



San Pasqual Valley Unified School District

Governance Handbook

Approved: May 12, 2026

Board of Trustees

Cody Hartt, *President*

Keahna Owl, *Vice President*

Karla Delgadillo, *Clerk*

Angelo Derma, *Trustee*

Sofia Dominguez, *Trustee*

Superintendent

Richard Cordero

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Unity of Purpose, Roles, Responsibilities, Norms and Protocols

*This document reflects the governance team's work on the creation of a framework for effective governance. This process involves **ongoing** discussions and agreements about unity of purpose, roles, norms, and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all children.*

On July 18 & 19, 2025, and February 21, 2026, San Pasqual Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent participated in workshops on Effective Governance with the California School Boards Association. This document reflects the governance team’s discussions about developing and sustaining a framework for effective governance and includes highlights of their conversations about unity of purpose, roles, norms, and protocols that enable the governance team to continue to perform its responsibilities in a way that best serves all students.

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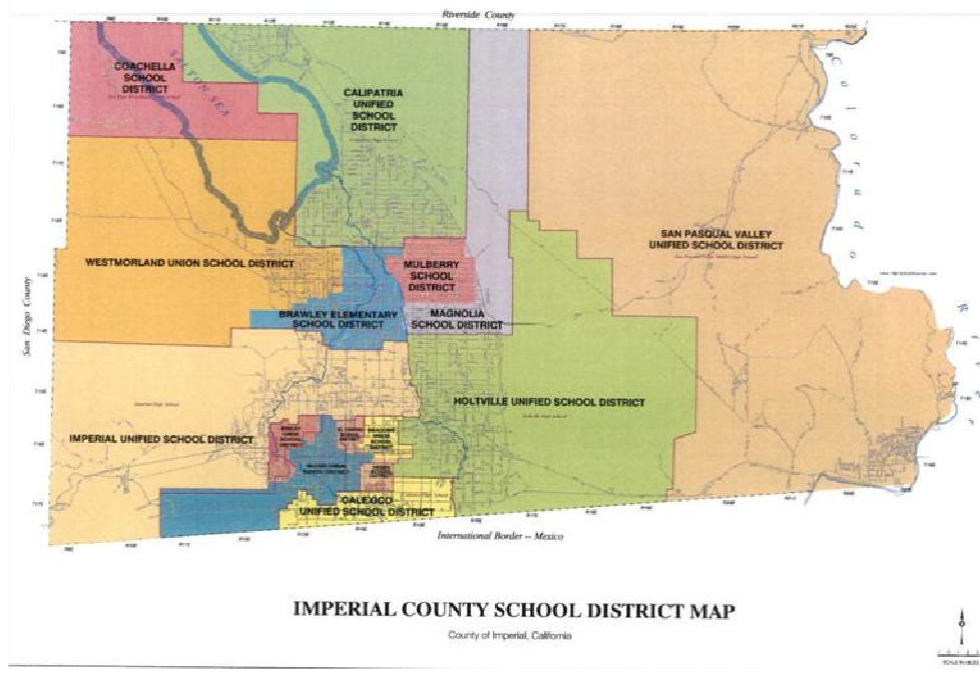
SAN PASQUAL VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HERITAGE

San Pasqual Valley Unified School District was created in 1952 with the merging of Andrade School, Fort Yuma School, Winterhaven School, Laguna School and Ogilby School. Bard School District and SPVUSD combined forces and created a high school in 1958. On 06/10/1958, the board met to decide between naming the district San Pasqual Unified School District and San Pasqual Valley Unified School District. The board voted unanimously on San Pasqual Valley Unified School District.

San Pasqual Valley Unified School has been in operation for 70 years and consists of six schools. San Pasqual Valley Unified School District has the largest territory of the state. The District reaches from the Mexican border to Riverside County line and from the Colorado River west to the Imperial San Dunes.

San Pasqual Valley Unified School District serves two of the most disadvantages communities in California, the small unincorporated Imperial County township of Winterhaven, and the Native American population of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation, home of the Quechan Tribe. Both populates are positioned along the banks of the Colorado River just Northwest of the California-Arizona and the US-Mexico borders.

San Pasqual Valley Unified School District serves approximately 600 students divided among five schools – San Pasqual Valley Elementary (K-5), San Pasqual Valley Middle (6-8), San Pasqual Valley High School (9-12), an alternative education program (9-12), and a vocational education academy.



SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

Locally elected school board members provide citizen oversight of the community's schools and protect the public's interest in preserving an accessible and equitable public education system in the United States.

School boards ensure success for all students by making decisions that fulfill legal mandates and align district systems and resources to ensure the long-term fiscal stability of the district.

Boards must act collectively and openly, be guided by community interests, and informed by recommendations of the superintendent and professional staff.

UNITY OF PURPOSE

Unity of purpose is the common focus, overarching goals, and the core values, beliefs and principles governing body members share in common about children, the district and public education.

OUR MISSION

The San Pasqual Valley staff believes in the worth and dignity of each individual. San Pasqual provides a safe and orderly environment where mutual respect is modeled, fostered and student academic needs are met and challenged.

We believe that education is a lifelong process of learning and living. Our school provides a California standards-based curriculum for the skills needed to be successful in school and society.

OUR VISION

Steeped in tradition and culture, San Pasqual Valley Unified School District holds to the vision of "Honoring the past as we prepare our students for the future."

OUR MOTTO

Learners Today Leaders Tomorrow

UNITY OF PURPOSE

What We Hope to Accomplish as a Team, to...

- Refocus on students: reorganize to increase ADA, grades, CTE offerings, graduation rates, and work skills.
- Better prepare students – bring up test scores.
- Provide students with more job skills and create more CTE pathways.
- Prepare more students for college.
- Improve relationships with staff and the community.
- Enhance community involvement.
- Bring more resources to the school district.

GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Role of the Board and Superintendent - CSBA:

School board “trustees” 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 school board to provide professional expertise in the day-to-day operations of the district. The role of the Superintendent is:

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

Performing Board Responsibilities – CSBA, BB 9000 – *Role of the Board:*

We Set 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.

We establish an effective and efficient Structure for the school district by:

- Employing the superintendent.
- Setting policy for hiring of other personnel.
- Setting policies.
- Setting direction for and adopting the curriculum.
- Establishing budget priorities and adopting the budget.
- Overseeing facilities issues.
- Providing direction for and voting to accept collective bargaining agreements.

We Provide Support through our behavior and actions by:

- Acting with a professional demeanor that models the district’s beliefs and vision.
- Making decisions and providing resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals.
- Upholding board approved district policies.
- Ensuring a positive personnel climate exists.
- Being knowledgeable about district efforts and able to explain them to the public.

We Ensure Accountability to the Public by:

- Evaluating the superintendent
- Monitoring, reviewing, and revising policies.
- Serving as a judicial and appeals body.
- Monitoring student achievement and program effectiveness and requiring program changes as indicated.
- Monitoring and adjusting district finances.
- Reviewing facilities issues
- Monitoring the collective bargaining process

We Act as Community Leaders by:

- Speaking with a common voice about district priorities, goals, and issues.
- 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.
- Advocating for children, district programs and public education to the general public, community, and local, state, and national leaders.

**GAINING CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND
ENHANCING TEAM COMMUNICATION:**

The Superintendent Can Support the Board by...

- Keeping us informed.
- Providing honest, timely and clear communication to the Board and Board Members.
- Solving problems – providing solutions.
- Getting involved – attending community events.
- Providing expertise.

The Board Can Support the Superintendent by...

- Allowing him to do his job.
- Allocating funds and supporting him.
- Getting the community involved.
- Scheduling frequent meetings with him.

Board Members Can Support Each Other by...

- Showing up, debating issues, and making motions.
- Engaging in ongoing self-evaluations. (Are we following protocols?)
- Creating goals for ourselves.

San Pasqual Valley Unified School District Governance Team

AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

Governance Team Norms and Protocols:

The Board of Education for the San Pasqual Valley Unified School District is entrusted by the community to uphold the Constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public's interest in the schools, and to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. To effectively meet district challenges, the Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team. Agreed upon behaviors or norms, and operating procedures or protocols, support consistent behavior and actions among team members. The purpose of the San Pasqual Valley USD governance team agreements is to ensure that a positive and productive working relationship exists among Board Members, the Superintendent, district staff, students, and the community. Norms and protocols are developed for and by the members of the governance team and may be modified over time as needed.

OUR NORMS

We wish to model the behavior that creates a culture that demonstrates...

- Respectful behavior.
- Being truly present – really being there when we show-up.
- Active listening – listening to understand, not just respond.
- Being prepared.
- Keeping confidential matters confidential.
- Trust.
- Being personable – warm and welcoming.

To that end, we have developed the following Meeting Guidelines:

Our Agreements to Facilitate Governance Leadership:

Meeting Guidelines

- We will keep our focus on the best interest of our students.
- When we have a difference of opinion, we will debate the facts of the situation and avoid personalities. We will address process -- not personalities.
- We will respect differences, show respect, and never dismiss or devalue others.
- We will be supportive rather than judgmental.
- We will honor the agenda and time limits – start and end on time and avoid getting sidetracked.
- We will communicate openly and honestly with each other.
- We will work toward the future, learning from the past.

PROTOCOLS

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Effective governance teams discuss and agree upon the formal structures and processes, or protocols, used by the Board and Superintendent in their functioning as a team. These structures and processes guide the operations of the governance team and determine how they do business. Protocols are the agreements that ensure that all members of the team are operating within their agreed upon roles.

The following protocols were developed at our Governance Workshop:

TOPIC:	PROTOCOL:
<p>Responding to Staff or Community Concerns or Complaints</p>	<p><u>Rationale:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We care about our constituents concerns and want to hear them, but we recognize that individual Board Members do not have the authority to resolve issues and complaints, as stated in BB 9200, <i>Limits of Board Member Authority</i>. • We want to ensure that everyone understands the process and is consistent and transparent. • We want to assist the complainant in getting to someone who really can address their issue. <p>Therefore, when a Board Member is approached by a community or staff member with an issue or concern, he/she will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Receive</u> – Listen without interruption and without preparing a response to the person’s issues or concerns, unless it is an issue that may come before us in our judicial role (personnel issues and student discipline) - that information will be shared with the entire Board at the appropriate place and time - during the hearing. • <u>Repeat</u> – If it is appropriate for us to listen to the concern, we will paraphrase or ask a clarifying question to ensure understanding of what has been said. • <u>Request</u> – Ask what the person sees as the solution to the problem or concern. Ask what they would have us do with the information they have given us. • <u>Review</u> – The conversation (and next steps, if any). • <u>Redirect</u> – Direct the person back into the system at the appropriate level. • <u>Report</u> - Notify the Superintendent of the conversation so that he has the full picture and can follow through as appropriate and/or necessary.

TOPIC:

PROTOCOL:

Board Meeting Management – Effective Deliberation and Public Comment

Rationale:

- The purpose of our Board Meetings is to conduct district business in public.
- We want to hear the views of our constituents, but we recognize that an appropriate process must be in place in order to have orderly, effective meetings.

Therefore:

- The Board President will facilitate Board discussions and manage public input.
- When opening public comment, the Board President will explain the requirements of the Brown Act and refer to the public input guidelines on the board meeting agenda, as stated in BB 9323.
- Each agenda item will have a 20-minute time limit for public comment. Three minutes are allotted per person. The board president may ask that the public limit their comments to new information. Board Members will direct their questions/comments to the Board President and not communicate directly with members of the public.
- The Board President has discretion to add time to the discussion if the majority of the board agrees to the additional time.
- A timer will be used to manage public input.

Managing Action Items:

- Step 1. The Board President will introduce the item.
- Step 2. The Superintendent or other staff may provide a presentation of background information and a recommendation, if necessary.
- Step 3. Board Members may ask questions for clarification.
- Step 4. The Board President will open the issue for public comment.
- Step 5. After public comment is completed, the Board President will close public comment.
- Step 6. The Board will discuss the item.
- Step 7. The President concludes deliberation by calling for a motion.
- Step 8. If a motion is made and seconded, the Board will vote on the motion.

TOPIC:	PROTOCOL:
Preparing for Board Meetings	<p><u>Rationale:</u> Board members must be prepared to deal with all items on the agenda and make informed decisions.</p> <p>Therefore, we agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim the agenda and make notes. • Then read the agenda thoroughly and make additional notes regarding points to address and questions to ask. • Direct all questions to the Superintendent via email or during a phone call or in a meeting. • The Superintendent may respond to the question directly or refer the item to another staff member. • Board members will advise the Superintendent/staff member if he/she intends to ask the question again in public so that staff is prepared to answer the question.

TOPIC:	PROTOCOL:
Reports to the Board	<p><u>Rationale:</u> There are no current standards for reports to the Board</p> <p>Therefore, we agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Superintendent will develop a standard format and time allotment for reports to the Board. • Children will give student reports. • Reports will be given by sites and departments as appropriate and listed on the Governance Planning Calendar • Other information will be included in the Friday Letter. • Board agendas will include reports on agenda items.

TOPIC:	PROTOCOL:
Explaining “No” votes	<p><u>Rationale:</u> Each trustee respects the right of other trustees to vote "no."</p> <p>When a Board Member chooses to vote “no” on an agenda item, he/she will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a courtesy to the team and to enhance communication and understanding, explain the reason for the "no" vote either during deliberation or during the vote.

TOPIC:

PROTOCOL:

**Site Visits and
School Events**

Rationale: Site Visits help Board members stay informed about district programs. Board Members will follow appropriate procedures to ensure school safety.

Therefore, when a Board Member wishes to visit a school, he/she will:

- Contact the Executive Assistant and share requested dates.
- The Executive Assistant will inform the Superintendent and check on his availability.
- The Superintendent will contact the principal in order to schedule the visit.
- An administrator will accompany the Board Member.
- Board Members will sign in at the office and wear their badges.
- Board Members who are invited by a teacher to visit his/her classroom or a school event will inform the Executive Assistant and the Superintendent.

We have reviewed and agree to follow the aforementioned governance team norms/meeting guidelines and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the San Pasqual Valley Unified School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students, and the community. We shall renew this document annually.

Affirmed on this 12th day of May, 2026.

Cody Hartt, Board President

Keahna Owl, Vice President

Karla Delgadillo, Clerk

Angelo Derma, Trustee

Sofia Dominguez, Trustee

Richard Cordero, Superintendent