

# **School Board Governance Handbook**

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## **Vision**

*We Inspire, Innovate, and Create Opportunities to Learn and Grow*

## **Mission Statement**

### *Quality Education for Life*

Through rigorous academic standards, high expectations, and a coordinated curriculum, the Coronado Unified School District, in partnership with our community, will graduate students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in higher education, careers, society, and life with the confidence to determine their futures.

## **Board Goals 2020-2025**

- Provide rigorous and challenging curriculum that will prepare all students for academic and vocational success.
- Communicate openly and accurately to engage and involve all shareholders.
- Maintain safe and supportive schools where students and staff thrive.

## **Our Guiding Principles**

- We believe in the potential and promise of each child.
- We will always base decisions on what is best for students.
- The Board is unwavering in our commitment to academic excellence and rigor.
- We prioritize the physical and emotional safety of our staff and students.
- We adhere to our fiduciary responsibility for budget stability and to sustain programs and supports which enrich students' experiences.
- We will make purposeful efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified staff who connect, challenge, and champion our students.
- We will use multiple measures to gauge the effectiveness and value of existing programs, and allocate resources accordingly.
- We will communicate with full transparency.
- We hold ourselves and staff accountable to our community stakeholders.

## **Governance Team Norms and Protocols**

### **Norms**

We understand that the work of the Board is to establish the vision, create policies, and assure accountability. This Board will emphasize planning, policy-making, and communication rather than becoming involved in the management of the schools. The Board will set clear goals for themselves and the Superintendent. The Board and Superintendent will facilitate goal setting for the school district.

The Superintendent, as the chief executive officer, manages the schools and makes recommendations, proposals, or suggestions on most matters that come before the Board.

We understand that Board meetings are meetings of the Board held in public, not open forum town hall meetings. We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted to ensure the multiple voices from the community inform Board deliberations.

We will consistently abide by our formal processes so that all persons are treated fairly and equally. We will do our homework and improve leadership skills by attending Board training and networking opportunities.

The Board will lead by example. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression on an individual, the Board, or the District. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will do it with care and respect.

We will fulfill the responsibilities of the role of a Board member as outlined in these protocols, and will appropriately balance our time as well as that of the Superintendent. We acknowledge that all members of the board are equatable in governance.

### **Board Protocols**

Board protocols describe how the Board Members serve and perform during and outside of meetings.

Boards operate in meetings. Individual Board Members do not have authority. The only authority to direct action rests with the body as a whole and it takes a consensus or majority of the Board Members to set direction. Outside of meetings, individual Members operate as advocates and community leaders.

The following protocols outline how individual Members of this Board agree to conduct both the public's business and themselves.

We have read and agreed to the aforementioned governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Coronado Unified School District Board of Education, staff, students, parents and the greater community.

We agree to:

- Review and renew these protocols and norms annually
- Create and support effective and efficient governance leadership
- Advocate, address and respond in a transparent, informed and truthful manner.

Affirmed in October 2015  
Amended on January 12, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lee Pontes, Board President

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Esther Valdes-Clayton, Board Vice-President

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Helen Anderson-Cruz, Board Clerk

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Whitney Antrim, Trustee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stacy Keszei, Trustee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karl Mueller, Superintendent

## **Protocols**

### **1. Agenda Questions Asked Before a Meeting**

- a. Board Members have an opportunity to meet with the Superintendent one on one before the Board meeting to discuss comments/questions on the agenda. Within Brown Act guidelines and to the extent possible, Board Members should attempt to have the Superintendent answer questions and resolve concerns with items in the proposed agenda at this meeting in order to save time at a subsequent public meeting.
- b. Board Members will, insofar as possible, let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made public so that staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer.

### **2. Bringing New Agenda Items**

- a. The best time to request items is during the period at the end of each meeting that is set aside for Organizational Business. This allows the President to determine if there are at least two members interested in future discussion of the item, and also allows the Superintendent to recommend a future meeting date for the item based on the anticipated length of time staff will need to prepare information for the discussion.
- b. The Board recognizes that from time to time issues may arise during the period between meetings that require immediate presentation to the Board. In these cases of urgency, the President may give the Superintendent and/or a single Board Member the latitude to include the items on the upcoming agenda.
- c. The Public may submit written requests for items to any Board member, who will then forward the request to the Superintendent and Board President. The Public may also make a verbal request for an agenda item at the meeting during time set aside for Comments from the Audience. Such requests will be discussed at the end of the meeting during Organizational Business to ensure support for inclusion of the item from two Board members.

### **3. Consent Calendar**

Housed within the agenda, the purpose of the Consent Calendar is to expedite routine operational business with minimal discussion.

- a. The Board will move and approve the Consent Calendar as a whole unless items are pulled. Items on the Consent calendar may be pulled when approving the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. Discussion and vote on particular items occurs only when an item is pulled. There are two specific times that call for an item to be pulled:

- i. When a trustee plans to vote “no”,
  - ii. When a trustee needs further information or discussion before deciding how to vote.
- b. A member of the public may request that an item be pulled from the Consent Calendar, and discussed/voted upon separately, during the initial time for public input.
- c. Pulled items trail to the end of the entire agenda.
- d. Prior to the vote seeking approval for the consent calendar, Board Members may comment on an item without pulling it from the Consent Calendar.

#### **4. Types & Timing of Board Meetings**

##### Regular Meetings

- a. To assist in meeting planning, the Board sets a target time for regular meetings of 2.5 hours. Recognizing that the administrative effort required to schedule and conduct public meetings is burdensome, it is important that the Board make every effort to expeditiously and efficiently consider and deliberate the agenda within the bounds of that timeframe.
  - i. Items on the agenda will include approximate time for the discussion and the amount of time reserved for that item. If it appears that an item may take more than 5 minutes over the allotted time, the President will ask Board Members whether they want to continue discussion of the item and, if so, for how long.
  - ii. Occasionally an agenda item(s) may be so complex and/or critical that it cannot be fully administered in its allotted time. In those cases, the current Board agrees that extending the meeting beyond 2.5 hours would be advantageous.

##### Special Meetings

- a. Study Sessions
  - i. Study sessions give the Board an opportunity to learn. They often include reporting from staff to receive more in-depth information on an important issue like the budget or special education. These matters are complex, and Board members may need guidance from staff. Study sessions give Board members an opportunity to learn without the pressure of making a decision, but the study session will certainly inform later decisions.
  - ii. Study Sessions are intended to create interest and understanding in a single topic of discussion. Therefore, the target time for workshops is 1.5 hours. On occasion this may be extended to two hours for complex issues. Since workshops have abridged agendas they should not add substantially to the workload of the administrative staff.

b. Discussion Meetings

- i. These meetings may involve staff at the discretion of the Board, but typically they involve only the Board or the governance team—the Board and the Superintendent. As the name implies, a discussion meeting is an opportunity to reflect and learn from each other without the pressure of making a decision. It gives the governance team members the opportunity to think out loud, to share ideas with one another on one or more issues.
- ii. Just as study sessions give the Board time to learn information, discussion meetings give the Board time to process information, to interpret the data it has received, and to evaluate the information in light of district values, mission, vision and priorities.
- iii. Discussion meetings may also include Board retreats for team-building conversations or matters that deal with the Board’s internal operations. These retreats can increase the Board’s effectiveness in governing the district by unifying the governance team through governance agreements that guide the Board’s operations.
- iv. By achieving a high degree of clarity and mutual understanding on how the Board functions, the Board can effectively focus on its oversight responsibilities in service to the students of the district.

c. Emergency Meetings

- i. The school Board may convene a special meeting to respond to an emergency situation without complying with the 24-hour notice requirement for special meetings. Such meetings are covered by Government Code 54956.5. An emergency situation is defined as a work stoppage; a crippling disaster, dire emergency, mass destruction, terrorist act or other activity which severely impairs public health, safety or both as determined by a Board majority.

**5. Hearing Agenda Items**

Staff Reports

- a. Contents
  - i. Item Title and Description
  - ii. Background
  - v. Report
  - vi. Financial Impact – Identify the
    1. Anticipated or Actual Amount
    2. Fund(s) source

3. Whether item is on budget or new revenue/expense
  - vii. Impact on/alignment with the LCAP and the LRP
  - viii. Superintendent's Recommendation
- b. Order of events and timeline guidelines:
  - i. Superintendent information and staff presentation
  - ii. Board member questions (2 min)
  - iii. Public comment (3 min per)
  - iv. Board member comments (2 min) and discussion of Superintendent recommendation
  - v. Board acceptance of report and/or direction to the Superintendent
- c. Time limits are general guidelines and may be waived or adjusted at the discretion of the Board President (and/or through a motion approved by a majority of the Board).
- d. The Board may request further information from or provide additional guidance to the Superintendent at this time. When appropriate, the Board may request a future action item related to the report.
- e. Philosophy regarding questions after the report:
  - i. Questions and consequent answers should intend to amplify a report and add missing details from previous comments.
  - ii. The question should highlight an important value or emphasis for future District direction, being aware that wise judgment is required.
  - iii. Will the question/answer influence your vote or change the vote of another Member?
  - iv. Members should be careful to not masquerade personal attacks or competing philosophies as questions
  - v. If a Board Member wants to make a substantive point, they will state it clearly and concisely during Board member comment or Board discussion.
- f. To the extent possible, all briefing materials (charts, statistics, PowerPoint Presentations, etc.) will be provided to Board Members preferably 72 hours but not less than 24 hours in advance in order to give Board Members the opportunity to send questions to the Superintendent so that his/her responses can be incorporated into the respective Report(s).

Action Items



When the item is up for action, the Board will hear the item in the same way as above and then the Board President will:

- a. Ask for a Motion on the Item to:
  - i. Approve as Written
  - ii. Approve as Amended
  - iii. To Deny
  - iv. To Table the Item
- b. Seek a second on the motion.
  - i. If motion dies for lack of a second, no discussion or vote occurs on the motion,
  - ii. If there is no second, the President may ask for a new, possibly related motion and seek a second on that motion.
- c. Open Deliberation by Board Members, and
- d. Call for the Vote.

## 6. Voting

As a courtesy to the Board, Members should attempt to clarify their intended vote during deliberation.

### Use of Abstentions

- a. If a member feels that there is insufficient information to vote on a motion, that member should move that the motion be tabled for lack of information and request the item be placed on a subsequent agenda. If there is no second on his/her motion to table or if the motion does not pass, the member may abstain from a vote. However, agendaized action items are known in advance which provides Board Members ample time and opportunity to receive all the information needed to vote intelligently and confidently on the motion in question.
- b. In accordance with Board Bylaw 9323, Members are reminded, "When a member abstains, his/her abstention will be considered to concur with (any) action taken by the majority."

## 7. Conflicts of Interest

Board Members with personal conflicts with any motion are again reminded of their obligation as Board Members to provide direction and governance within the school district. Abstentions for personal conflicts should be extremely rare, and only taken after due consideration of the possible outcomes.

- a. If a Board member has a financial conflict of interest as defined by Government Code 1090, he/she will make this known to the Board before discussion of the issue and will recuse themselves from discussion and/or action taken on the item.
- b. "Conflict of Interest" is explicitly defined in Board Bylaw 9270. Before abstaining on any issue, a Board Member should be thoroughly familiar with this Bylaw in its entirety.

## 8. Stakeholder and Public Comment

School Boards conduct the business of the public in public, audience and staff becomes observers.

- a. There are two opportunities for public input at Board meetings:
  - i. Introducing non-agendized items during the time for public comment
  - ii. When an agenda item occurs
  - iii. Special meetings are also public meetings, however public comment is limited to items listed on the special meeting agenda.
- b. In all cases, yellow speaker cards are provided to facilitate public input. Individuals must limit their remarks to 3 minutes.
- c. When 3 or more cards on the same subject are submitted to address or introduce items not on the agenda, the Board President may hold these comments until after the meeting agenda has been heard.
- d. The Board hears leadership committee and stakeholder reports during the time for public comment on non-agendized items.
- e. If a Stakeholder report requires more than 3 minutes, the group may request to be placed as a separate item on the Agenda. Such requests should be forwarded to the Superintendent and/or the Board President for consideration when building the meeting Agenda.
- f. Board Members listen to public input and take it into account during discussion and deliberation. However, except for specific questions on committee reports and general comments, Board Members have no direct interaction with the public during a regular Board meeting. It is incumbent on the Board President to acknowledge and thank the Members of the public for their input as appropriate.
- g. Once Board Members make their comments and move to discussion on an item, the audience and staff no longer participate. \*

**\*Exception:** If the Board feels additional public/staff input would be helpful in determining a course of action, the Board President may make such a request of

the Superintendent. If desired the Superintendent may request public/staff to come forward to clarify the agenda item in question.

#### **9. Board Member Requests for Information**

- a. If it appears that a request for information will take considerable staff time, the Board President will restate the request and ask the Superintendent for input regarding time and resources involved. The Board President will then seek consensus from the entire Board to see if a majority supports the request.
- b. Board Members will not direct questions to the staff/teachers. Board Members submit all questions directly to the Superintendent. Appointments outside of the public meetings are strongly advised for lengthy inquiries.
- c. Members will self-monitor to ensure requests for information do not place unnecessary or inordinate demands on the time and resources of District Staff, especially when it may impact their ability to complete their normally assigned duties.
- d. When an individual Member requests information, it will be provided to all Members.

#### **10. Board Member Requests for Action**

- a. The only authority to direct action rests with the full majority of the Board sitting at the Board table.
- b. Board Members may request action during Board meetings, explaining their interest in a particular course of action and asking that it come back as an action item. The Board President will then restate the request, seek consensus from the entire Board to see if a majority supports having the item brought to an upcoming Board meeting for discussion/action.

#### **11. Board Members' Role in the Public**

- a. Board Members are reminded of their obligations as public servants. Board Bylaw 9010 provides great detail with regards to that obligation and should be reviewed periodically by Board Members for compliance.
- b. To best understand the programs and needs within the District, Board Members shall visit school sites on rotating calendared visits (see para 13 below) as well as chance opportunities such as Back-to-School nights, Open Houses and special events (ASB functions, sports contests, CoSA shows, NJROTC drill meets, Harvest Hoedown, Strand Luau, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Olympics, CMS Veteran's Day, etc.)
- c. Additionally, Board presence is desirable and encouraged at meetings, events, and functions of organizations that routinely support the District either financially

or through volunteering their time to promote District goals. Civic organizations that have long-established relationship with our District include but are not limited to the following:

Site Parent/Teacher Organizations (PTOs)

Coronado Schools Foundation

Islander Sports Foundation

Coronado School of the Arts Foundation

SAFE Coalition

- d. From time to time Board Members will receive requests for their standing support and participation as members within these civic organizations. Although there is no legal restriction against such involvement, Board Members must be cognizant of the fact that he/she has a sworn responsibility at all times during their tenure to act as an advocate for the District. Consequently, careful thought should be given before accepting roles in these organizations, particularly if a conflict of interest may be perceived. Should a Board Member accept a position, he/she should make that known to the public and fellow Board Members during General Meeting time set aside for "Comments from Board Members."

## **12. Self-monitoring**

- a. Individual trustees agree to review and adhere to meeting norms, goals and Board Member roles as defined by CSBA and Board Bylaws.
- b. In order to conduct efficient and effective Board meetings, Board Members will come to the Board meetings prepared and ready to do business. Board Members agree to speak to the issues on the agenda and attend to fellow Board Members respectfully. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the Superintendent. Points are to be made in as few words as possible; speeches at Board meetings are discouraged.
- c. Key Questions for Members to Consider for Effective Meetings
  - i. How much work has already been done at preliminary Board committee sessions?
  - ii. Are Members prepared for the meeting?
  - iii. Do Members refrain from monopolizing discussion?
  - iv. Does everyone really understand the issues?

## **13. Site Visits**

Board Members are expected to visit at least one school site each month based upon a schedule provided by the Superintendent's office. Board Members will personally contact the respective site Principal to arrange a convenient calendar date for their visit and

forward it to the Superintendent's office. "Drive-bys" or "drop-ins" on staff and schools is discouraged and should be coordinated with Superintendent or his/her assistant.

#### **14. Spokesperson**

- a. The Board President is the spokesperson in response to emails and communications addressed to the entire Board. Therefore, he/she will provide an initial response confirming receipt of the communication, explaining how the Brown Act restrains us from conducting business/discussion in non-public communications, and encouraging the sender to attend a future Board meeting where the Board's business is publically conducted. The Board President will courtesy copy the Superintendent and other Board Members with any such response.
- b. The Board President is also the initial spokesperson for the Board with respect to controversial or "hot-button" issues that may require explanation beyond confirmation of receipt. This protocol is adopted in recognition that the District's interests may be best served by a timely, informative response to clarify any action taken with regards to the contentious matter. Again, the Board President will courtesy copy the Superintendent and other Board Members with any such response.
- c. Nevertheless, this protocol is not intended to stifle comment from other Board Members, particularly if they disagree with remarks offered by the Board President or if they believe that further comments are important to public discussion and understanding of such issues. In providing additional comments, individual Members should:
  - i. Endeavor to permit the Board President an initial opportunity to comment on the issue,
  - ii. Be mindful that multiple voices may confuse or distract from constructive discussion of the issues,
  - iii. Not circulate their responses to all Board Members as it might risk constituting an inter-active discussion through email in violation of the Brown Act, and
  - iv. Avoid comments that suggest that the individual member's comments represent the viewpoint of the entire Board.
- d. The hope of the Board is that the public will understand that these protocols are intended to achieve a practical and appropriate balance among the following important but at times competing Board objectives, namely, a desire to:
  - i. Be responsive to, and respectful of, communications from the public;
  - ii. Promote efficiency in communications;

- iii. Be faithful to the limitations imposed by California's Brown Act.

## **15. Evaluation of the Board**

Using a workshop setting, the Board will evaluate its effectiveness annually in accordance with Board Bylaw 9400.

## **16. Evaluation of the Superintendent**

- a. On or before September first of each year, the Board and Superintendent will meet and establish goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes for the coming year in accordance with the terms of his contract. Prior to that meeting, the Superintendent will submit proposed written goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes to the Board. These may be revised by the Board following consultation with the Superintendent. The final goals, objectives and measurable outcomes will be written and will be among the criteria by which the Superintendent is evaluated by the Board.
- b. During closed session no later than the January Board meeting, the Board and Superintendent will review the goals and his progress toward each one. The Superintendent will provide written and oral input to this effort. At this time, any other issues should be brought forward by either party to include any contractual issues that may arise.
- c. During closed session no later than June first of each year, unless otherwise mutually agreed, Board Members will meet without the Superintendent to evaluate his performance based on the aforementioned goals. A written summary of overall performance will be presented to Human Resources prior to the final General Board Meeting of each school year. A more general but no less accurate statement of performance will accompany the overall performance summary and will be read in the Open Session of the school year's final General Meeting.

## **17. Election of Board Officers.**

The Governing Board shall elect a president from among its members to provide leadership on behalf of the governance team and the educational community it serves.

The Board shall each year elect its entire slate of officers. No Board member shall serve more than 2 consecutive years in the same office.