

Windsor Unified School District

Governance Handbook

Board of Trustees

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This handbook is designed to be used and referred to in conjunction with any previously-adopted Board bylaws and policies, which shall take precedence.

The Windsor Unified School District Governance Handbook was developed during effective governance workshops conducted in 2007- 2017 with the assistance of Governance Consultant Babs Kavanaugh, California School Boards Association; Educational Consultant Michael Juric; Sonoma County Office of Education Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Nancy Brownell; Pivot Learning Partners Director of Special Projects Cathy Townsley; Steve Goldstone of the Cosca Group and Educational Consultation.

Table of Contents

I. Windsor Unified School District — Unity of Purpose

WUSD Mission	pg. 3
WUSD Vision	pg. 3
WUSD District Guiding Principles	pg. 3

II. Board of Trustees

WUSD Trustees' statements	pg. 4
WUSD Trustees' statements.....	pg. 5

III. Governance Roles and Responsibilities

Effective Trustees	pg. 6
Effective governance teams	pg. 6
Creating a positive culture	pg.7

IV. Governance Leadership Culture

Board meeting norms and guidelines	pg. 8
Strategies to support effective deliberation	pg. 8

V. Structure and Process: Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Placing items on the board meeting agenda.....	pg. 9
Requesting information from staff.....	pg. 9
Deliberation at board meetings	pg. 9
Bringing up new ideas	pg. 10
Individual board member requests for action	pg. 10
Allowing the majority to set the direction for the school district	pg.10
Confidentiality	pg. 10
Handling public comment and addressing community concerns	pg. 10
Addressing concerns of the community via email	pg. 10
Self - monitoring governance team effectiveness	pg. 11
Addressing difference of opinion	pg. 11

Appendices

Appendix A – 2018-2019 Board Goals.....	pg. 12
2018-2019 Board Goals	pg. 13

I. Unity of Purpose

Unity of Purpose is a common focus and the core values and beliefs governance team members share about students, the District and public education.

Windsor Unified School District Mission

It is the mission of the Windsor Unified School District to provide a supportive and nurturing environment for all students. Students shall acquire the basic skills of knowledge, along with the thinking skills needed for problem-solving and decision-making relevant to a changing world. Windsor students shall exhibit personal and social maturity through responsible behavior, developed from understanding and respect for the diversity of all life, and a genuine caring for others.

Windsor School District is at its best when:

- Education is a shared, community partnership
- Students are engaged in learning
- Schools and facilities are state-of-the-art
- Specialized programs foster student success
- A supportive social network is in place
- Fiscal integrity is maintained

Windsor Unified School District is committed to the following Guiding Principles:

- Modeling positive, open communication
- Collaborating with other public agencies
- Promoting inclusiveness in decision-making
- Patterning appreciation for diversity
- Teaching to varied learning styles
- Offering ways to achieve academic progress
- Providing a system of accountability
- Creating activities to work collaboratively
- Modeling and teach critical thinking skills
- Employing technology to enhance learning
- Offering specialized programs in academics, the arts, athletics, student wellness and technology
- Promoting student health and nutrition
- Fostering respect
- Maintaining a safe, nurturing environment
- Valuing human resources of the District
- Cultivating trust and high standards
- Planning professional staff development
- Developing financial resources
- Employing sound organizational practices
- Maintaining appropriate facilities that support student learning

II. Board of Trustees

Bill Adams

Bill was appointed to the Board of Trustees in August 2015. An advocate for improved academic and extracurricular programs for all students, he believes it is important for Trustees to demonstrate leadership, exercise prudent stewardship, partner with the Superintendent and collaborate with community stakeholders to develop long term strategies that optimize our unique grade-clustered school system. Critical to success are shared vision, communication, engagement and accountability amongst students, teachers, District staff, and parents. Bill has participated in a wide variety of District issues including PTA, Education Foundation, Site Councils, Superintendent's Advisory Committee, Boosters and Windsor Advocates for Music. In May 2016, he completed the yearlong California School Boards Association "Masters in Governance" leadership institute.

A native of Chicago, Bill has more than 30 years of experience in innovative solutions-oriented planning, policy implementation and leadership team development in both the public and private sectors. He attended Northwestern University and law school at University of Oregon. Since moving to Windsor in 1993, Bill has been actively involved in youth sports, veteran's affairs, and wide range of regional community programs addressing literacy, hunger, infrastructure collaboration, and economic development. He recently retired as Deputy County Counsel for Sonoma County and presently works for the Santa Rosa law firm of Merrill, Arnone & Jones. His wife is an elementary school teacher in another district and their three children have all gone through WUSD, with the youngest currently attending school in the District.

Sandy Dobbins

Sandy Dobbins has been deeply committed to the students of Windsor since 2000, when she first became involved as a parent working on behalf of the PTA. She was awarded the Windsor PTA's Children's Award for 2001, followed by election to Site Council at Windsor Creek Elementary. As liaison to that site, she advocated for and became a founding member of the Board Budget Advisory Committee in 2001, followed by appointment to an interim position on the Board of Trustees in June of 2002. She has gone on to be elected to four subsequent four-year terms on the Board, and is honored and humbled for the continuing opportunity to serve Windsor students.

Sandy is committed to public education and strives always to provide a rich and equitable educational experience for all of Windsor's children. She continues to find great hope and inspiration in the youth of our community and she actively seeks opportunities to contribute her time and energies to activities at the sites, such as volunteering as a judge for Senior Projects, as a day-long guest reader for Read-Across-America events, and leading classes of children through clay projects during Arts Day. She believes that being a successful Board member requires strong leadership abilities, vision, personal integrity, honesty and foremost, a strong focus on student needs.

Sandy was raised in what is now the Silicon Valley (back when it was famous for its apricots and cherries), and has lived in California all her life; the last 28 years, right here in Windsor. Sandy's personal inspiration comes from her husband and partner, who teaches English and Drama for a local public high school in a neighboring district, and from their two daughters. After having attended Windsor schools for the entirety of their K – 12 experience, they have both flown in pursuit of their dreams.

Eric Heitz

Eric Heitz first elected in 2014, brings an experienced, working perspective with 27 years as a public school teacher. Eric holds a master's degree in Education: Teacher Leadership, and K-12 California teaching credentials. Eric teaches PE, AVID and science and is an athletic director and coach. Eric has completed the California School Board Association Master's in Governance program and attended School Board conferences and trainings. As an experienced trustee and teacher, Eric brings knowledge of Common Core State Standards, Smarter Balance testing and the LCAP. Currently teaching in a small rural district, Eric has vast experience working with English Language

Learners and Economically Disadvantaged students. As a Trustee Eric has served on the facilities, policy, bond, Visual Performing Arts, and LCAP committees.

Eric was born and raised inside the Windsor Unified boundaries and has lived in Windsor since buying a home here in 1996 having watched the community grow and develop into the wonderful place it is to live today. Eric's son Brien graduated from Windsor High and is attending San Jose State University, his daughter Sarah is attending Windsor High School and wife Ellen is a credentialed elementary school teacher and regularly substitute teaches in the Windsor schools. Eric is a member of the WHS Boosters, Windsor Advocates for Music, WE Foundation, and has many years of coaching Windsor youth soccer and baseball teams. Eric and his family are dedicated to the advancement of all our youth through education and opportunity, thereby continuing the positive growth of the Windsor community.

Esther Lemus

Esther Lemus was first appointed to the Windsor School Board in February 2015. She was re-elected to her seat in November 2016 while earning 64.6% of the vote. Esther is a firm believer in the potential and promise of every child and is committed to maximizing the educational opportunities and future success of all children in Windsor schools.

As a first generation college and law school graduate, Esther recognizes that a quality education can serve to transform the lives of students and their families. Therefore, she is strongly committed to enhancing the quality of education in Windsor schools so that all students can make their dreams a reality.

Esther is currently employed by the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office which she joined in 2007 after having previously served as a federal prosecutor for the United States Attorney's Office in the U.S. Department of Justice. Esther has extensive experience working with Truancy Court and the enforcement of the compulsory education laws.

She is also a past member of the Sonoma County School Attendance Review Board (SARB). During her tenure in Truancy Court, Esther worked in partnership with the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) where she served as presenter and trainer to school officials regarding truancy laws and the referral process for prosecution. Esther currently serves as coordinator for several community safety initiatives related to youth, including the Gun-Violence Information for Teens (GIFT) program, the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, and #iSMART (Internet, Social Media Awareness, Resources & Training) which she teaches to students throughout Sonoma County. Esther is also assigned to handle criminal cases in Domestic Violence and Mental Health treatment courts.

Esther was born and raised in Santa Rosa and moved to Windsor when she was in high school. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Juris Doctor degree from UCLA School of Law. She and her husband, Doug, reside in Windsor with their two young daughters, Sydney and Chloe, who are students in the district.

George Valenzuela

George has resided in Windsor since 1996 with his wife Rachel. He was born and raised in East Los Angeles and received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Berkeley; a Juris Doctorate from Empire College School of Law; an Administrative Credential from Sonoma State University; and a Masters in Governance from the California School Boards Association.

Elected to the School Board in 2008, George believes in the School Board's transparency and accountability to the Windsor Community. He believes that all children have the right to a quality and meaningful education in Windsor Schools. George has a keen focus on helping to close the achievement gap for Latino Students in the District. He has over twenty five years of work experience in Education as: a Spanish Bilingual Teacher (Sonoma County; Mendocino County, Los Angeles County); and as a School Administrator (Sonoma County and Napa County). He has three sons: Adrian attends USF Law School (WHS Class of 2013), Jacob attends WHS (Class of 2020), and Elias attends CCLA. George is a current and/or past member of: Windsor PTA, Cali PTA, WE Foundation, and WHS Boosters (lifetime member). George is a licensed California Attorney since 2001 with extensive experience in the areas of: Estate Planning, Education Law, Employment Law/Human Resources, and Landlord-Tenant Issues.

III. Governance Roles and Responsibilities

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.

Effective Trustees

- Are respectful and professional. The community will see us sharing perspectives, agreeing, and agreeing to disagree, respectfully
- Are leaders who are engaged and commit the time to be knowledgeable
- Think globally, are open and willing to learn, and listen to the viewpoints of others
- Do not give up in seeking to understand the issues; are tenacious and never afraid to ask questions
- Are good listeners, not defensive or reactive
- Are believable and are able to build the trust of the community
- Understand that once board members have listened, been inclusive, and made the decision, they will stand by the decision and move forward

Effective Governance Teams

- Have a common purpose; demonstrate leadership
- Are loyal to the team; trust one another
- Create a safe environment for each other; never intentionally hurt one another
- Self-correct when there is a problem; talk to one another when there are interpersonal issues or problems
- Respectfully receive ideas from one another; learn to compromise; agree to disagree and move forward
- Work well when there is adequate information to make wise decisions
- Are present and attentive; are tenacious; put in the time needed to reach decisions
- Support each other; care about each other; energize each other
- Lead, inspire, risk, and strive to be effective

Creating a Positive Culture – Providing Support

Reciprocal support between the Board and Superintendent

To be effective, it is vital that the Board and the Superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications. The superintendent and trustees discussed strategies for how to support one another, which include:

- ❖ Creating and supporting a working environment with “no surprises”
- ❖ Coming prepared to and being provided with adequate data and background for meetings
- ❖ Maintaining good communication
- ❖ Supporting decisions of the Board
- ❖ Promoting trust and openness
- ❖ Maintaining openness and tolerance
- ❖ Demonstrating respect with consistency
- ❖ Maintaining confidentiality always
- ❖ Collaborating consistently on potential community issues and appropriate responses/ communication regarding these issues

Reciprocal support among Board Trustees in order to fulfill responsibilities

- ❖ Create and support a working environment with ‘no surprises’
- ❖ Address issues as they arise
- ❖ Demonstrate respect with consistency
- ❖ Be mindful and aware that manner and demeanor make a difference
- ❖ Always remember that individual trustees are perceived as speaking for the whole board
- ❖ Are responsible to call point-of-order when trustees infringe upon board bylaws

IV. Governance Leadership Culture

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.

Board Meeting Norms and Guidelines

- Above all: *We focus on the best interests of students*
- We strive to achieve a common vision and purpose
- We show respect by keeping an open mind to the ideas of others and valuing their opinions
- We demonstrate respect, professionalism and leadership
- We work toward the future while learning from the past

Strategies To Support Effective Deliberation

The governance team identified strategies to support and strengthen the board's ability to respectfully and effectively deliberate the issues.

- Practice and model open-mindedness and support for one another
- Share in the effort to achieve consensus
- Remember that words make a difference – continue to seek phrases and words that support effective deliberation
- We listen carefully and build upon others ideas

V. Structure and Process

Protocols are the agreements that ensure that all members of the team are operating within agreed upon roles. The trustees and superintendent discussed and agreed upon the following protocols.

Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Issue	Protocol – Agreement
Placing items on the board meeting agenda	<p>Trustees agree to the following process to place items on the board meeting agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the board president and/or the superintendent to discuss the item. Let them know that this item is either linked to a district-planning goal or there is a sense of urgency associated with the item. • Introduce the item in the section of the board meeting agenda, ‘Items of Concern’ as a future board agenda item. The board president will ask for a show of support for the item. If there is support, agreement will be reached on the timeline for moving the item forward. • If a request is specific to the District goals, it may be placed on a future meeting agenda. The timeline will be clarified at the board meeting.
Requesting information from staff	<p>In an effort to ensure that the working climate supports the norm of ‘no surprises:’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees agree to first contact the superintendent with requests for information. The superintendent will facilitate the contact with the staff either by asking staff to call the trustee or by referral. • Information provided to one trustee will be provided to all trustees, as appropriate. • Recommended changes or additions to information provided in the board packet will be discussed at the board meeting.
Deliberation at board meetings	<p>The governing board represents the entire community and models effective deliberation at board meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members strive for authentic and honest discussion in a respectful climate. • Each member of the governance team comes to the board meeting prepared, with an open mind and without a predetermined decision. • The superintendent and trustees agree that each member will be proactive in identifying and sharing issues of concern. When an issue is potentially polarizing or divisive, the governing board promotes thoughtful deliberation and strives for consensus. When a topic is difficult or challenging, the board will outline a timeline to discuss the topic, the process that will be used and the opportunities for input. • Board members practice active listening strategies including allowing the speaker to finish and raising one’s hand before speaking out.

Issue	Protocol – Agreement
Bringing up new ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a governance team, we want to demonstrate that we are never complacent. We strive to find ways to improve and encourage innovation and new ideas, while maintaining the focus on District goals. • Board members will use the board comments or the future school board items section of the board meeting agenda to bring forward new ideas. Consideration of new ideas will also be incorporated into the annual goal-setting process. • When a new idea is suggested, the board president will ask trustees if there is general interest in the topic. • The board will arrive at consensus about whether or not a particular topic or subject of interest will be added to a future agenda. • If the answer is yes, staff will move forward in gathering information. If the topic will impact the current workload, the superintendent will suggest a timeline for the preparation of the information.
Allowing the majority vote to set the direction for the school district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority to direct action rests with the board of trustees only when seated at a regular or special meeting. • It is important to the effectiveness of the governing team that a majority vote of the board set the direction for the district. • Once a vote has been taken, those in the minority agree that they will not undermine the decision.
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance team is responsible for keeping closed session information confidential, including, but not limited to, district litigation, personnel, negotiations, superintendent evaluation, student issues, or other issues addressed by The Brown Act. • The governance team shall take immediate responsibility for breach of confidentiality. • The superintendent will specifically state when an issue is confidential.
Handling public comment and addressing community concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board’s business shall be conducted in public. Clear guidelines are established for the public’s input and shall be communicated by the board president to the public. • When listening to a complaint or comment from the public, the board president may ask a clarifying question. • As appropriate, the item may be referred to staff for clarification and follow up. • The superintendent will report the status of the referred issue at a board meeting • The board president or chair will acknowledge the comment and move on.
Addressing concerns of the community via email	<p>Mindful that email communication is public record, the governance team agrees to the following process in responding to email and phone requests from community members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When community members voice concern to a trustee through email or phone, the trustee will thank them for their input and concerns and let them know that their input will be forwarded to the board president and the superintendent for follow up. • The superintendent will forward email correspondence that is directed to the board president and superintendent to all trustees. • Board members will not engage in any emailing, the purpose for which is

Issue	Protocol – Agreement
	to reach “collective concurrence” or fact gathering for purposes of reaching “collective concurrence.”
Self-monitoring of governance team effectiveness	<p>Reflection and ongoing self-assessment are important tools for the governing team to assess their own performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board will schedule at least one workshop annually to review governance team agreements and processes and to participate in a self-evaluation process. This will include evaluation of meeting effectiveness and assessing whether board protocols are regularly followed.
Addressing difference of opinion	The Superintendent may have a difference of opinion regarding matters under discussion by the Board until an official decision has been reached, after which the Superintendent’s own views are subordinate.

GOVERNING BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2018-2019 BOARD GOALS



Maintain and balance our current and long-range priorities and planning opportunities

As measured by the following objectives/actions:

1. Aligning district budget and expenditures with district goals and priorities consistent with Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)
2. Continuing District financial solvency via a balanced budget and positive certification
3. Supporting successful negotiations which result in a balanced budget
4. Maintaining a system of internal control policies with clear roles, responsibilities and transparency
5. Exploring consideration of District configuration



Provide a rigorous curriculum based on adopted state standards to maximize student progress and achievement (LCAP Goal #1)

As measured by the following objectives/actions:

1. Assessing current district enrichment programs and services and developing a plan to enhance these programs, which includes exploring public-private partnership opportunities
2. Evaluating and improving the implemented Math programs
3. Ensuring support for and evaluating efficacy of enrichment programs and curriculum
4. Increasing the English Learner re-designation rate
5. Monitoring the phased-in implementation of the coordinated District Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Plan



Ensure that students will be engaged in their learning and emotionally supported in order to be successful (LCAP Goal #2)

As measured by the following objectives/actions:

1. Continuing to provide programs and support services for the social emotional learning and mental health of all students
2. Increasing percentage of students who are college and career ready
3. Recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff
4. Increasing diversity of District staff through active recruitment of minority job applicants



Create and maintain optimum learning and working environments for students and staff (LCAP Goal #3)

As measured by the following objectives/actions:

1. Continued implementation of 2016 General Obligation Bond facilities projects
2. Maintaining facilities (internal/external) for health and safety and for providing a welcoming site for students and staff
3. Successfully acquiring land and planning of a new school; easing capacity at existing school sites
4. Update of the Facilitates Utilization Master Plan (F.U.M.P.) for even years, effective 2018
5. Exploring consideration of District configuration



Build effective and relevant family partnerships to increase student achievement and engagement in school (LCAP Goal #4)

As measured by the following objectives/actions:

1. Development of a marketing and communications plan/calendar that includes...
 - a. Highlights/featured District accomplishments
 - b. Important, timely and relevant information
 - c. User-friendly access to information
2. Continued proactive, ongoing communication and transparency with all stakeholders, including updates on fiscal status, student achievement, and other educational matters
3. Encouraging outreach opportunities. For example:
 - a. Forums and workshops to inform and educate as well as facilitate dialogue
 - b. Increase information outreach to community
 - c. Accessible, informative website presence with proactive community communication