

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019



Board of Education

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Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

Table of Contents

Vision for MDUSD	3
Unity of Purpose – Governance Team	3
Governance Standards and Board Bylaws	3
• Role of Board BB9000	3
• Governance Standards BB9005	4-5
• Public Statements BB9010	5
• Members Limits of Board Members Authority BB9200	5
• Negotiations BB9280	6
• Methods of Operation BB9300	6
• Meetings and Notices BB9320	6
• Agenda/Meeting Materials BB9322	6
• Meeting Conduct BB9323	7
Norms	7
Protocols	7-9
Goals	9
• LCAP	9

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

MDUSD Vision

As Educators, Mt. Diablo Staff has a moral imperative to prepare students for post-secondary success upon graduation by providing high expectations and a rigorous instructional program.

Unity of Purpose

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, the values and beliefs and deeply felt goals governance team members share about students, the district and public education that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

Governance Team

The Governance Team for Mt. Diablo Unified School District is recognized as the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent. This team is committed to keeping students at the center of all decisions and policies. The overall effectiveness of the Governance Team has a direct impact on student outcomes. To this end, the Governance Team embraces the Unity of Purpose.

Governance Standards

MDUSD Governance Team follows the Brown Act, Government Code section 54950 et seq., in the process of carrying out its responsibilities. Governance Team members are responsible for being familiar with the Brown Act.

The Governance Standards for MDUSD Governance Team is outlined in Board Bylaws. There is an annual review of these Bylaws, with opportunity for revision. Each member of the Governance Team is responsible for being familiar with the Board Bylaws, which are included in this Handbook. The following Board Bylaws segments are highlighted here to support ongoing Governance Team effectiveness:

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

Role of Board: BB9000

Board Bylaws regulate the work of the Board. Board Bylaw 9000 brings clarity to the role and responsibilities of the Board.

The Board is the elected representation for the community, provides big-picture visionary leadership, and establishes the framework for all district work by adopting fair and responsible policies and procedures that guide district operations. The Board provides leadership on educational issues to the community, and fosters an environment within the district where excellence can be attained.

Board members have no individual authority to give direction, task any member of district staff, or resolve complaints. The Board as a whole gives direction to the Superintendent by majority vote of all of the membership constituting the Board. Action is taken at legally noticed Board meetings on items that have been identified for action on the agenda.

Governance Standards: BB9005

The Governing Board believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board also has 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 Board effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

The Board expects its members to work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. Each individual Board member shall:

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.
2. Value, support and advocate for public education
3. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community.

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

4. Act with Dignity, and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior.
5. Keep confidential matters confidential.
6. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.
7. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.
8. Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals.

Public Statements: BB9010

When speaking to community groups, the media, or other members of the public, individual Board members should recognize that their statements may be perceived as reflecting the views and positions of the Board. Board members have a responsibility to identify personal viewpoints as such and not as the viewpoint of the Board.

Members Limits of Board Members Authority: BB9200

Individual members of the Board, by virtue of holding office, shall not exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee. Individual Board members shall submit requests for information to the Superintendent.

Individual Board members do not have the authority to resolve complaints. Any Board member approached directly by a person with a complaint should refer the complainant to the Superintendent or designee so that the problem may receive proper consideration and be handled through the appropriate district process.

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

Negotiations: BB9280

Since the Governing Board itself will not negotiate with any employee organization directly, the Board designates the Superintendent or designee to represent it in negotiations with employee organizations. Expert consultants in the field of negotiations may be contracted to assist the negotiating team(s), the Superintendent, and the Board in the process of negotiations.

Methods of Operation: BB9300

The Board shall concern itself primarily with broad questions of policy, rather than with administrative details.

Meetings and Notices: BB9320

A majority of the Board shall not, outside of an authorized meeting, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. However, an employee or district official may engage in separate conversations with Board members in order to answer questions or provide information regarding an item within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, as long as that employee or district official does not communicate the comments or position of any Board members to other Board members.

Agenda/Meeting Materials: BB9322

Any member of the public or any Board member may request that a matter within the jurisdiction of the Board be placed on the agenda of a regular meeting. The request must be in writing and be submitted to the Superintendent with supporting documents and information, if any, at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting date. Items submitted less than two weeks before the scheduled meeting date may be postponed to a later meeting in order to allow sufficient time for consideration and research of the issue.

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

Meeting Conduct: BB9323

Except as otherwise provided in the bylaws of the Board or by specific legal requirements, the Board shall conduct all its meetings in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, latest edition.

Norms

As another means of supporting effective work of the Governance Team, the following norms are agreed to for their work together:

- Keep students at the center
- Be respectful of each other's ideas and opinions
- Be honest
- Be open to new ideas
- Listen for understanding
- Commit the time necessary to govern effectively
- Support a culture of positivity and teamwork

Protocols

To ensure practices appropriate for the roles Board Members and of the Superintendent, the following protocols have been established:

Prior to Board Meetings

- The Superintendent meets with the Board President to finalize the agenda prior to public posting.
- Board members submit any questions to the Superintendent by the Friday, or sooner if possible, before the Board Meeting to enable the Superintendent to work with staff as needed to provide a response.
- Board members review all Board agenda items early enough to submit questions to the Superintendent.
- Board members let the Superintendent know in advance of any consent agenda items he/she will be asking to pull for separate consideration.
- When a high profile item is being considered by the Board, Board members will discuss any concerns with the Superintendent in advance of the meeting.

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

- Board members will be thoughtful in their requests for information to ensure such requests are appropriately consistent with the role of Board members and to not put undue burden on the Superintendent and staff.

During Board Meetings

- Board members provide Board Members and the Superintendent with reason for voting no or abstaining on any agenda item.
- Board members understand that an abstention is a vote in support.
- Board members respect the right of other Board members to hold an opposing view, and following a Board vote, respect the decision made by the Board.
- Board members follow the stated protocol for public comment.
- Board members refrain from use of cell phones and any two-way electronic communication during the meetings.
- Board members will limit their communications during the Board meeting to those in attendance at the meeting.

Maintaining Confidentiality

- Board members agree to maintain the confidentiality of all closed session and privileged conversations.

Communications

- In order for the Superintendent to be aware of all expressed concerns of Board members, Board member requests for information will go to the Superintendent and not to staff.
- Board members will let the Superintendent know of any plans to visit school sites.
- Board members will keep the Superintendent informed of any concerns and will practice the 'no surprises' rule with their fellow Board members and the Superintendent.
- Board members will refer staff, parents and community members to the Superintendent with any questions, issues and concerns.

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Governance Handbook 2019

Board Member Role in Public

- Board members represent the District in an official capacity only when appointed by the Board to serve in that capacity.
- Board members contact the Superintendent should the media contact them. At the Board direction, the Board President acts as the spokesperson on specific issues.

Local Control Accountability Plan Goals

Goal 1: College and Career

All students will receive a high quality education in a safe and welcoming environment with equitable expectations, access to technology, and instruction in the California State Standards that prepare them for college and/or career.

Goal 2: Professional Learning

High quality, culturally proficient, and responsive staff will provide engaging instruction respectful of all students' backgrounds to ensure they are college and/or career ready.

Goal 3: Community Engagement

Parents, family and community will be informed, engaged and empowered as partners with Mt. Diablo Unified to support student learning.