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Mountain View Whisman School District GOVERNANCE TEAM HANDBOOK

GOVERNANCE NORMS

The Mountain View Whisman School District is governed by a Board, not by individual Trustees. While understanding our 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.

We will . . .

- Keep the District focused on learning and achievement for all students.
- Communicate a common vision.
- Operate openly, with trust and integrity.
- Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
- Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.
- Take collective responsibility for the Board’s performance.
- Periodically evaluate our own effectiveness.
- Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.

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GOVERNANCE PROTOCOLS

<p>Consent Agenda The Consent Agenda allows the Board to deal with routine business (including items that are covered by policy) with minimal discussion.</p>	<p>Trustees will notify the Board President by the morning of the Board meeting if they intend to pull an item.</p> <p>There are two specific times that call for an item being pulled: when a Trustee plans to vote “no;” and, 2hen a Trustee needs further information or discussion before deciding how to vote.</p>
<p>Trustee request for information</p>	<p>Trustees will let the Superintendent know ahead of time when a request for information will be made in public so the staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer.</p> <p>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 ask for a “thumbs up” from the entire Board to see if a majority of the Board supports the request.</p> <p>When an individual Board member requests information, it will be provided to all Board members.</p>
<p>Voting “No” or Abstaining</p>	<p>Each Trustee respects the right of other Trustees to vote “no” or to abstain on an issue. Everyone also agrees it is a courtesy to the team to explain the reasons for the “no” vote or abstention during deliberation.</p>
<p>Visiting Schools</p>	<p>The Superintendent will share calendar invites for school walkthroughs with Trustees, and Trustees may RSVP.</p> <p>Trustees will observe visitor protocol and wear badges and also sign in. Trustees will be cautious about encroaching on the administrator’s time. Trustees will avoid evaluative commentary.</p>

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Handling Complaints and Concerns Individual Board members have no authority to fix problems. The appropriate order of whom to contact is first the teacher, then principal, then District staff.	Trustees listen carefully to complaints, remembering they are only hearing one perspective on an issue, then direct the person making the complaint to the person in the District most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. This will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally and expeditiously and that the processes and procedures of the District are upheld. As representatives of the public, it is important that Trustees invite the person with the complaint to ultimately get back to them if the issue is not addressed. The Trustee will advise the Superintendent of the concern. Email Statement: Thank you for your email. I will inform the Superintendent of your concern and she or her designee will respond accordingly.
How we address each other during public Board meetings	Trustees will address each other by their title and last name. The Superintendent and staff will be addressed by title and last name.
Spokesperson	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Once decisions have been made the Board President, or the President's designee, will be the spokesperson for the Board and describe the Board's processes and positions.2. During disasters and emergencies, Board President, or the President's designee, will be the spokesperson for the Board.
Communications During Meetings	Communications utilized during Board meetings, including those by electronic means, are subject to requests from the public under the Public Records Act. Trustees will refrain from sending/receiving electronic communication during Board meetings on matters that are being heard, considered, or deliberated. As a matter of courtesy, and to allow all Board members access to the most complete information possible, Trustees will refrain from engaging in private conversations during Board meetings, including during breaks, with members of the public on matters of which the Board will be deliberating.
Motions and Deliberation Process	On action items, the order is as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Presentation by Staff2. Trustee Questions3. Public Comment4. Trustee Comments (discussion and deliberation); further clarification from staff when needed and/or as directed by President5. Motion6. Vote

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Getting questions answered about items on the agenda before a meeting	<p>Method 1: Trustees will, insofar as possible, submit questions regarding agenda items by 4:00 p.m. the Tuesday before a regularly scheduled meeting. The questions and answers to the questions will be posted online alongside the agenda.</p> <p>Method 2: Call or e-mail questions to the Superintendent as soon as possible. If the item is confidential, do not use names of personnel or students when using e-mail.</p>
Self-Monitoring of Governance Team Effectiveness	<p>Individual Trustees agree to review and adhere to meeting norms, goals and CSBA Board member roles. When behavior by an individual Trustee detracts from effective governance, other Trustees work with that Trustee to encourage conformance to our norms (communicating with courage and consideration). In a workshop setting, the governance team will evaluate its effectiveness once a year.</p>
Placing Items on Agenda	<p>Email item with a short explanation to the Superintendent at least 24 hours prior to a meeting. During the agenda item, the Superintendent will read proposed agenda items to the Board who will vote on whether or not to take up an item at a future date. It will be determined if the item is just for information, an agenda item or if it should be a workshop.</p>
Board Meeting Management	<p>During discussion, Trustees will be called on only when they indicate they have something to say (vs. “going down line”). Trustees may request that a bio break be taken during long meetings. Trustees may leave for a personal break.</p> <p>It is the role of the Board President, and individual Trustees, to actively facilitate Board meeting efficiency and protocol.</p>
Board Member Updates	<p>The purpose of Trustee updates is to share information on school or policy events the trustee may have attended since the last meeting. Trustees respect the need to help facilitate efficient meetings, so they agree to (a) limit their remarks to, (b) focus on offering information that helps other Trustees do their job, and (c) always consider, “Does this need to be said?” Trustees agree they will not use this time to lobby.</p>

DRAFT

Setting Board Agenda	<p>The Superintendent will distribute a tentative Governance Calendar of agenda items to all Board members each year. Following the established template, the Superintendent and Board President will order the agenda for each meeting for maximum effectiveness—considerations will include staff time, paid consultant time, likely public involvement, and anticipated Trustee discussion. Under unusual circumstances, the Superintendent and Board President may reorder the established template. Out of courtesy to staff and the community, whenever possible the published agenda will reflect the actual order of the meeting. However, there may be times that the Board will reorder the agenda at the beginning of a meeting. There may be cases when the Board President determines it is appropriate to reorder the agenda, and the Board President agrees to make this decision in consultation with the Superintendent.</p>
Meeting Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Everyone is engaged➤ Seek first to understand, then be understood➤ Stay on topic➤ Keep discussion moving forward (Does it need to be said?)➤ Remain objective➤ Adhere to time➤ Maintain a collegial tone, where discussion and debates are thoughtful and respectful
Closed Session Protocol	<p>During Board Agenda Planning, Cabinet will identify any input/direction they will need to obtain from the Board during the upcoming Closed Session. At the end of Closed Session, staff will summarize (and record) the direction provided by the Board.</p> <p>During closed session discussions, if Board members don't express concern about an item brought up in Closed Session, staff will assume that the Board supports it.</p>
Communication Tools	<p>Board Wrap Up: The Public Information Officer or Superintendent will prepare and distribute board meeting agenda highlights to the community ahead of a meeting and a summary of important board actions afterward via district email list.</p>
Election of Board Officers	<p>The Board typically follows a rotation method (Clerk to Vice President to President) for selecting officers. There are times when the rotation may not be followed.</p>

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Board President	The Board President conducts meetings, works closely with the Superintendent to construct upcoming agendas, and at times serves as the public face of the Board. The President plays a key role in the success of the Governance Team, therefore, it is highly recommended that the Board President have demonstrated leadership experience and competency on an elected body, or participate in a training to invest in strong leadership skills, such as the New President workshop offered through CSBA or CSBA Masters in Governance trainings.
Board Vice President	A new Vice President is highly recommended to complete the New President workshop or a similar training before rotating into the position of President.
Social Media Communication	<p>It is each trustees right to use social media, however, they must be careful to not offer a personal opinion on any matter that is under the Board's purview.</p> <p>Board members agree they will not engage in social media debates and arguments, and if they observe concerning online discussions or information, they will bring it to the attention of the Superintendent for appropriate action. The governance team recognizes that electronic communication is an efficient and convenient way to communicate and expedite the exchange of information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board members shall exercise caution to ensure that social media is not used as a means for the board to deliberate outside of an agendized board meeting.• Electronically transmitted suggestions or issues will be sent to the superintendent for appropriate response and distribution. The Superintendent may handle the issue or forward on to staff.• Any complaint or request for information should be forwarded to the superintendent in accordance with board bylaws and governance protocols so that the issue may be handled through the appropriate process.• Like other writings concerning school district business, a trustee's electronic communication and social media comments or "likes" regarding district business may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

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Attorneys Contact	<p>Superintendent and Board President Board Bylaw 9124 states as follows: At his/her discretion, the Board president or Superintendent may confer with district legal counsel subject to any limits or parameters established by the Board. In addition, the Superintendent or Board president may contact district legal counsel to provide the Board with legal information or advice when so directed by a majority of the Board. Individual Board members other than the Board president may not seek advice from district legal counsel on matters of district business unless so authorized by a majority of the Board.</p>
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