

# ROMOLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT



## Governance Handbook 2021-22

### Board of Trustees

**Manuel Aguirre, Board President**  
**David Sperry, Board Clerk**  
**Marla Clites, Board Member**  
**Debbie Moon, Board Member**  
**Gerard “Gary” Reller, Board Member**

### Superintendent and Cabinet

**Trevor J. Painton, Superintendent**  
**Keith Bacon, Chief Business Official**  
**Vince Butler, Chief Technology Officer**  
**John Murray, Director of Human Resources**  
**Michelle Wise, Ph.D. Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services**

*This handbook reflects the governance team’s work on creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, roles, commitment to norms and coming to agreement on protocols/formal structures that will enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.*

*Last Updated: August 10, 2021*

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# EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. The actions of an individual, a group coming together to govern, and the performance of governance responsibilities by the group.

In a school district, the Board and Superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work together effectively, members need to (1) Maintain a Unity of Purpose, (2) Agree on and govern within appropriate roles, (3) Create and sustain a positive governance culture, and (4) Create a supportive structure for effective governance.

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 and maintain the focus on improved student learning and achievement.

## ***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.

# UNITY OF PURPOSE

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

## UNITY OF PURPOSE

What We Want to Accomplish as a Team for Our Students and Our District:

We wish to...

- ◆ Provide a great education for our students and to create self-learners, lifelong learners, and an environment where students yearn to learn.
- ◆ Keep students at the forefront of every decision.
- ◆ Create a fun, safe learning environment for all students so that they enjoy coming to School.
- ◆ Create a culture and environment for student success.
- ◆ Ensure that all students have an equitable educational experience that prepares them for future opportunities.
- ◆ Create a good working environment to support all of the above.

# **BOARD OF TRUSTEES’ VISION, MISSION, AND CORE BELIEFS**

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## **VISION**

The Romoland School District Board of Trustees is committed to fulfilling its mission to stand at the forefront of educational leadership, thus creating a District of excellence.

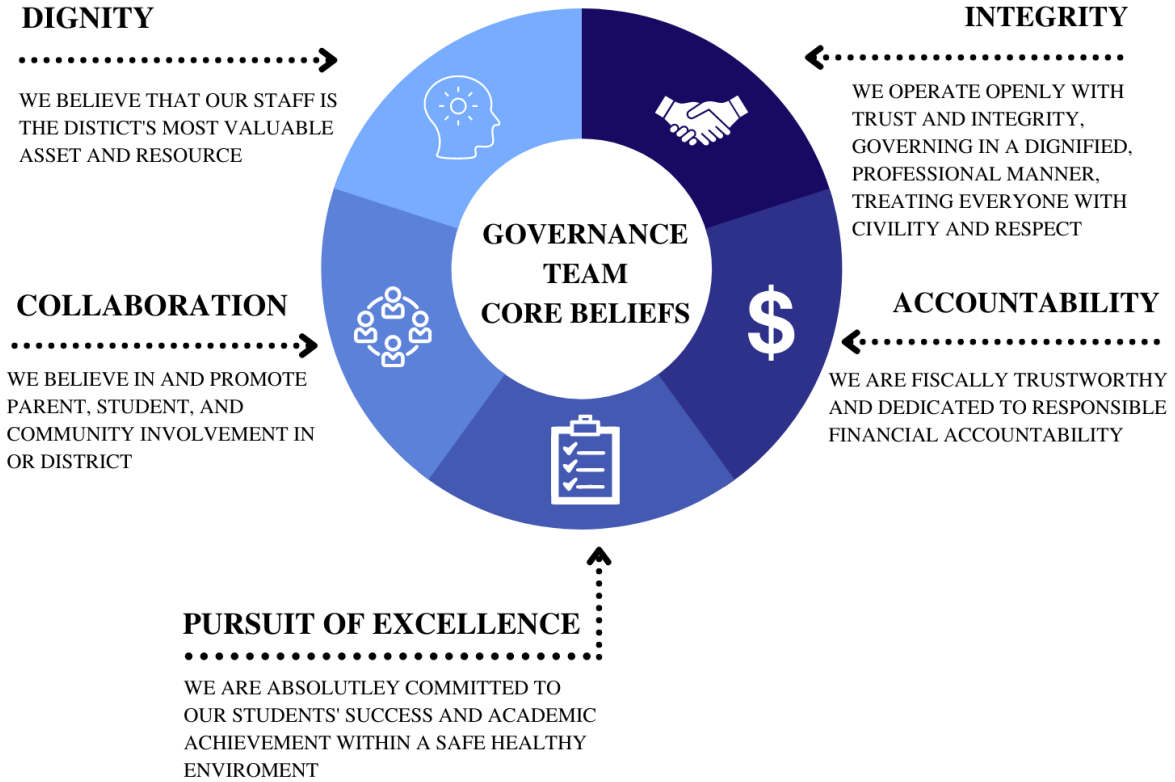
## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Romoland School District Board of Trustees’ mission is to deliver a quality education for ALL students by:

- ◆ Setting clear direction
- ◆ Establishing District structure
- ◆ Providing support
- ◆ Ensuring accountability
- ◆ Demonstrating community leadership

# GOVERNANCE TEAM

## "CORE BELIEFS"



# GOVERNANCE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Citizen oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. The role of the trustees who sit on locally elected school boards is to ensure school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing five major responsibilities. These are setting direction; establishing an effective and efficient structure; providing support; ensuring accountability; and providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district and public schools.

These five responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public that they can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority is granted to the Board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, Board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the Superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the community.

The Board carries out these responsibilities in each of the following job areas:

- ◆ Setting the District's Direction
- ◆ Student Learning and Achievement
- ◆ Finance
- ◆ Facilities
- ◆ Human Resources
- ◆ Policy
- ◆ Judicial Review
- ◆ Collective Bargaining
- ◆ Community Relations and Advocacy

The Superintendent assists the Board in carrying out its responsibilities in each of the job areas, and leads the staff toward the accomplishment of the agreed upon District vision and goals. The following pages provide more detail on how the Board performs its governance responsibilities in each job area. It's important to remember that boards who inadvertently get involved in staff functions undercut their ability to hold the Superintendent accountable for the results of those efforts.

# PERFORMING GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

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We agree with the responsibilities of school boards as described below by the California School Boards Association:

## *Set the direction for the community's schools*

- ◆ Focus on student learning
- ◆ Assess needs / obtain baseline data
- ◆ Generate, review or revise setting direction documents (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)
- ◆ Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used
- ◆ Ensure these documents are the driving force for all District efforts

## *Establish an effective and efficient structure for the School District*

- ◆ Employ and support the Superintendent
- ◆ Establish a human resources framework that includes policies for hiring and evaluating other personnel
- ◆ Oversee the development of and adopt policies
- ◆ Set a direction for and adopt the curriculum and require data-producing assessment systems
- ◆ Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues
- ◆ Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

## *Provide support through our behavior and actions*

- ◆ Act with professional demeanor that models the District's beliefs and vision
- ◆ Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals
- ◆ Uphold Board-approved District Policies and support staff implementation of Board direction
- ◆ Ensure a positive working climate exists
- ◆ Be knowledgeable enough about District efforts to explain them to the public

## *Ensure accountability to the public*

- ◆ Evaluate the Superintendent
- ◆ Monitor, review and revise policies
- ◆ Serve as a judicial and appeals body
- ◆ Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated
- ◆ Monitor and adjust district finances and periodically review facilities issues
- ◆ Monitor the collective bargaining process



# PERFORMING GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

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(Continued)

## *Act as community leaders*

- ◆ Speak with a common voice about District priorities, goals and issues
- ◆ Engage and involve the community in District schools and activities
- ◆ Communicate clear information about policies, programs and fiscal condition of the District
- ◆ Educate the community and the media about the issues facing students, the District and public education
- ◆ Advocate for children, District programs and public education to the general public, key community members and local, State and national leaders

## **GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **What the Board Needs from the Superintendent:**

The superintendent will support trustees in fulfilling their responsibilities by:

- ◆ Continuing to be transparent
- ◆ Continuing to keep us informed
- ◆ Having open, honest communication
- ◆ Providing public affirmation for the Board
- ◆ Ensuring that we are introduced at school events
- ◆ Ensuring that there are no surprises

### **What the Superintendent Needs from the Board:**

The trustees will support the superintendent in fulfilling his responsibilities by:

- ◆ Ensuring that there are no surprises and preparing him for success by asking questions in advance.
- ◆ Running for reelection
- ◆ Trusting and verifying
- ◆ Reading the FCC and Board packet
- ◆ Asking how you can help
- ◆ Listening to what he needs to move the district forward
- ◆ No matter what, do not “put him down” to others

### **What Board Members Need from Each Other:**

The trustees will support each other by:

- ◆ Respecting one another’s opinions
- ◆ Having open, honest communication with the Board
- ◆ Listening and directing attention to the person who is speaking
- ◆ Remembering that our meetings are the Board’s Meetings in public
- ◆ Ensuring that there are no surprises
- ◆ Being nonjudgmental and continuing to be patient with each other

# POSITIVE GOVERNANCE TEAM CULTURE

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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 others. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

Because the community elects School Board members to set and monitor the direction of the School District, and the District Superintendent translates all efforts into action, it is vital that the Board and Superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

# OUR GOVERNANCE NORMS

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## **WE AGREE TO:**

### **ACT WITH DIGNITY**

We agree to Board ethical standards and behavior including the governance standards.

### **RESPECT DIFFERENCES**

We will respect dissenting opinions in a respectful way that encourages sharing of ideas, experiences, and knowledge.

### **BUILD TRUST**

We look for common ground, maintain confidentiality, and publicly support Board decisions.

### **WORK AS A TEAM**

We agree that a working plan of how we do business internally and externally is essential.  
We will work for the good of the team, not our own interests.

### **ENGAGE THE PUBLIC**

We listen to our stakeholders and encourage their input into our decision-making at appropriate times.

### **FOCUS ON THE SUCCESS OF EVERY STUDENT**

The Board will keep student success in the forefront of all decisions.

### **WORK TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD**

We will communicate about our decisions with honesty and integrity in the process.

# **STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

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Effective governance teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the Trustees and the Superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., processes or structures for Agenda setting, set-up of Board Room and table, Agenda structure, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how governance teams operate, how they do business. These agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

# OUR PROTOCOLS

ISSUE	PROTOCOL
Boardroom Layout and Seating Arrangement	<p>Boardroom layout will allow for easy discussion among Board members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board table will face the public and seating</li> <li>● Flags will be placed near the Board table equally spaced to each side of the President and Superintendent</li> </ul>
Developing the Board Agenda	Reference Bylaw 9322(a)
Structure of the Board Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Call to Order</li> <li>B. Roll Call</li> <li>C. Public Comments for Closed Session</li> <li>D. Closed Session</li> <li>E. Reconvene in Public</li> <li>F. Pledge of Allegiance</li> <li>G. Governance Norms</li> <li>H. Communications - Governing Board, Superintendent</li> <li>I. Recognitions and Announcements</li> <li>J. Communications – Public Comments and Association Reports</li> <li>K. Public Hearing, if applicable</li> <li>L. Information Item I</li> <li>M. Consent Agenda (Consent Agenda will contact routine Board Action items; such as the personnel order, routine items in nature, etc.)</li> <li>N. Action Items</li> <li>O. Information Items II, if needed</li> <li>P. Closed Session II, if needed</li> <li>Q. Reconvene in Public, if applicable</li> <li>R. Board Member Closing Comments</li> <li>S. Adjournment</li> </ul>
Placing something on the Board Agenda	Reference Bylaw BB 9322(a)
Information Item <i>versus</i> Action Item	<p>In most cases items will be brought to the Board first as an Information Item then as an Action Item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● From time to time and due to time constraints, items may be brought directly to the Action Agenda</li> <li>● Note will be given ahead of time in the Friday Communication Cornet (FCC)</li> </ul>
Getting questions answered about items on the agenda before a meeting	<p>Contact the Superintendent as early as possible after receiving the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Questions may be made written, by phone, in person, or by email</li> <li>● E-mail questions should be forwarded to the Superintendent, and cc: to the Executive Assistant</li> <li>● Superintendent will distribute questions to appropriate staff, and cc: to Board President and Board members</li> <li>● Response to <b>all</b> Board members</li> <li>● Effort 24 hours in advance</li> <li>● Effort towards no surprises</li> </ul>

# OUR PROTOCOLS CONTINUED

Board Presentations	Board members will be provided any presentation for the Board Meeting either by the attachment to the Board Agenda item(s), in the Friday Communication Corner (FCC) or electronically. The Board can approve the item(s) in a timely manner.
Public input at the Board meetings	Reference Bylaw 9323 (b). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● President will acknowledge comments from the public and direct Superintendent to respond when applicable</li> </ul>
Public request for Agenda packet	Per applicable laws, members of the public will be charged printing and postage costs.
Deliberation at Board meetings	All discussion will follow norms of deliberation as established by the Board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff will be cognizant that this is a meeting of the Board in Open Session</li> <li>● Staff may not comment unless making presentation or solicited by the Superintendent</li> <li>● On critical items, President will solicit input from each member</li> <li>● Staff comes to podium to address item</li> </ul>
Allowing the majority vote to set the direction for the School District – how we act when we aren’t in the majority	When asked questions about a Board decision by the public and the media, members in the minority will state something to the effect, “Even though I was in the minority I support the Board decision.”  Media can be directed to reference the meeting minutes.
Bringing Agenda items back for further discussion	An item that has no action, has been unresolved, or has new information, may be placed on the agenda at the request of any Board member per Board Bylaw 9322(a).
Impacting the District Agenda / Requesting Information	Agenda length will be considered when placing items on the agenda. Board members will be aware of staff time constraints when requesting information. Length of time to provide the information will be based on the time needed to research the information.
Handling complaints from the community, staff, and addressing concerns of the community	Concerns/complaints expressed to Board Members will be handled in the following manner: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Board Member will refer the constituent to the appropriate person in the district, which may include the teacher, site administrator, a district office administrator or the superintendent, depending on the nature of the concern.</li> <li>2. The Board Member will notify the Superintendent about the concern so that she may address the issue appropriately.</li> <li>3. Unresolved issues may be taken to the next level in the district, including the Superintendent.</li> <li>4. No confidential information will be included in an email.</li> <li>5. If a mass email occurs; the Board President will respond. If a Board Member receives an individual email or if a Board Member feels it is appropriate for him/her to reply to a mass email message, he/she should reply by stating, “Thank you for your e-mail message and I appreciate your concern, however I am referring your e-mail message to the Superintendent.</li> </ol>
Use of study sessions; scheduling of study sessions	When study sessions are required or requested, weekdays or weekday evenings will be used for the meeting unless weekends are the only days available.

# OUR PROTOCOLS CONTINUED

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Confidentiality	Board members are required by law to maintain confidentiality of what is discussed in Closed Session and may not be discussed in Open Session.
Role in public	Board members are always an elected official. Members should always act in a manner that is mindful of Board Norms and Protocols.
Visiting Schools	Members will call or email the Executive Assistant and/or Superintendent 24 hours ahead of visiting school sites. The Executive Assistant will then notify the site principal.
Self-monitoring of governance team effectiveness	Self-Evaluation will be conducted annually every August.
Events calendar	The Master Calendar of Events is posted on the District’s website by the Executive Assistant.
Governance Calendar	Governance calendar to be developed to ensure recurring items are addressed in a timely fashion.
Technology (web Sites, Blogs, etc.	All Board members’ websites and blogs, social media, etc. will follow Board protocols, Norms, and the Brown Act.
Public appearances	<p>When a Board member is invited or would like to be part of other governmental entities events, such as celebrations, meetings, parades, or grand openings, etc. Board members may attend events, celebrations, meetings, parades, grand openings, etc., and the Board members can report back to the other Board members during the Trustee Reports at the Regular Board meetings.</p> <p>When a Board member acts as a citizen and speaks at another governmental meeting, such as another school board meeting or city council meeting, the Board member should say, “I am here speaking as a citizen of the community”. In addition, when speaking to the community in an informal capacity, the Board member should always say that he or she is speaking as only a member of the Board and does not speak for the whole Board.</p>