



BOARD OF TRUSTEES' PROTOCOLS

Overview

Exceptional Boards make governance intentional and invest in the structures and practices that address changing circumstances. Protocols are tools to strengthen the capacity of the leadership team to engage in a constructive and positive relationship. It is grounded in a mutual understanding of the respective roles and responsibility of the Board and the Superintendent in order to provide transparency and stability for the District.

Principles of Governance

The Governance Team of Banning Unified School District will operate on the following principles of good governance:

- Keeping learning and student achievement for every student as the primary focus •
Operating openly with trust and integrity
- Governing in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility, dignity and respect while honoring the right to disagree with each other
- Ensuring opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform our deliberations and decisions
- Valuing, supporting and advocating for public education

With these principles in mind, the Governance Team and Leadership Team members commit to the following working protocols:

Communications

1. The Superintendent and Board members commit to open dialogue with one another in order to avoid surprises to the Governance team and staff.
2. The Superintendent will provide relevant, timely and thorough information to Board members through weekly communication.
3. In order to ensure that all Board members receive the same information and to keep the Superintendent informed of Board members' questions and concerns, request for information should come to the Superintendent. All Board members will receive the information.
4. The Superintendent can be reached by email, cell phone (call or text), or office phone if a Board member needs to reach the Superintendent.
5. The Board understands the distinction between Board and staff roles and will refrain from

performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.

6. The Superintendent will make an effort to meet at least monthly with individual Board members to discuss items of mutual interest and concern.
7. We will practice the “no surprises” rule regarding all communications and interactions.
8. Board members understand that direct communication with staff will not include directives or insinuate direction or action must be taken by staff members, based on the Board member’s perspectives. Board members should communicate directly with the superintendent prior to school site visits or meetings with district staff.

Maintaining Confidentiality

1. The Board, Superintendent, and Cabinet members agree to maintain the confidentiality of all closed session and privileged communication as required by Education Code. Such matters relate to personnel issues, litigation, real property negotiations, and labor negotiations.
2. Board members should address concerns that may arise to the Superintendent and not to individual staff members.
3. Board members will not personally advocate for an individual’s hiring or promotion.
4. The Board will provide clear parameters to the District’s negotiation team members and will not address issues of negotiations with employee bargaining unit members.
5. Governance Team members understand the responsibility and consequences of the confidential information they will be privy to in their leadership roles.

Board Member Role in Public and with the Community

1. Board members visiting classrooms at a school are requested to inform the Superintendent and Principal in advance.
2. Board members should contact the Superintendent when the media contacts them regarding an incident, event or agenda item.
3. Individual Board members represent the District in an official capacity only when they are appointed by the Board in that capacity.
4. Governance Team members are encouraged to attend community functions
5. Governance Team members are accountable for implementing the vision, goals and policies of the District, accepting responsibility for communicating these to the larger community.
6. The Superintendent and Board President are designated as spokespersons for the District with the media.

Handling Concerns

1. The Board and Superintendent are committed to having parent and/or staff concerns handled at the lowest possible level in the organization, where those involved in the issue can resolve the matter.
2. Board members will listen to complainants and relay any concern to the Superintendent and will not interfere in the process to resolve the concerns.
3. Board members will refer parent or staff concerns to the Superintendent, and the concern will be investigated in a timely manner. The Superintendent will respond and communicate back to the Board members.
4. A Board member forwarding a complaint will not be perceived as endorsing the complaint.

Prior to Board Meetings

1. Board members will thoroughly read materials before the board meeting and will make every attempt to contact the Superintendent with any questions they have on the agenda at least 24 hours before the meeting.
2. Board members' questions will be answered in advance of the board meeting with a response to all Board members prior to the meeting.
3. Board members will not discuss items that the Board will be acting on with more than one other Board member.
4. Board members will make an effort to notify the Superintendent in advance of their intent to remove an item from the consent calendar.
5. Board Members may request that an issue be agendaized by making a request to the Board President or Superintendent. The item will be placed for discussion at a subsequent board meeting, and staff will prepare a minimum of background work.
6. When a high profile item is being considered by the Board, any disagreements or concerns should be discussed with the Superintendent before the meeting.

Board Meetings

1. All Board members will have an opportunity to speak to any items on the agenda, and the Board President will acknowledge individual Board members prior to making a comment.
2. Each Board member will respect the right of other Board members to hold an opposing point of view and, following a board vote, will respect the decision made by the board.
3. Board members agree that it is a courtesy to each other and to the full board to share the reason for a dissenting vote during deliberation.

4. All team members will be respectful to each other and recognize the impact of comments made in public toward one another.
5. The Superintendent or a Board member should not bring a matter to a public meeting that is a surprise to the team.
6. Study sessions will be developed throughout the year on issues that require extensive discussion.
7. Board and management team members will remain engaged at all meetings and avoid electronic or other distractions not related to the meeting.
8. Board members will attend all scheduled board meetings unless there is an extenuating circumstance.
9. Board members will not respond to public comments, but refer to the Superintendent if follow up is needed.

Social Media

1. Board members will exercise caution so as to ensure that electronic communications are not used as a means for the Board to deliberate outside of an agenda meeting, nor to circumvent the public's access to records regarding district business.
2. To the extent possible, electronic communications regarding any district-related business shall be transmitted through a district-provided device or account.
3. Governance Team members recognize that "clicking" on social media is considered speech and might be found to be part of the deliberation process, which can be a violation of the Brown Act.
4. Board members will exercise caution when commenting on, liking, or retweeting any other member's social media content.
5. Governance Team members understand that social media use can create problems for the District and the team through misinterpretation or miscommunication.