

CHICO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance Handbook

Approved August 20, 2025



Board of Trustees

Tom Lando, President
Rebecca Konkin, Vice President
Gayle Olsen, Clerk
Eileen Robinson, Member
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Superintendent

Greg Blake

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

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EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization: the actions of an individual, the coming together to govern as a group, 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.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

- 1. Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students.**
 - Recognize that children come to school with diverse educational needs.
 - Base decisions on the district's vision, student needs, research, empirical data, and a balance of community expectations, legal constraints, and resources.
 - Ensure that the district has established academic standards and regularly measures growth in achievement for all students.
 - Ensure that the district provides opportunities for all students to succeed.

- 2. Communicate a common vision.**
 - Develop and adopt a written statement of the district vision and other direction-setting documents using collaborative processes that involve the staff and community.
 - Ensure procedures are in place to periodically review the district vision and other direction-setting documents.
 - Demonstrate commitment to the vision and goals by regularly communicating them to staff and the community.
 - Exhibit behaviors and make decisions that support the achievement of the district vision.
 - Keep current on trends and emerging needs in education in order to proactively participate in renewing or reviewing the district's direction and policies.
 - Uphold Board decisions.

- 3. Operate openly, with trust and integrity.**
 - Conduct district business in a fair, respectful, and responsible manner.
 - Consider the concerns and interests of the staff and community.
 - Encourage thorough debate, seek to engage in dialogue for clarification, and withhold judgment until all perspectives are heard.
 - Ensure that all members of the Board have the same information—no secrets or surprises, among members of the governance team.
 - Communicate Board decisions to all those who are affected by them.
 - Keep confidential information confidential.

- 4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.**
 - Treat the community, parents, students, staff, and Superintendent with dignity and respect.
 - Listen openly and respectfully to each other, community members, parents, students, staff, and the Superintendent.
 - Welcome open discussions of different points of view.
 - Demonstrate the ability to disagree on issues and maintain trust, respect, and dignity.
 - Work together to build consensus for decisions.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE STANDARDS (Cont'd)

5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.

- Have a policy development, approval, and update process understood and followed.
- Understand the distinctions between the role of the Board and that of the Superintendent and staff, and do not become involved in the district's day-to-day operations.
- Have agreed upon norms and protocols to carry out Board responsibilities.

6. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance.

- Assume collective responsibility for Board conduct, behavior, and conflict management.
- Function as a governance team with the Superintendent.
- Demonstrate a commitment to continually improving governance efforts.
- Take responsibility for the orientation of all new members.

7. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness.

- Have procedures in place for regular, ongoing self-evaluation.
- Ensure meeting agendas provide for a sound order of business and facilitate maximum focus on matters related to student achievement.
- Have norms and protocols in place to ensure that individual Board members do not get involved in the day-to-day management of the district.

8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.

- Ensure Board policy enables parents, staff, and the public to participate in district discussions, school programs, and activities in meaningful ways.
- Consider the concerns and interests of all segments of the community in deliberations.

CUSD MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Chico Unified School District, a partnership of students, staff, families, and community, is to ensure all students achieve high levels of academic and personal success, contribute to their community, and confidently succeed in a changing global society by engaging in quality educational programs that address diverse student needs and promote learning throughout life.

CUSD EQUITY STATEMENT

Chico Unified School District is committed to educational excellence for every student, which requires the identification and removal of barriers to success as well as the assurance that each student has access to the full range of resources, supports, and services necessary for them to achieve their unique potential.

UNITY OF PURPOSE

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

CUSD GOVERNANCE TEAM UNITY OF PURPOSE

- We will provide high-quality educational opportunities for all students.
- We will build trust and confidence with our community, staff, and students.
- We will function as an effective team.
- We will understand our collective responsibilities to our heritage, current challenges, and community values.
- We will be a team with a common vision and act as a catalyst for the focused efforts of employees and the community.
- We will partner with the staff to carry out the mission of CUSD.
- We will oversee the continuous development of quality programs, staff, and facilities.
- We will perpetuate a legacy of positive culture.
- We will support our staff as they endeavor to enhance the lives of our students.

GOVERNANCE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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 their communities' values, beliefs, and priorities. Boards fulfill this role by performing five major responsibilities: 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 job area and leads the staff toward accomplishing the agreed-upon district vision and goals. The following page provides more detail on how the Board performs its governance responsibilities in each job area. It is important to remember that Boards that inadvertently get involved in staff functions undercut their ability to hold the Superintendent accountable for the results of those efforts.

PERFORMING GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

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, and/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 work with the Superintendent in support of an effective Governance team.
- Establish a human resources framework that includes policies for hiring and evaluating other personnel.
- Oversee the development of and adoption of 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 a 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 for the governance team.
- 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 (Cont'd)

Act as community leaders.

- Communicate clear information about district priorities, goals, policies, programs, and the district's fiscal condition.
- Engage and involve the community in district schools and activities.
- 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.

POSITIVE GOVERNANCE TEAM CULTURE

Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by how 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.

CUSD GOVERNANCE NORMS

Agreed upon Board governance norms.

- Focus on students' best interests.
- Respect each other's opinions.
- Listen "actively" to each member's ideas.
- Value each member's point of view.
- Remain open to new ideas.
- Exhibit positive body language.
- Do not interrupt or monopolize Board discussion.
- Encourage everyone to verbalize their opinion.
- Disagree agreeably.
- Recognize the positive.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Focus on process, not personalities.
- Act by building on the thought of a fellow governance team member.
- Commit the time necessary to govern effectively.
- Commit to open communication, honesty, and no surprises.
- Maintain confidentiality.

STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

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, and how they do business. These agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS

The following protocols were developed to support and promote the effectiveness of our governance team.

Issue	Protocol
1. Self-Monitoring of Governance Team Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will schedule a yearly workshop to review governance team agreements and processes by reviewing the Governance Handbook.

Issue	Protocol
2. Voting No/Abstaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each trustee respects the right of other trustees to vote "no" on an issue.• Each trustee respects the right of other trustees to "abstain" on an issue in limited instances, if there is a conflict of interest or a lack of sufficient information.• Everyone agrees it is a courtesy to the team to explain the reasons for the "no" or "abstain" vote either during deliberation or before casting the vote.

Issue	Protocol
3. Visiting Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visits are encouraged.• As a professional courtesy, trustees will contact the principal/supervisor and the Superintendent ahead of time to arrange the visit at an agreed-upon time.• Trustees will also be cautious about encroaching on the learning environment. To assist in this matter, the Superintendent will ensure principals and teachers know that a teacher does not need to interrupt their lesson when a Board member visits a classroom.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS (Cont'd)

Issue	Protocol
4. Handling Concerns From the Public and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When someone brings a concern to the Board, we will listen carefully, remembering we only hear one side of the story. Then we will direct that person to the person in the district who is most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. • We will make sure they understand the appropriate order of whom to contact (i.e., teacher, principal, then district staff) and are aware of any formal forms or policies that might assist them (e.g., written complaint form). • By responding to community concerns in this manner, the Board will ensure everyone is treated fairly, equally, and expeditiously and that the processes and procedures of the district are upheld. The response will also clarify that one Board member has no individual authority to fix a problem. • As a public representative, it is important that the Board members invite the person with the complaint to ultimately get back to them if there was a failure in the process.

Issue	Protocol
5. Individual Board Member Requests for Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an individual Board member requests information pertaining to an agenda item, it will be provided to all Board members. • In so far as possible, an individual Board member will work to let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made in public so the staff can be prepared to provide a thorough answer. • Individual Board members will self-monitor to ensure one person's request for information does not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals.

Issue	Protocol
6. Individual Board Member Requests for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only authority to direct action rests with the full Board sitting at the Board table. • A majority vote on an action agenda item sets such a direction. • Individuals may request an item for a future agenda by explaining their interest in a particular course of action and working to get a Board majority to support moving in that direction. • When a majority of the Board, sitting in a formal meeting, requests action, it should be done in the context of the intended results. It is the duty of CUSD staff to determine the methods used to achieve those results.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS (Cont'd)

Issue	Protocol
7. Board Meeting Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We understand that Board meetings are meetings of the Board held in public, not open forum town hall meetings. • We will keep this in mind as we conduct our meetings, allowing the public to provide input at the time allotted to ensure the multiple voices of the community inform Board deliberations. • However, when the Board deliberates, it will be a time for the Board to listen and learn from each other, considering the public input, not a time to re-engage with the public. • We will consistently abide by our formal processes relating to this issue so that all persons are treated fairly and equally. • We will review our policies, bylaws, and protocols relating to Board meeting management (e.g., time limits on input from members of the public), revising or reaffirming them as appropriate.

Issue	Protocol
8. Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members will be aware of and follow District policy as it pertains to electronic communication. • We will use email carefully to ensure that we do not violate the Brown Act, which prohibits Board members from exchanging facts to develop collective concurrence, advance or clarify an issue, facilitate agreement or compromise, or advance ultimate resolution. <p>Our Understanding – Utilizing "Reply All" in Emails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily makes email part of the deliberative process. • Creates a public record. • Inhibits the opportunity for any other two Board members to have a conversation on a topic.

Issue	Protocol
9. Nominations and Elections of Officers	<p>Nomination and Elections of Board President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board shall hold an annual organizational meeting to elect officers per Ed Code. • Nominations and elections shall be conducted in the following order: President, first; Vice President, second; Clerk, third; and Secretary to the Board, fourth. • Once the President has been elected, they will assume control of the meeting and conduct the election process for the remaining offices, which shall then be nominated and voted on.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS (Cont'd)

Issue	Protocol
Nominations and Elections of Officers (9. Cont'd)	<p>Nomination and Elections of All Offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any member can bring forth a nomination as soon as the President opens nominations from the floor. Nominations do not require a second, and a person can nominate themselves. A member cannot nominate more than one person for an office until everyone has had the opportunity to make a nomination. A member does not have to be present to be nominated, but the person doing the nominating should know beforehand if the person they wish to nominate is willing to serve. After all nominations for an office have been made, the President will close nominations and ask if any member nominated wishes to make a qualifying statement. Said statements shall not be longer than three minutes. Statements will be made in order of nomination. After all qualifying statements, if any, have been made, the chair shall call for the vote in order of nomination. If the first nominee does not receive a majority vote for an office, the President shall move to the second nominee and take a vote. The process will continue until a candidate receives a majority and is elected to that office, which the President will then announce. <p>Board members shall use the Board President Leadership Matrix as a tool in determining qualifications for the President.</p>

Board President Leadership Matrix

Scoring Key: Do you believe the proposed candidate possesses the identified qualities?

3 = Yes | 2 = Sometimes or Unsure | 1 = No

Name	Ability to efficiently and effectively run Board meetings	Ability to allow all stakeholders a voice and encourage expression of diverse viewpoints	Has a clear understanding of role as a Board member and Board officer	Is prepared for Board meetings	Has depth and breadth of experience as a CUSD Board member	Attentive and involved with Board decisions	Able to facilitate development and articulation of the vision of the Board	Has knowledge of and is able to devote the necessary time to required duties of the President	Has completed Board President Workshop	Total Score
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CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS (Cont'd)

Issue	Protocol
10. Role and Responsibilities of the Board President	<p>Our Beliefs</p> <p>We have an obligation to set an example of good government in action for our community. We will model dignified problem-solving for our community and our children. The Board President works with the Superintendent to ensure the effectiveness of the Board meeting. We intend that our Board meetings proceed professionally, efficiently and effectively and that district staff will have the opportunity to provide necessary background materials and information to the Board in a respectful environment. Each Board member must have the opportunity to express their viewpoint during Board deliberation. Everyone in attendance at Board meetings will be treated with dignity and respect. The Board president has a facilitation role relative to Board meetings and acts as spokesperson for the Board. They have no more authority than any other Board member outside of Board meetings.</p> <p>Our Agreement - Role of Board President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair meetings. • <u>Work with the Superintendent</u> as necessary to help ensure Board members have the necessary information and materials to make wise decisions. • Ensure pending agenda items are addressed appropriately. • Confer with the Superintendent before meetings to prepare, as necessary for the upcoming meeting. • Model the tone and behavior the Board wishes to convey to the community. <p>Our Agreement - Role of Board President as Meeting Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and preside over meetings. • Introduce agenda items, providing some background information as appropriate, different from background information that is provided by staff (e.g., <i>"This is an item we have had on our agendas four times in the last three months. We have given it a great deal of consideration and appreciate all of the input we have received from the public and the information staff has provided on the issue. Tonight, we will receive additional public input, deliberate further, and hope to make a final decision."</i>). • Call on speakers. • Ensure that there is direction for the making of a motion at an appropriate time during deliberation. • Make sure all Board members have a chance to share in deliberation. • Work to facilitate effective deliberation.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS (Cont'd)

Issue	Protocol
Role and Responsibilities of the Board President (10. Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpret and clarify for understanding to ensure that all Board members have an accurate understanding as the deliberation proceeds.• Wait until all other Board members who wish to speak on an issue have done so before adding their own comments.• Call for a vote, restating the motion.• Clarify and authenticate all actions, orders, and procedures of the Board.• Adjourn meetings.• Remind the governance team and audience members of any meeting guidelines and Professional Governance Standards the Board has adopted, as necessary.• Work with the Superintendent to make sure there is appropriate follow-up and clarification of possible options for the Board following the Board meeting.• Serve as the spokesperson for the Board – always bearing in mind the direction and commitment of the Board given during Board meetings.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS (Cont'd)

Issue	Protocol
11. Designated Spokesperson(s)	<p>Our Beliefs</p> <p>It is essential that important information be communicated to members of the Board, the staff, and the community in as timely a fashion as possible. Board Members and the Superintendent have an obligation to communicate clearly about district issues to the staff and community. We recognize that some situations have legal or other considerations that may place restrictions on what may be told to the media or public. Confidential issues must remain confidential. It is important that the Board speak with clarity and consistency regarding Board actions to maintain our community's trust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Annual Governance Workshop, the governance team will discuss which team members are networking with which community groups and organizations. • If a Board member is invited to speak to a community group or organization, they will make sure other Board members know about the invitation and will request updated district information as appropriate. <p>Our Agreement – Role of Designated Spokesperson</p> <p>In most cases, everyone is comfortable having the press contact any Board member. However, occasionally an issue requires that there be one chief spokesperson. Who fills this role may vary yearly and from issue to issue.</p> <p>The designated spokesperson will vary depending on the issue or situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis: The Superintendent will be the primary spokesperson and may involve the Board president at their 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 Priorities / General District Information: All governance team members may serve as spokespersons.

CUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION PROTOCOLS (Cont'd)

Issue	Protocol
12. Disclosure of Confidential Information Acquired in Closed Session by a Board Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We understand items discussed in closed session are confidential in nature.• Board members may not disclose confidential information acquired by being present in a closed session unless the Board authorizes disclosure of that confidential information.• The Board President will announce at the beginning of open session the outcome of any decisions made by the Board in closed session.• A willful violation of this protocol by a Board member can cause the referral of that member to the Grand Jury. <p>Exceptions would be the disclosure of facts to a district attorney or grand jury to establish the illegality of an action by the School Board, or disclosing information acquired in a closed session that is not confidential in nature.</p>

*This protocol was added by Board vote on August 4, 2010

CHICO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE TEAM AGREEMENTS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

A major difference between groups and teams is that teams have clear agreements (norms that identify expectations for behavior, and protocols that describe how the team will operate) set by the team's members. Once developed, these norms and protocols shape how team members behave with each other and how they perform their responsibilities.

Group expectations help a group work together to not only address difficult issues in an objective and consistent way, but also to confirm what each member will do in the normal course of business to help the team succeed. - California School Board Association (CSBA)

CUSD Governance Team Norms and Protocols

The community entrusts the Board of Education for the Chico Unified School District to uphold the Constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public interest in schools, and to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student.

The Board and Superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team to effectively meet district challenges. Agreed-upon behaviors (or norms) and operating procedures (or protocols) support consistent behaviors and actions among team members.


The purpose of the CUSD governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among Board members, the Superintendent, district staff, students, and the community. The protocols were developed for and by the governance team members and may be modified over time as needed.

We have reviewed and agree to follow the aforementioned governance team norms and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Chico Unified School District Board of Education, staff, students, and the community. We shall renew this agreement at the Annual Governance Workshop of the CUSD Board of Education held annually.

Affirmed on this 20th day of August 2025



Tom Lando, President



Rebecca Konkin, Vice President



Gayle Olsen, Clerk



Teisha Hase, Member



Eileen Robinson, Member



Greg Blake, Superintendent