

YREKA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

Board of Trustees

Cherie Jones, President
Gayla Dagata, Vice President
Tara Miller
Christopher Clayton
Steve Burton

Superintendent

Dave Parsons

Unity of Purpose, Roles & Responsibilities, Norms & Protocols

This Governance Handbook reflects the governance team's work on creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions and agreements about unity of purpose, roles, norms and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all students.

Board Approved: June 11, 2013

**Yreka Union School District
Governance Handbook**

Table of Contents

Vision/Mission Statement	1
Great Traits of Y.U.S.D.	1
Effective Governance (CSBA).....	2
Working as an Effective Team (CSBA).....	3
YUSD Governance Team:	
Who Are We?	
What Is Our Purpose?	
To Whom Are We Responsible?	4
<u>Discussion of Roles and Responsibilities:</u>	
A Discussion of Governance	5
Three Essential Roles	6
Definition of Micromanagement	6
Communicating with Constituents.....	7
Board Governance Protocols.....	8

Our District Vision

The Yreka Union School District will prepare students with 21st Century social and academic skills necessary for college and career readiness to be productive members of a global society.

Our District Mission

It is the mission of the Yreka Union School District to provide each student with a safe, caring and supportive atmosphere which will foster the intellectual, emotional, and social growth necessary to become a productive and responsible citizen who accepts cultural differences. All parents, students, teachers and staff are part of a supportive team helping students develop personal, educational, social and ethical values.

Great Traits About the Yreka Union School District

- “Our kids come 1st”
- “There is a family feel in the district”
- “Low staff turnover”
- “Everyone belongs”
- “Professional staff”
- “Teamwork”
- “District is sought after”
- “People are appreciated”
- “Teachers stay current”
- “Good parent environment”
- “Sense of excitement about new things”

Effective Governance

California School Boards Association

Governance – A Definition

School district governance is the act of transforming the needs, wishes and desires of the community into policies that direct the community's schools.

As the governance team fulfills responsibilities in the areas of setting direction, human resources, policies, student learning and achievement, finance, judicial appeals, collective bargaining, and community relations and advocacy, the way in which governance team members perform the governance role is critical.

Whether in the boardroom, out in the community or at home, board members are always trustees for the district. The integrity of the school district's educational program is dependent upon the responsible and professional manner in which each board member, and the board collectively, fulfills governance roles and responsibilities with the superintendent. The demeanor of governance team members sends an important message to the public.

Utilizing effective governance techniques, private citizens, once elected to school boards, work with the superintendent to keep all district efforts focused on student learning. Effective governance tenets encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors that enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in a school district.

The community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, but the district superintendent will translate all efforts into action. It is therefore vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

Working as a group, board members and the superintendent leverage the efforts of the professional staff by setting a direction for the district reflective of the community's wishes for its children, by creating a supportive framework for action in the district, by holding the system accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms, by providing support to students and staff through behaviors and actions, and by demonstrating community leadership on behalf of children, district schools and public education. When this is done effectively, the chances of a climate for excellence being created in which students are able to thrive increases dramatically.

Working As An Effective Team

California School Boards Association

To effectively focus all district efforts on learning and achievement for all students, a governance team needs to have a unity of purpose, a mutual understanding of roles, positive working relationships and supportive structures and processes. One of the chief ways a governance team can strengthen or maintain its effectiveness is to periodically assess its own performance in these areas.

Unity of Purpose

The foundation of effective governance is the common focus governance team members share that helps them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose. Unity of Purpose is the super-ordinate goals, the core values and beliefs governance team members share in common about children, the district and public education.

Roles

Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the Board and Superintendent and strive to operate within them.

Culture

Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave with each other and with those outside the team. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

Structure and Process

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the board and superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., agenda structure, visiting schools, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea, handling complex community issues, how boards operate, and how they do business).

Yreka Union School District Governance Team

Who Are We?

The Yreka Union School District Governance Team members are leaders who care about our students, the school district and our community. We are people who are committed to public education and understand the role education plays in sustaining our democratic society. We represent the entire community: children, parents, staff, businesses, and all community members. We hold the interest of ALL the children in trust. We have been chosen to provide educational leadership to the district and to see that the mission of the district is achieved. Even though we bring our individual perspectives and experiences to the table, we are committed to developing collective understanding, making informed decisions and operating as a unified team.

What Is Our Purpose?

We are a leadership team, responsible for the realization of the mission of our District while being fiscally responsible with the public monies in our trust. We consider the present and future to maintain our focus on our mission, vision and aims that were developed through inclusive processes. We have the responsibility to do the best job we can for our students within the state and federal requirements, and to see that our students graduate from our schools able to become responsible citizens. We see that the necessary resources are available to our staff to do the work we expect of them. We inspire, engage and inform our staff and community about education issues on behalf of our students, our district, our teachers and public education.

To Whom Are We Responsible?

We are responsible to our children to provide the best possible education in a safe, nurturing, challenging learning environment. We are responsible to district staff to provide necessary resources and a safe, supportive, challenging work environment. We are responsible to parents to provide a free public education for their children in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for the children and their families, and to provide avenues for their involvement in their children's education. We are responsible to our voters and taxpayers to provide a high quality of education in our schools so the community is perceived as a good place to live, and to use public funds efficiently and effectively. We are responsible to our entire community to keep them informed and help them understand the benefits of our educational system whether or not they have children in our schools. We are responsible to the state and federal government to obey the law, to be informed and to keep other elected officials informed about the effect of legislation on our district, and to advocate on behalf of our children, the teaching profession and our schools. We are responsible to the other members of our team to come to meetings prepared, to be interested and informed, to be committed to our work, and to be respectful and honest in our interactions.

A Discussion of Roles and Responsibilities

California School Boards Association

Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent, and strive to operate within them.

There are important distinctions to be made between the board's role and that of the superintendent and staff. Boards and superintendents must team together to ensure a district has effective leadership. Just as board members should govern and not manage a school district, superintendents should not administer a district in isolation from the representatives whom the public has entrusted with the schools. School Board "trustees" are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure a community's schools educate the community's children in accordance with the wishes of the local community.

Board members have collective, **not individual authority**. Authority to make decisions is only granted to the board as a whole. The full board gives direction to the superintendent, most commonly at board meetings. Individual board members do not have the authority to direct the superintendent, unless otherwise agreed to by the board and superintendent.

The role of the school boards is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are well run. When a board member inadvertently takes over the staff role, he is in essence vacating his board seat and effectively undercutting his ability to govern. He is forfeiting his ability to hold the superintendent responsible for the way the board's policy direction is translated into action by the professional staff.

Three Essential District Roles:

The Three Roles

The Board has the Strategic Role:

- It doesn't directly make change happen but sets the targets for change to happen
- Sets clear targets for improvement

The Administration has the Tactical Role:

- It creates and deploys plans to meet the strategic charge set by the board while working directly with all constituent groups

Teachers have the Operational Role:

- They take the tactical plan and adapt it to actual work in the classroom and only they have direct access to students
- Focus on students

These three roles must be aligned if meaningful change is going to occur.

Definition of Micromanagement:

When any person in the organization assumes the function and/or responsibility of another role.

Communicating with Constituents

1. **Receive** Listen to what the person has to say without preparing a response.
2. **Repeat** Paraphrase or ask a question to clarify for understanding. We will ask the person to identify those to whom they have spoken about the matter prior to contacting a board member.
3. **Request** Ask what the person would like the board member to do with the information and/or what they see as a solution to the problem.
4. **Review** Go over the real options available to the person to remedy the situation.
5. **Redirect** Put the person back into the system at the appropriate place – remembering lines of authority and chains of command.
Remember: Students and district personnel have legal and due process rights that must be honored. We will not divulge confidential information to community members or staff.
6. **Report** We will maintain open lines of communication between the Board and the Superintendent and will notify the Superintendent of the conversation as soon as possible:
 - a. So the Superintendent can verify or clarify the situation and follow-through as necessary and/or appropriate
 - b. So that the Superintendent knows first-hand what the board member said to the community or staff member.
 - c. We will ask the community or staff member to follow-up with us about the issue.

Board Governance Protocols and Procedures to Facilitate Governance Leadership

ISSUE	PROTOCOL
-------	----------

Board member visits to district schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees will call the Superintendent to request a visit to a school site. The Superintendent will either host the board member or delegate to another administrator to host the visit. • The exception to this process is when the board member is visiting in their role as a parent.
--	--

ISSUE	PROTOCOL
-------	----------

Board members absence from a board meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the first practical opportunity, a board member will inform the Superintendent if the board member is to be absent from any board meeting.
---	---

ISSUE	PROTOCOL
-------	----------

Responding to the Press/Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any request by the Press/Media shall be directed to the Superintendent. • The exception would be if there is a legal issue with the Superintendent or if the board has accepted the resignation of the Superintendent. The designated board member to address the board in this circumstance is the board president.
--------------------------------------	---

ISSUE	PROTOCOL
-------	----------

Questions for the Superintendent in regards to the board packet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board will strive to avoid surprising the Superintendent at all times. • If a board member has a question about an item in the board packet, the board member will contact the Superintendent as soon as possible before the meeting. • The Superintendent will make every reasonable attempt to have the information available by the board meeting.
--	---

