SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 12.1

Meeting Date: October 6, 2016

Subject: Governance Handbook

- ☒ Information Item Only
- ☐ Approval on Consent Agenda
- ☐ Conference (for discussion only)
- ☐ Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- ☐ Conference/Action
- ☐ Action
- ☐ Public Hearing

Division: Superintendent's Office

Recommendation: Approve and adopt the Governance Handbook.

Background/Rationale: This handbook reflects the SCUSD governance team's effort to create a framework for effective governance that will help provide unity of purpose, roles and norms. It also outlines agreed upon protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that places the achievement and well-being of students above all else.

The governance handbook will be reviewed and adopted every January with the exception of this initial adoption. The next review and adoption will be January 2018.

Financial Considerations: None

LCAP Goal(s): College, Career and Life Ready Graduates; Family and Community Empowerment; Operational Excellence

Documents Attached:
1. Governance Handbook

Estimated Time of Presentation:	5 minutes
Submitted by:	Nathaniel Browning, Special Assistant to the Board of Education
Approved by:	José L. Banda, Superintendent

Sacramento City Unified School District

Governance Handbook

Board of Education

Gustavo Arroyo
Ellen Cochrane
Jay Hansen
Christina Pritchett
Diana Rodriguez
Jessie Ryan
Darrel Woo

Superintendent

José Banda

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE Unity of Purpose, Roles, Responsibilities, Norms and Protocols
This handbook was developed as a project to improve our Board of Education unity and to strengthen our leadership. It defines who we are and how we operate as a group. *Annually the team reviews and updates this Governance Handbook.*

Approved: _____

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Mission

Students graduate as globally competitive lifelong learners, prepared to succeed in a career and higher education institution of their choice to secure gainful employment and contribute to society.

Vision

Every student is a responsible, productive citizen in a diverse and competitive world.

Values

- Equity: All students will receive instruction and intervention supports where needed to be successful and to reduce educational and opportunity gaps in our community.
- Achievement: Students will be provided with a relevant, rigorous and well-rounded curriculum, with the expectation that all will be well prepared for a career and post-secondary education.
- Integrity: Communication and interaction among and between students, parents, staff and community partners is defined by mutual respect, trust and support.
- Accountability: Commitment to transparency and ongoing review of data will create a culture focused on results and continuous improvement in a fiscally sustainable manner.
- Efficiency: Systems and resources are managed effectively and prioritized to meet goals and expectations.

Goals

The goals of Sacramento City Unified School District:

- College, Career and Life Ready Graduates: Challenge and support all students to actively engage in rigorous and relevant curriculum that prepares them for college, career and a fulfilling life, regardless of zip code, race/ethnicity, ability, language proficiency, and life circumstances.
- Safe, Emotional Healthy and Engaged Students: Provide supports and opportunities to ensure that every student succeeds, with safe school environments that foster student engagement, promote daily attendance, and remove barriers to learning.
- Family and Community Empowerment: Commit to a welcoming school environment for our community; recognize and align district partnerships; and provide tools and family empowerment opportunities that are linked to supporting student academic achievement and social emotional competencies in order for families to be equal and active partners in their child’s educational success.
- Operational Excellence: Be a service-focused organization. We will consistently serve students, families, staff and community with efficient programs, practices, policies and procedures at every point of contact across the district.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Board of Education are the representatives of the people, elected to ensure the district schools educate the children in consideration of the interests of the local community. The role of the School Board is to ***govern*** the school district.

The Superintendent is hired by the Board of Education to provide the professional expertise in the day-to-day ***management*** of the district. The role of the Superintendent is:

1. To work with the Board of Education to develop an effective governance leadership team.
2. To serve as the chief administrative officer for the school district.

The Board of Education:
Sets the direction for the community's schools by:

- Focusing on student learning.
- Assessing district needs.
- Generating, reviewing and revising setting direction documents: (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- Ensuring an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop these documents.
- Ensuring that these documents are the driving force for all district efforts.

Establishes an effective and efficient structure pertaining to:

- District direction
- Student learning and achievement
- Superintendent employment
- Policy
- Finance
- Facilities
- Collective bargaining agreements
- Judicial review
- Community relations and advocacy

Provides support through our behavior and actions by:

- Articulating the district's beliefs, vision and goals
- Acting with a professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and vision
- Making data-driven decisions and providing resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals as outlined by the Strategic Plan
- Upholding Board approved bylaws, district policies, and protocols
- Ensuring a positive personnel climate exists
- Being knowledgeable about district efforts and able to explain them to the public

Ensures accountability to the Public by:

- Monitoring student achievement and program effectiveness and requiring program changes as indicated
- Evaluating the Superintendent
- Monitoring, reviewing and revising policies

- Serving as a judicial and appeals body
- Monitoring and adjusting district finances
- Monitoring the collective bargaining process

Acts as community leaders by:

- Speaking with a common voice about district priorities, goals and issues
- Advocating for children, district programs and public education to the general public, community, and local, state and national leaders
- Engaging and involving the community in district schools and activities
- Communicating clear information about policies, programs and fiscal conditions of the district
- Educating the community and the media about issues facing the district and public education

Board Beliefs

Learning and education is the key to the future. It can help end the cycle of poverty and injustice, and open doors of opportunity for all students. Persistent achievement and opportunity gaps must addressed in order to do so.

No one should fall through the cracks. Even helping one child makes our Board service worthwhile.

Education can help improve neighborhoods and communities. Through partnerships now, and by preparing generation who will lead our communities tomorrow, we can improve the quality of life of everyone in our communities.

We can make a difference in the above areas through effective Board practices.

Board Values

Respect – Members commit to treating everyone with kindness, consideration and civility and being responsive to each other, the community and staff.

Partnership – Members commit to actively participating in the Board's work, and openly sharing their governance activity outside of meetings.

Integrity- Members commit to being open and honest with each other, and following through on commitments and promises.

BOARD MEETING NORMS

We will:

- Be on time for meetings
- Come to meetings prepared to participate
- Model expected behaviors
- Ensure that all members have the same information
- Acknowledge all opinions in a positive manner
- Practice open and honest communication
- Accept differences in experience, culture, and value priorities
- Give and receive constructive feedback civilly to all patrons and staff
- Allow others to speak without interruption
- Listen attentively
- Have no side conversations
- Stay focused on our goals and student achievement
- Go the extra mile to support each other in our work
- Maintain flexibility in difficult situations
- Work to continuously improve meeting efficiencies through data and feedback
- Keep Board Member comments and updates to no more than two minutes each

The following processes guide the operation of the entire Board of Education and determine how we do business. Protocols are the agreements that ensure that all members of the team are operating within their agreed upon roles.

Unified Board

Recognizing that leaders have different management styles and philosophies, differences of opinion are expected. When a controversy or split vote occurs on a significant issue, the Board of Education agrees to disagree out of respect for the other person and his/her right to that opinion. We also understand that majority rules.

Recognizing that district improvement requires change, the Board of Education team welcomes different opinions and ideas. However, the team also takes great effort to avoid lingering animosities which can result from different viewpoints.

The Board of Education actively solicits input and listens to all perspectives. The Board values diverse opinions among its Members and realizes that by respecting that diversity and seeking common ground it becomes a more effective Board.

The Board of Education recognizes that it represents all students and all facets of the community and, as such, it has an obligation to pursue different points of view with honesty and vigor. Each Board Member commits to hearing one another out, and by doing so Board Members model for students the honest and respectful expression of different points of view.

If a Board Member cannot support the decision of the entire Board of Education because it offends a moral/personal code, the Member is expected, at a minimum, to refrain from undermining the decision or directive.

The above commitment to either support or refrain from undermining majority decisions does not preclude the member from asking for consideration at a future time of a more acceptable alternative. However, the decision of the entire Board of Education should be considered final.

Managing Difficult Topics

Recognizing that the Board of Education has been elected to conduct challenging conversations in public, Members agree to discuss the issues in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Debate should only occur between Board Members. The Board of Education will not respond to questions or statements made by members of the audience. However, the Board President or Committee Chair will respond to public comment during the meeting and only if warranted.

We do not have different values. We have different value priorities. Rarely are there single-value problems. We seek the **best** rather than the right solution.

Handling Concerns and Complaints from the Public and Staff

When someone complains to us regarding policies or procedures; Members must be careful not to usurp the chain of command. If the complaint is heard during a meeting, we will direct the person or persons to the supervisor that oversees the school site or department implicated in the complaint against the district. We will inform them that a supervisor will connect them immediately following their public comment. Complaints emailed to us will be forwarded to the Superintendent and/or the Deputy Superintendent and then forwarded on to the correct individual overseeing the school site of concern.

We understand that as individuals we have no power to fix the problems. As representatives of the public, it is important that we invite the person with the complaint or concern to ultimately get back to us if the issue is not resolved. The Special Assistant to the Board of Education may become involved if the issue was not initially resolved.

However, with regard to the Board of Education's formal role in overseeing and approving work grievance procedures and discrimination appeals, Members will not listen or respond to complaints against personnel.

Board members will be knowledgeable of the complaint processes outlined in Board Policies 1312.1, 1312.2, 1312.3, 1312.4, and 4031 along with the accompanying administrative rules.

Meeting Operations – Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools

Board Members agree that Board meetings are opportunities to strategically move the district forward and to communicate direction, district priorities and progress to the community.

It is the Board of Education's desire that meetings shall be formal enough for orderly procedures but informal enough to encourage discussion. Debate should only occur between Board Members. Members will not respond to questions or statements made by members of the audience. Only the Board President or Committee Chair will respond to public comment during the meeting, and only if warranted.

Board Members will generally refrain from taking a position on an agenda item or issue until all relevant information is presented. Every effort will be made to limit deliberations/activities to governance work and not administrative/staff work.

The Board of Education will annually meet with members of the administrative team to create the Board's Governance Calendar. At the conclusion of each regular meeting, the Superintendent will note upcoming information and decision points.

Spokesperson for the Board/ Communication with the Media

We believe it is essential that important information be communicated to the entire Board of Education, the staff and the community in as timely a fashion as possible. We recognize that some situations have legal or other considerations that may place restrictions on what may be told to the media or public. We also believe it is important that we speak with one voice in order to maintain the trust of our community.

The designated spokesperson will vary depending on the issue or situation:

- Crisis/Disaster: The Superintendent will be the primary spokesperson and may involve the Board President at the Superintendent's discretion.
- Meeting Information (e.g. Board meetings, agenda items, study sessions): The Board President and the Superintendent will serve as primary spokespersons.
- Core Values /Vision / District-wide Priorities / General District Information: All Board Members may serve as spokespersons utilizing developed and agreed upon key messages.

Any public statements regarding district activities or issues made by Board Members while attending community activities, events or organizations should uphold the agreed upon Board position and/or key messages.

The Board of Education also recognizes that Members are not obligated to answer questions outside of a Board Meeting and may refer to meeting minutes as the official record.

The Board of Education understands the importance of being visible and accessible to the public. Members will demonstrate their dedication and commitment to the entire Board of Education by clarifying their authority as one of seven in all Board of Education decisions and actions. No individual Board Member, other than the Board President, or designee, has the authority to speak for the entire Board of Education. Individual Board Members may always share their individual viewpoint but must clarify that they are speaking for themselves, rather than the entire Board of Education.

District Planning

The Board of Education will convene a community planning session to establish long-term district goals at least every 5 years. The Superintendent and the Board of Education will work together to establish Board goals/Superintendent goals annually.

Staff Reports

The Board of Education recognizes the commitment and expertise of staff and appreciates their effort in providing the Board of Education with accurate and timely information. To balance its time to address all the issues that must be dealt with, the Board of Education

directs the Superintendent to give clear guidelines to staff regarding Board presentations. These include:

- Use executive summaries and
- Get to the point quickly.
- Avoid jargon or acronyms.
- Avoid reading slides or documents to the Board.

Staff should address these questions as appropriate:

- Using quantitative and qualitative data, how are all students impacted as well as individual subgroups?
- How is the recommendation consistent with the district mission, values, vision and priorities?
- What policies are related to the issue?
- How has the community been engaged in this process, if applicable?
- How have our bargaining partners been engaged in this process, if applicable?
- Are there research-based criteria the Board should know?
- What districts offer best practices in this area?
- What are the pros and cons of the recommendation?
- What is the impact on the budget?

Board Members shall treat all staff with respect and dignity during board reports as outlined by the the Board Beliefs and Values contained herein.

Use of District-Provided Email Accounts and Other Equipment

Board Members shall utilize district-provided email accounts, cell phones and resources for all district business. Doing so will help protect the district from hacking and fraud. It will also help secure personal Board Member information in the event of a public records act request where files may have to be collected and shared from cell phones and email accounts.

Review of Board Bylaws, Brown Act, and Other

The Board of Education will hold a special study session every January to review Board standards, agreements, and processes. The study session shall include a review and group reading of the Board Bylaws and Brown Act, and a review and adoption of the Governance Handbook and Governance Calendar. The study session shall also include Mandated Reporter, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination trainings.

Orientation of New Members

Board Members will begin serving following the oath of office. As soon as possible, the Board President will schedule an orientation session with the newly constituted Board Member(s). The orientation session will include but not be limited to:

- Review the Governance Handbook protocols and agreements.

GOVERNANCE PROTOCOLS

- Review of Board agenda process and procedures.
- Review of 9000 series of Board Policies.
- Review of the Brown Act and discussion of confidentiality.
- Review of CSBA Professional Governance Standards.
- Review of ACSA/CSBA Professional Standards and job description for the Superintendent. Review contract provisions and evaluation procedures.
- Discussion of pending litigation and critical issues.
- Review of the Strategic Plan, district departments, and district initiatives.
- Review and visit each school site within the Board Member trustee area in order to become acquainted with staff, climate and programs at each site.

Individual Board Member Requests for Action

The only authority to direct action rests with the entire Board of Education when seated at a regular or special Board meeting. Outside of this setting, the Board has no authority. A majority vote of the entire Board of Education sets the direction.

Individuals can request action by bringing up a new idea, explaining their interest in a particular course of action, and by working within a meeting to gain majority support.

It is important for each Board Member to remember that they represent the entire district at-large even though they are elected by trustee area. Board Member requests for action should take this in account.

Board-to-Staff Communications

As outlined in Board Bylaw 9200 - Limits of Board Authority, Board Members shall not exercise any administrative responsibility or command the services of any employee directly other than the Superintendent, Special Assistant to the Board of Education, and the Assistant to the Board of Education. The importance of this bylaw is to help the Superintendent track the work of their staff for reporting purposes, reducing the likelihood of multiple and competing demands on staff time, overall staff satisfaction and positive workplace climate, and to insure Board transparency.

Principle: To direct Board Member requests of staff time to the Superintendent, or designee, in order to streamline workflow, insure no duplications of work, improve workplace morale and satisfaction, and increase Board transparency.

1. Board Members shall not independently request work of staff on administrative functions pursuant to Board Bylaw 9200. Such requests shall be emailed to the Superintendent with the Deputy Superintendent and the Special Assistant to the Board of Education also copied on the email.
    a. Those requests received before the close of business on Fridays and Tuesdays shall be compiled and shared with staff during the next scheduled Cabinet meeting.
    b. The Superintendent shall supply the Executive Committee with a complete list of all Board Member requests for the two weeks prior to each Committee meeting and provide any reason why any specific requests cannot be made.
    c. Any information sharing from staff to Board Members in relation to such requests will be shared through a formal Board Communication as outlined by the Staff-to-Board Protocol.

2. Committee Members may request information directly from the lead staff member of that Committee so long as all Committee Members are attached to the email request and the corresponding answer is also shared with all of the Committee Members via email. Committee Members may not request information or action on any item that requires the entire Board of Education to weigh in on that given subject area or matter.
    a. Committee Member requests will be forwarded to the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent and Special Assistant to the Board of Education if the request requires more than 30 minutes of staff time in order to add it to the overall workflow of that staff person.
3. Board Members may share ideas and/or resources with staff so long as it does not require input or additional work from staff.
4. District staff is not expected to respond to direct requests or direction from individual Board Members.
    a. Individual Board Members shall not expect phone, text or email replies directly from staff regarding any information inquires. Such sharing shall go through the appropriate channels that are outlined by the Staff-to-Board Protocol.

Staff-to-Board Communications

The School Board values open communication from the staff on areas of importance or interest to the district. Therefore a mechanism known as a Board Communications (BC) has been established to formally share vital or previously requested district or Board Member information.

Principle: To provide all Board Members with transparent and consistent information from staff on important updates pertaining to district work and initiatives, media notifications, information on school emergencies, answers to questions asked by Board Members, upcoming events relevant to all Board Members and talking points and/or information to support them in addressing relevant topics in the district. The intention of the Board Communications is to provide informative, concise and honest information about successes and challenges, and include—where appropriate—a recommended course of action.

1. All written communication with the Board of Education will use the same consistent format in the form of a Board Communications (BC) Memo.
    a. Specific Board Committee staff is allowed to communicate with Board Members who reside on that Committee in so long as all Committee Board Members are attached to any and all reply emails or phone calls.
    b. Board Committee requests requiring more than 30 minutes of staff time shall be directed to the Superintendent for workflow purposes and the corresponding information shall be shared with the entire Board of Education through a BC Memo.
2. BC Memos will be tracked and logged to ensure that all Board Members are receiving the same information and that the district is being responsive to requests for information.

3. A Board Communications Memo will be marked confidential when/if it contains confidential information about a student, employee or other confidential matters.
4. BC Memos will be distributed every Friday, along with a cover sheet indexing the Memos. When appropriate, some BCs may be distributed throughout the week for timely matters such as a media alert or school emergency.
    a. Staff will make every effort to include the requested information in the next BC Memo unless the request requires a substantial amount of research and/or the request is made too close in proximity to the next distributed BC Memo.

Board Member-to-The Board Communications

As outlined by the Ralph M. Brown Act, a majority of the Board of Education shall not, outside of a legally posted meeting, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item of business that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board of Education.

Principle: To provide information from one Board Member to the entire Board of Education without violating the Brown Act.

1. Information may be shared from one Board Member to the entire Board of Education via email, but no single Member may reply to the author of that email or any other Members of the Board. The original author of the email shall state clearly at the beginning of the email that Members are not to reply.
2. Board Members may have a discussion—email or other—with no more than a total of three Members at a time.
    a. No single Board Member may share or forward the information of such conversations with any other Board Member unless within a legally posted meeting. Such communications are considered a daisy chain and are not permitted by law.

Superintendent-to-The Board Communications

The Superintendent—being the Secretary of the Board—shall work in close partnership with the Board President—as well as the entire Board of Education—to keep all Members informed of the happenings of the district and to be responsive of Board Member requests.

Principle: To ensure information-sharing and responsiveness to Board Member requests as well as outline how the Superintendent shall request information from the entire Board of Education outside of regular meetings.

1. The Superintendent shall respond to all Board Member calls and emails within 24 business hours of receiving the communication in order to indicate the request has been received and/or handed off to another staff member.

   a. The response communication shall outline the request that has been made and a proposed timeline for providing the Board Member(s) with the needed information through a Board Communication Memo as outline in the Staff-to-Board Communication Protocol.
2. The Superintendent shall first confer with the Board President before conferring with any other Board Member when requesting information; setting a date, time and location for a meeting of fewer than the majority of the entire Board of Education; and other related requests.

3. The Superintendent will inform the entire Board of Education of pertinent activities or recent hot issues that have taken place in the district. If it's likely to be in the newspaper, the entire Board of Education should know about it. The Superintendent will use Board Communications Memos to communicate routine matters to the entire Board of Education on a regular basis. Newly developed high-profile issues, including but not limited to, politically sensitive issues will be shared as soon as possible with each Member via text message with a follow up Board Communication Memo with more details.

Emergency and Crisis Communications

The Superintendent shall inform all Board Members of any emergency or crisis situations that are underway within the school district in order to keep all Members informed of the fragile situation.

Principle: To inform Board Member(s) of an emergency or crisis situation within the district at the earliest convenience of the Superintendent and staff in order to insure that Members are not caught off guard if approached by a community member.

1. During emergency/crisis situations at any district site, the Superintendent, or designee, will send out a brief text-message alert to the Board Member(s) informing them of the situation. The Board of Education recognizes that student and parent safety is the primary concern in such situations which may delay the response time to Board Members.
2. All Members will be informed of additional details regarding the crisis situation via a Board Communication after it has been resolved.

GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK SIGNITURE PAGE

We have reviewed and agree to abide by and institutionalize the aforementioned Board of Education standards and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students and the community. We shall renew this agreement at each Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education.

Affirmed on this _____day of _____, 2016

Gustavo Arroyo, Trustee	Diana Rodriguez, Trustee
Ellen Cochrane, Trustee	Jessie Ryan, Trustee
Jay Hansen, Trustee	Darrel Woo, Trustee
Christina Pritchett, Trustee	José Banda, Superintendent