



## Governance Handbook

*The Board of Education is entrusted by the community to uphold the Constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public interest in schools, and to ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student. School districts and county offices of education are governed by boards, not by individual trustees. While understanding their separate roles, the board and superintendent work together as a “governance team.” This team assumes collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively. To operate effectively, the Board and Superintendent must have a unity of purpose, an understanding of roles and responsibilities, governance standards and protocols.*

### Board of Trustees

Valerie Mansfield  
Larry Reilly  
Bonnie Turnbull  
Lauri Kemper  
Jon Hetherton

### Superintendent

Todd Cutler, Ed.D.

### Vision Statement

Discover and foster the unique talents and potential of all students

***This handbook outlines the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, governance standards, roles, and protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best serves all students.***

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# About California school boards

School boards govern California's nearly 1,000 school districts serving 6.2 million students

**1** School board members are individually elected by the community they serve



- Each school district is governed by a school board that is accountable for the performance of schools in their district.
- They represent the community's diverse beliefs and values.
- School board members are residents of the school district they serve and come from all walks of life — doctors, lawyers, homemakers, teachers, architects, truck drivers, professors, business owners, real estate agents and more.

**2** School boards govern at board meetings



- Hiring and evaluating the superintendent
- Adopting district policies
- Approving Local Control Accountability Plans
- Adopting and monitoring budgets
- Monitoring district performance and student achievement
- Actively listening to public comments

**3** School boards serve the community



- Listening to their ideas
- Engaging them in setting the district mission and goals
- Making student achievement a priority
- Advocating on important K-12 policy issues for all students
- Representing the district at community events
- Ensuring accountability for student and district performance

**4** School board members give the gift of time



- Preparing for and attending board meetings
- Responding to constituents
- Participating in board training and development
- Attending community events

**To learn more about your school board or attend an upcoming meeting, contact a local school board member or the district superintendent's office.**



California School Boards Association | 3251 Beacon Blvd.,  
West Sacramento, CA 95691

## The Busy Life of a LTUSD Board Member

School board members are a diverse group united by a common goal: supporting students and improving their academic and social outcomes. A school trustee is called to public service with the intention of making a difference in the lives of children and families in their community. They are responsible for the continuous improvement and effectiveness of educational programs, the district's fiscal health, and providing opportunities for student growth and achievement. Below is a description of the LTUSD Board Member's commitment:

1. **Two Board meetings a month** for 7 of the 12 months on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. February, April, July, November and December have one meeting and the December meeting is the Annual Organizational Meeting. Generally, Board meetings start at 5:00pm and end by 8:00pm. At times, Board meetings can last into the 9:00pm hour. Depending on the Board member, Board meeting material can take anywhere from 2 hours to 8 hours to review and prepare for the meeting.
2. **Board Agenda Review meetings** occur on the Monday prior to a Board meeting. These meetings are scheduled for 1 hour. Board members are asked to have reviewed the Board material and prepared any questions for the meeting. The Superintendent will be ready to highlight important information and answer questions. Meetings may be scheduled around a Board Member's work or other obligations.
3. **Special Board Meetings** are scheduled as needed. Topics can range from Superintendent evaluation, Board annual evaluation, current issue, etc.
4. **Board Education Workshops** are scheduled regularly to enhance the Board's knowledge and ability to work as a successful governance team. For example, the Board did a read/study of the book "The Governance Core" during the 2021/22 school year and discussed one chapter per month for 9 months. Other opportunities for learning and personal/professional growth are offered by California School Boards Association (CSBA) and through LTUSD's Staff Development program.
5. **A Board Retreat** is scheduled at least once per year. This meeting has been traditionally scheduled in the month of January on a Friday evening and Saturday. The intent of this annual meeting is to review the District's Vision and Mission Statements, along with the Board's Goals. Along with these topics the Board engages in a professional learning of a topic that aligns with the District's and Board's goals.

6. **CSBA Annual Education Conference** is held in the first week of December from Wednesday through Saturday. All board members are asked to attend in an effort to improve the understanding of the work of a board member.
7. **Special Events** that happen in our community and within El Dorado County are also part of the Board member's year. Though not required, many of the community events are encouraged.
8. **School Activities** occur quite regularly at each of our schools and a large number at STHS. Board members are encouraged to attend when possible.
9. **Pay and Benefits** currently include a \$240 per month stipend and the option to join the District's group health insurance plan at the same rate as employees.

More information about the School Board's role:

[The School Board Role in Creating the Conditions for Student Achievement](#)

[School Boards in Action](#)

[What It Takes to Lead: The role and function of California's school boards](#)

## LTUSD's Motto, Vision and Mission

### ***Motto:***

- ***Navigating*** the Path to Success

### ***Vision Statement:***

- ***Discover*** and foster the unique talents and potential of all students

### ***Mission Statement:***

- ***Cultivating*** a collaborative, nurturing environment which embraces diversity, promotes equity, and develops confident lifelong learners resulting in academic excellence, civic responsibility, and emotional & physical wellness.

### ***Taglines/Branding:***

- "Navigate, Discover, Cultivate, Achieve"
- "Path to Success"

## LTUSD School Board's Goal and Priorities

### **Goal:**

- Develop a strong district-wide team that builds a culture of shared leadership and ownership of all student outcomes.

### **Priorities:**

- Student preparation and performance
  - Achievement is attainable for all student groups with a commitment for all students to meet or exceed standards.
- Culture, Engagement and Teamwork
  - Promote communication with stakeholders that embraces engagement around the belief that all students are valued and will achieve.
- Professional Growth and Learning
  - A commitment for continuous learning and growth to achieve our goals for student success (All staff, Board Members, and Parents).
- Safety
  - A place where every person feels safe, secure, and has a sense of belonging, so learning and achievement can occur.

## Unity of Purpose

The Board of Education and the Superintendent believe that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board and Superintendent also have 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 effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Board members and the Superintendent are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct while representing a shared unity of purpose.

1. *We keep the District focused on learning and achievement for all students.*
2. *We communicate a common vision.*
3. *We ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.*
4. *We are here to serve the community.*
5. *We ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations.*
6. *We value, advocate for, and support public education.*
7. *We assume the public comes to the Boardroom with good intentions and we honor their concerns and opinions.*
8. *We support opinions with evidence and facts.*
9. *We put aside personal and political preferences and opinions so that students' needs and priorities drive our decisions.*
10. *We recognize and appreciate the professional judgment of our staff and their commitment to our schools and students.*
11. *We operate in a unified, cohesive manner with a unity of purpose rooted in action and driven by ethical imperatives.*
12. *We serve as a model for the value of lifelong learning.*



## **Roles and Responsibilities**

These roles and responsibilities represent core functions that are fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public. Authority is granted to the Board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the community.

The role of Trustees is to stay focused on the big picture while fulfilling five responsibilities in a series of job areas. These five responsibilities are:

- We set the direction.
- We establish the structure.
- We provide support.
- We ensure accountability.
- We act as community leaders.

We carry out these responsibilities in each of the following job areas:

- Setting the District's Direction
- Student Learning and Achievement
- Finance
- Facilities
- Human Resources
- Policy
- Judicial Review
- Collective Bargaining
- Community Relations and Advocacy

The Superintendent assists the Board in carrying out its responsibilities in each of the job areas, and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon District vision, mission, and goals.

## **Board Governance Standards**

Effective boards make a commitment to govern responsibly and effectively. Board Governance Standards are designed to guide the collective work of the board in their responsibility to protect the public interest in schools and ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student. The standards also provide a framework for board members and the superintendent to work together as a governance team.

1. Board members understand the distinction between the Board roles and District staff roles and delegate administrative functions to the Superintendent.
2. Board members never discuss confidential personnel matters, confidential negotiations matters, or any matters discussed in closed session, with members of the bargaining unit, public, or staff.
3. No individual board member will make or appear to make a decision which appropriately should be made by the entire board. There are five board members. "I am only one equal vote."
4. Each member of the team accepts responsibility for making the team successful.
5. Appointments are made by the Superintendent, but only in consultation with the school board. Personnel changes are to be recommended by the Superintendent. Board input will include only significant and relevant data – never the "pushing" or "pushing out" of individuals.
6. Board members are encouraged to be aware of their conversations involving the business of the board to ensure that their conversations outside of a noticed meeting, either directly or indirectly, involve less than a majority of the board (Brown Act).
7. Loyalty to the entire team includes:
  - a. Participate in the discussion of issues and listening patiently and respectfully
  - b. Being civil and striving to understand points of view
  - c. Respect and acknowledge each individual's thoughts and opinions.
  - d. Accept and live with the action of the Board – prior disagreements are deemed closed after action is taken
  - e. Read board packets prior to meeting, bring questions or concerns prior to the meeting
  - f. Attendance at meetings is given highest priority
8. The board will conduct regular and timely evaluations of the superintendent based on the vision, goals and performance of the district, and ensure that the superintendent holds district personnel accountable.
9. The board will periodically evaluate its own effectiveness.

## **Board Protocols**

Protocols provide specific guidelines within which the board will function. The following are agreed upon norms, procedures, and protocols required for the board to work in a cohesive, consistent, and professional manner.

1. Discussions are conducted professionally, exhibiting attentive listening, mutual respect, politeness and calm, despite different opinions.
2. New issues or items raised during public comment at a school board meeting will be referred to the Superintendent, and the Superintendent will respond accordingly.
3. Ideally, questions and clarification of board agenda items are to be communicated to the Superintendent prior to the board meeting.
4. Any substantive complaint or concern made to a board member by the community is to be referred to the Superintendent who shall provide a response back to the entire Board in a timely manner.
5. Individual requests for reports, surveys, projects, etc., will be directed only to the Superintendent and responses will be directed to the entire board.
6. Rumor and innuendo information are not to be pursued except by and in the judgment of the Superintendent.
7. Board members should not come between the Superintendent and his/her staff as this may undermine the Superintendent's authority.
8. Any concern reported to the Superintendent by a board member is to receive the appropriate priority, with the disposition of the matter communicated to all of the Board.
9. With the exception of campaigning for office during election season, individual board members will not use the media as a personal forum. The Superintendent is the district designee to talk to the press/media. The Superintendent may consult with Board members to develop a public statement.
10. Board members will make their best effort to meet with the Superintendent, individually, prior to every board meeting.

**Lake Tahoe Unified School District**  
**Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Resolution to Adopt Board Governance Handbook**

WHEREAS, local boards of education are entrusted by their diverse communities to uphold the Constitution, protect the public interest in schools and ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student; and

WHEREAS, local boards must govern responsibly and effectively on behalf of the students and communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, the intent of this resolution is to build unity, create a positive organizational culture, improve the effectiveness of the Board's leadership and governance, and thereby, operate on established Board governance standards, roles, and protocols which act as guidelines for the conduct of effective Board-Superintendent relations and Board meetings; and

WHEREAS, because boards can only perform their governance work at board meetings, and they have limited time and often extensive issues that require their attention, the efficiency of these meetings is critical to effective governance; and

WHEREAS, the Board Governance Standards, Protocols and Unity of Purpose will be utilized to enhance our District's effectiveness and to help our community and families to better understand the structure and function of the School Board and Superintendent; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Lake Tahoe Unified School District, have agreed upon the following Unity of Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities, Board Governance Standards, and Board Protocols, which shall be reviewed and updated as changes in board composition and superintendent leadership occur. Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Lake Tahoe Unified School District hereby adopts the LTUSD Board Governance Handbook this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ at a regular meeting of the Board of Education, by the following vote:

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSENT:

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Board President