointing committees to conduct in-depth research.	

37. At Board meetings, there is at least as much dialogue among members as there is among members and staff.	
38. The Board effectively uses data in its decision-making.	

	= STRENGTH area for ALL members.
	= STRENGTH area for a MAJORITY of members.
	= GROWTH area for a MAJORITY of members.
	= GROWTH area for ALL members.

## SECTION II: BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

### Setting Direction

39. The Board sets clear organizational priorities for the year ahead.	
40. Within the past year, the Board has reviewed school district strategies for attaining long-term goals.	
41. The Board has discussions focused on identifying or overcoming school district weaknesses.	
42. The Board uses the district's mission, core beliefs, and vision to drive district performance.	
43. The Board adopts clear and measurable indicators to assess district performance.	
44. The Board is focused on achievement for all students.	
45. The Board discusses and researches events and trends in the community that may affect schools.	

### Fiscal Management

46. The Board adopts a fiscally responsible budget aligned to the district's vision and goals.	
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47. The Board regularly monitors the fiscal health of the district.	
48. The Board requires proper accountability for the expenditure of funds in the school district.	
49. The Board provides justified funding to maintain an educational program in this district that is based on the belief that all students can learn at high levels.	
50. The Board keeps the community informed about the financial needs of the schools.	
51. The Board stays aware of its debt limitations and sets priorities based on total financial needs of the system and maintaining an adequate financial reserve.	
52. The board is periodically advised of availability of outside funds, such as state and federal grants, special programs, community resources, research programs, and special construction funds.	

### Community Leadership

53. The Board recognizes that their fellow citizens have entrusted them with the educational development of the children and youth of this community.	
54. The Board recognizes that the community expects their first and greatest concern to be in the best interest of all students in the district without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be.	
55. The Board provides community leadership on educational issues.	
56. The Board shows an awareness of the impact its decisions will have on the community.	
57. The Board pursues partnerships to support district efforts.	
58. The Board advocates on behalf of students and public education at the local, state and federal levels.	
59. The Board informs the community on district priorities, progress, needs and opportunities for involvement.	
60. The Board encourages the public to attend Board meetings.	

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## Accountability

61. The Board takes the time to learn about important issues facing schools through actions such as allowing teachers, students, and administrators to report at meetings.	
62. The Board monitors student progress against established benchmarks.	
63. The Board establishes and maintains a systematic plan for feedback on policies to determine effectiveness, their worth, and whether they need to be amended, modified, or canceled.	
64. The Board monitors progress towards district goals based on established success indicators.	
65. The Board compares reports on schools' progress with the district's long-term goals.	
66. The Board evaluates the performance of the Board and has discussions about the effectiveness of its performance.	

## SECTION III: OVERALL STRENGTHS AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The third section of the Board Self Evaluation allowed for open-ended, written responses. Board members were asked to type in a brief, written response to each question. *\*A response for each open-ended question in Section III was required.*

For Section III, all open-ended responses have been aggregated by question, and provided as verbatim transcriptions. No summary interpretations have been added.

### 1. List areas of strength. In what areas are we doing really well?

- Every one of the board members is intelligent, thoughtful and dedicated to our students.
- Representing the needs of our community well, not just a part of it. Conducting ourselves in a professional and respectful manner. Asking lots of questions for understanding and accountability. Acknowledging staff's efforts. Open to learning from board colleagues with different perspectives.
- The individual board members are active in educating themselves about current events and the effects on the MH community. Board members are well prepared

for board meetings and all have the best interests of students and the MH District in mind.

- 1. Board members have worked to develop trusting and collaborative relationships among one another. 2. The Board is willing to take on extra work to increase understanding and strengthen decision-making. 3. There is keen interest in and attention to Board accountability to district residents. 4. All members are deeply committed to equity in our educational practices and show it through rigorous questioning, research and action.
- Fiscal Management and Community Leadership are areas of strength.
- Fiscal / financial oversight; Adapting to online meetings, listening to stakeholders on reopening plans
- Board culture is strong and effective. - Board makes fiscally-responsible decisions. - A wide and varied range of knowledge and experiences are represented on the Board.

## **2. List areas where the Board could improve.**

- Need to find ways to assert itself as the policy and direction-setting entity. - Need to spend more time focused on and discussing student achievement. - Increase our efforts in the area of accountability.
- Keeping the Board's focus on the mental health and safety of students. Prepare an orientation and induction plan for our soon to be elected Trustee.
- Establish systems, practices and processes through which the board will drive the priorities of the district rather than deferring the setting of priorities to staff.
- 1. Annual goal-setting that is clear, communicable, and measurable, and regular review of goal achievement. 2. Standardized process for Superintendent evaluation that is clear, communicable, and measurable. 3. Strategic attention to self-evaluation method and commitment to action based on its finding.
- I would like to see dedicated meetings for reviewing academic achievement and discuss what the district is doing to close the achievement gap. I also feel that we could still improve on including various stakeholders in conversation about the schools, especially teachers, students, and parents. Another area for improvement would be the development of the Agenda for board meetings. Presentations should be limited so that discussion among trustees can be increased. Also, if



presentations need to be an hour long then perhaps those presentations should be special meetings. Not only would that allow for deeper discussion and understanding, it would be more transparent to stakeholders; stakeholders could choose whether to attend the meeting or not based on the item. I have noticed a drop off in parent attendance at the board meetings. The meetings should not be longer than 3 hours, any longer and the information presented is not getting the discussion it deserves, and also how is it fair to parents with children to have a meeting that goes so long? If parents are one of our most valued stakeholders, then why would we make the time a barrier for attendance to these board meetings? Trust between the Board and Superintendent with the Executive staff needs to be nurtured.

- Gathering data from community; representing wide-range of perspectives; focusing on district initiatives, setting priorities and metrics rather than managing organizational decision making.
- Board/Superintendent Relations and Reaching Decisions are areas in need of improvement.

### **3. What would be the most important thing the board needs to work on first? What will have the greatest impact on student learning?**

- Establishing and enforcing an expectation of real transparency so that students, families and first line staff feel that they are informed and empowered.
- Commit to understanding and internalize the meaning of a Shared Moral Imperative-a relentless commitment to the learning of all students, no exceptions-must drive the work of the board and its individual and collective action.
- Establish a stronger, more explicit focus on student achievement - select metrics and evaluate regularly. Create clear and simple messages about successes and struggles in student achievement to share with students, staff and families and solicit feedback.
- Focusing on student learning outcomes and closing achievement gap by addressing inequitable practices;
- With the volatile conditions brought upon us due to COVID-19, I believe we need to revisit setting directions and goals for the District to make sure that they are being used to drive district performance. Then we can work on new LCAP goals that include student achievement, social-emotional learning (how to handle stressors)

and how it will be measured. The Board needs to have a systematic plan to monitor student progress. I think this would have the greatest impact on student learning.

- The Board needs to do work internally and get organized as the direction and policy-setting entity so that it can effectively focus on student achievement. Focusing more attention and discussion on student achievement and accountability efforts will greatly impact student learning.
- The most important thing for the Board to work on first is how to safely return our students to in-person learning at our schools. Communication between the Board and the Superintendent must be open and frequent. Timely information is critical. As plans are formulated to get our students back to school, we need to also focus on students who are not succeeding at distance learning. Meaningful ways to immediately assist the students struggling with distance learning need to be implemented. The challenges facing us and the decisions we need to make depend on improved communication between the Board and the Superintendent.

#### 4. What do we need to learn as a Board team? Where can we get the information we need to improve? When can we take the time to learn?

- Acceptance of the reality of governance. Become system thinkers. Have a strategic focus. Commit to deep learning. Resources; SCSBA, CSBA, SCLSBA and CLSBA Resource Materials; Book titles, The Governance Core: Schools Boards, Superintends and Schools Working Together, Authors Davis Campbell and Michael Fullan When can we take time to learn? Individually (on going) Board, Take MIG Classes, Create Board Governance Retreats involving Superintendent and leadership team.
- We need to learn to actually control what is on our board agendas in order to drive the policy, accountability and vision setting work. We may well need more active subcommittee and other board assignments in order to provide the time needed for this work.
- This Board has shown it will take time to learn. A strong facilitator may be able to help us establish expectations and goals, agree on measures, and use results to improve.
- As a board team, we need to continue to educate ourselves on setting direction and our roles as trustees. Unfortunately, resources are limited as CSBA seems to hold a monopoly on Board Education and there are few courses available. Because

each board member takes these courses at different times, the result is that trustees are at different areas of their understanding on the role of the board and setting direction. We could have a Special meeting on Setting Direction. I know that we have done this before, but it is time to do it again. The CSBA MIG courses are informative and I highly recommend that trustees benefit from them. CSBA has also hinted at upcoming “Post-MIG courses” which would also be an essential resource for trustees.

- Require MIG training; engage in more team building/ learning together about board-related goals and district beneficial initiatives
- We need to learn how to effectively set direction for the District. We can get the information we need to improve from CSBA. We can take the time to learn during some Board Study Sessions or Board Workshops.
- The Board needs to learn to communicate more effectively with each other and with the Superintendent. We need to better understand the Brown Act and find ways to enhance our ability to work together. The School Board is expected to provide guidance and oversight to the district. To effectively perform our role, we need timely information from our Superintendent. And our Superintendent needs clear communication from the Board on its position concerning matters pertaining to the school district. Several Board members are taking classes on School Board governance. Many informative classes are available online. The California School Board Association provides updates and information on many areas of interest. Special School Board meetings have been scheduled to provide additional information. Zoom meetings and Community Forums have helped increase community, school administrator, and teacher participation in Board meetings.