

Palos Verdes Peninsula USD

Board Bylaw

Governance Standards

BB 9005

Board Bylaws

The Board of Education is the educational policy-making body for the District. To effectively meet the District's challenges, the Board and Superintendent must function together as a leadership team. To ensure unity among team members, effective operating procedures, or protocols, must be in place.

The Board of Education believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board also has major commitments to parents/guardians, all members of the community, employees, the state of California, laws pertaining to public education, and established policies of the district. To maximize Board effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

(cf. 9000 - Role of the Board)

(cf. 9270 - Conflict of Interest)

The Board expects its members to work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. Each individual Board Member and the Superintendent shall:

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.
2. Value, support and advocate for public education.

(cf. 9010 - Public Statements)

3. Operate openly, with trust and integrity.
4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility, dignity, and respect, while honoring the right to disagree with each other.
5. Keep confidential matters confidential. Uphold the legal requirement for confidentiality on all matters arising from Board Meeting Executive Sessions; will keep all conversations taking place in Closed Session absolutely confidential.

(cf. 9011 - Disclosure of Confidential/Privileged Information)

6. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be

an informed and effective leader.

(cf. 9240 - Board Development)

7. Understand the distinctions between the Board's policy making role and the staff's management roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.

(cf. 2122 - Superintendent of Schools: Responsibilities and Duties)

8. Be responsible for complying with the requirements of the state's open meeting laws. The Superintendent or designee shall provide a copy of the Brown Act to each Board member and to anyone newly elected or appointed to the Board.

(cf. 54950-54963 The Ralph M. Brown Act)

Board members also shall assume collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture. To operate effectively, the Board shall have a unity of purpose and:

1. Work with all members of the Board and the Superintendent to become a team devoted to students; be dedicated to making all members of the team successful.
2. Act with dignity, and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior.
3. Recognize and respect difference of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.
4. Focus on policymaking, planning and evaluation for student success.
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.
6. Communicate a common vision.
7. Understand authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals.
8. As an individual Board member, not make or appear to make a decision that appropriately should be made by the entire Board.
9. Recognize that decisions are made only at properly scheduled meetings.
10. Acknowledge individual requests for reports and projects will be directed only to the Superintendent. Requests requiring more than two (2) hours to complete will be brought to the entire Board for direction.
11. Understand the Superintendent's role to make personnel recommendations and changes in

consultation with the Board.

12. Understand the Board as a collective body must give clear signals to its professional staff through its Superintendent.
13. Participate in establishing annual expectations and goals for the Superintendent.
14. Objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance and provide appropriate feedback.
15. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness; review its protocols annually.
16. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance.
17. When a stakeholder expresses a concern, the Board Member will listen carefully. The member will then direct that person to the District staff member most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. In the event of a complaint, it is understood that the appropriate order of whom to contact is teacher, then principal, then District staff, then Superintendent. The last stop, not the first, will be the Board. Board Members agree to follow the chain of command and insist that others do so.
18. Contact the Superintendent and/or the Board President whenever contacted by the media regarding an incident, event, or agenda item.
19. Communicate directly with the Superintendent prior to Board meetings to address questions and/or concerns about agenda items; honor the "no surprises" rule with the Superintendent.
20. Communicate one-on-one with the Superintendent when an individual concern arises; will not allow a matter to fester.
21. Refer Board-related correspondence to the Superintendent or designee for forwarding to the Board or for placement on a Board meeting agenda.
22. Recognize the individual role of constituents and special interest groups, while understanding the importance of using one's best judgement to represent all members of the community.
23. As time permits, visit school sites and attend school functions, but avoid interrupting instruction or interrupting employees at work. Board members will have school visits arranged by the Superintendent's designee. The Superintendent or designee will ensure principals know that a teacher does not need to interrupt his/her lesson when a Board member visits a classroom.
24. Represent the District, when possible, by attending community functions.
25. Not conduct business with the district served, nor have an interest in any contract with the district in general.

(cf. 9270 - Conflict of Interest)

26. Be aware of his/her role as a Board Member when interacting with district employees, especially when the Board Member has a child attending a district school.
27. Defer to the Board President to speak on behalf of the Board. Copies of statements and emails made by the Board President on behalf of the Board shall be sent to the other members of the Board.
28. Have Wednesday evenings available for single topic workshops and first readings of upcoming agenda items.

Board Meetings will be conducted in accordance with applicable law and as follows:

1. Meetings will be conducted from an agenda set only with the approval of the Board President and Superintendent.

(cf. 9322 - Agenda/Meeting Materials)

2. Board members shall attend regularly scheduled Board meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible; cooperate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.
3. Each Trustee respects the right of other Trustees to vote "no" on an issue. It is courtesy to the governance team to explain the reason(s) for the "no" vote either during deliberation or before casting the vote.
4. The Board believes that when no conflict of interest or other compelling reason requires abstention, its members have a duty to vote on issues before them.
5. Board members will Support the decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions. The Board embraces the "rule of three: After the gavel falls, all members of the management team will support the majority decision.
6. Board meetings are meetings of the Board held in public and not open forum town hall meetings.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

35010 Power of governing board to adopt rules for its own governance

35160 Board authority to act in any manner not conflicting with law

35164 Actions by majority vote

GOVERNMENT CODE

1090 Financial interest in contract
1098 Disclosure of confidential information
1125-1129 Incompatible activities
54950-54963 The Ralph M. Brown Act
87300-87313 Conflict of interest code

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

CSBA Professional Governance Standards, 2000
Maximizing School Board Leadership: Boardsmanship, 1996

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

Bylaw PALOS VERDES PENINSULA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

adopted: June 7, 2001 Palos Verdes Estates, California

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