



Board of Education Governance Handbook

Revised May 13, 2025

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BHUSD Governance Handbook

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BHUSD Governance Handbook

I. Definition of Governance

The Beverly Hills Unified School District ("BHUSD") Board of Education (the "Board"), as the governing board for the school district, recognizes that good governance requires the Board to balance its responsibility of providing visionary, strategic leadership with its responsibility as an oversight body charged with holding the district accountable to the community.

This BHUSD Governance Handbook documents how the Board and Superintendent agree to provide high quality, effective governance leadership in support of educational excellence as defined by the mission and vision, core values and goals of the district.

The Board will review and revise this handbook annually.

II. Governing as a Unified Team with a Common Purpose

The Board and the Superintendent shall work together as the governing team. The governing team's united purpose includes a focus on values that are shared about students, the district and public education that transcend individual differences, and fulfill a greater purpose.

Mission

Educational Excellence

Vision

Our students will realize their full potential to thrive with integrity in a complex, and changing world.

Core Values

Excellence

Integrity

Wellness

Inclusion

Safety

Community

Collective Commitments

We commit to:

- Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students;
- Hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct; to treat everyone with civility and respect;
- Govern in accordance with Board policies and procedures;
- Ensure fiscal responsibility;

- Provide a quality, safe learning environment; and
- Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community.

Community Pledge

The BHUSD community acknowledges that in order to achieve educational excellence, we must act with integrity and respect for each other and our learning environment.

Therefore, I pledge to:

- Model civil behavior and respect in all communications and in public while maintaining a culture of honesty;
- Listen and acknowledge differences of opinion;
- Do my part to protect an inclusive culture in which we honor the relationship between all school community members; and
- Honor our learning environment including how we take care of our schools and personal property.

By holding ourselves and each other accountable to this pledge at all times, we will promote an environment of educational excellence that will allow our entire BHUSD community to thrive.

III. Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and the Superintendent

We value and respect the essential roles held by the Board and the Superintendent. We strive to operate within them. A sound, cohesive partnership between the Board and the Superintendent results in a powerful strategic leadership team that builds a positive environment focused on enhancing student learning and achievement, while earning the respect and support of the staff and community. There are important distinctions between the Board's role and that of the Superintendent and staff. All Board members are equal under the law, and authority rests with the Board as a whole. Just as Board members should govern and not manage a school district, Superintendents should not administer a district in isolation from the Board members, of whom the public has entrusted.

Role of the Board

1) Demonstrate community leadership

As the only elected officials chosen solely to represent the interests of students, Board members have a responsibility to speak out on their behalf.

- Speak with a common voice about district priorities, goals and issues;
- Engage and involve the community in district schools and activities;
- Educate the community and media about issues facing the district and public education; and
- Advocate for students and district programs to the general public, city leaders and local business/organizations, as well as state and national leaders.

2) Set the direction

Ensure that the long-term vision is established for the school system.

- The vision reflects the consensus of the entire Board, the Superintendent, the district staff, and the community as to what the students need in order to achieve their highest potential;
- Generate, review, revise direction-setting documents (e.g., mission/vision, core values priorities, strategic goals, success indicators) and ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used; and
- Ensure that these documents are the driving force for all district efforts.

3) Establish an effective and efficient organizational structure

Establish and maintain an organizational structure that supports the district's vision and empowers the staff.

- Employ the Superintendent and set policy for hiring other personnel;
- Oversee the development and adoption of bylaws and policies;
- Set a direction for and approve the adoption of curriculum;
- Establish budget priorities (e.g., strategic plan), adopt the budget and LCAP
- Set parameters for negotiations with employee organizations, and ratify collective bargaining agreements; and
- Provide safe and adequate facilities that support the district's instructional program.

4) Providing Support

The Board has a responsibility through its behavior and actions to support the Superintendent and staff as they carry out the direction of the Board. Additionally, the Board shall:

- Act with professional demeanor that models district vision and core values;
- Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals;
- Uphold district bylaws and policies that the Board has approved;
- Ensure a positive climate among personnel; and
- Be sufficiently knowledgeable about district efforts and policies so as to explain them to the public.

5) Ensure Accountability to the Public

The Board represents the community and is accountable for the performance of its schools. The Board establishes systems and processes to monitor results. The Board evaluates the school systems' progress towards carrying out the vision, and communicates such progress to the local community. Additionally, the Board shall:

- Evaluate the Superintendent and set policy for the evaluation of other personnel;
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies;
- Serve as a judicial and body of appeals in accordance with the law, Board policies and negotiated agreements;

- Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness; requiring program changes as needed;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the safety and condition of facilities, which support instructional programs;
- Monitor and evaluate district finances;
- Oversee the collective bargaining process; and
- Evaluate its own effectiveness through Board self-evaluation and reflection.

Role of the Superintendent

Serving as the CEO for the district, the Superintendent supports student learning and achievement through instructional and non-instructional programs, provides leadership in fulfilling the district's vision and goals and supports the ability of the Board to govern effectively.

The Superintendent shall:

- 1) Maintain clear and effective communication with all stakeholders;
- 2) Ensure that all district efforts are focused on student learning and achievement, and align with district vision, goals, and strategic plan;
- 3) Implement the decisions of the Board;
- 4) Manage the day-to-day operations of the district;
- 5) Communicate effectively with the Board; and
- 6) Maintain transparency and accountability to the Board community.

IV. Governance Culture

To be effective, it is vital that the Board and Superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communication. The Superintendent and the Board agree to the following assumptions:

Board Supports Superintendent

The Board supports the Superintendent's ability to fulfill his/her responsibilities and shall:

- Provide trust, respect and honesty in all interactions;
- Use their judgment to keep the Superintendent informed;
- Clarify/resolve miscommunications and conflicts immediately;
- Respect confidentiality;
- Be prepared for Board meetings, and when feasible, present questions/inquiries by or before Monday 9:30 am (prior to scheduled meetings) in order to prepare staff appropriately;
- Make best efforts to practice a "no surprise" rule;
- Respect and recognize the role the district staff play in implementing systems;
- Inform the Superintendent and site administrator ahead of time when planning to visit schools or to meet with employees;
- Include the Superintendent when communicating with admin/staff/ faculty by phone, text or email, on any and all district matters;

- Refer student/parent/community complaints through the appropriate channels; and
- Unless absolutely necessary, refrain from contacting the Superintendent/staff on the weekend, evenings, and holidays.

Superintendent Supports Board

The Superintendent supports the Board's ability to fulfill its responsibilities by:

- Providing transparency and ensuring all Board members are informed;
- Providing multiple levels of communication, including sharing answers with all Board members, including answers regarding agenda questions by 5:00pm on the day prior to regular Board meetings;
- Collaborating with the Board president to create a balanced agenda and monitoring the length of time required for agenda items;
- Ensuring that Board members have sufficient information and time for review and questions for all Board items requiring action.
- Providing the Board with a balanced perspective of pros and cons on issues at hand;
- Practicing the "no surprise" rule at all times;
- Collaborating and communicating with stakeholders;
- Maintaining a formal, and respectful demeanor;
- Providing expertise, creative problem-solving and a variety of options to consider;
- Providing a regularly updated Board Governance Calendar to keep the Board informed and equipped to manage and schedule their time; and
- Hold staff/personnel accountable.

V. Governance Structure and Process

The following protocols are to support and promote an effective governance team and ensure a positive and productive working relationship among Board members, the Superintendent, district staff, students and the community.

Board Communication

Board members may contact one other Board member and the Superintendent in discussing district issues or matters before the Board and be in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act.

Board Meetings

- The Board will use Robert's Rules of Order as its guide for parliamentary procedures;
- Individuals that wish to address the Board during the public hearing period shall submit a speaker card or submit a form online 1 hour prior to the meeting time. Speakers may increase their speaking time, however, it shall be limited to no more than 1 additional person's time that has been ceded to them;

- The Board president may limit the amount of time to 20 minutes for public comment when it regards one particular topic;
- The Board President recognizes public hearing speakers and informs speakers of their time limit;
- Presenters must submit materials prior to being placed on the agenda. Materials will be sent to the Board 120 hrs prior to the meeting. Regular Board presentations must not exceed 10 minutes and should stress the most important points. Board members shall commit to reading the written materials provided to them prior to the Board meeting, in order to support an efficient and productive meeting;
- The Board may consider holding study sessions for policy review, budget discussions, and other special projects;
- Regular Board meetings will end at 9:00pm. At 8:30, the Board president will ask for an assessment of the items remaining and the Board will make a determination as to whether or not to continue past 9:00pm;
- Board members should avoid repeating comments during deliberation and keep comments brief;
- In general, Board comments should be relevant to the BHUSD community;
- Board members will email both Board president and Superintendent to request items to be added to the agenda on a requested date; and
- Board members will dress in business attire, and conduct themselves in a professional manner.

Closed Session

Board members have an absolute obligation to maintain the confidentiality of all information including supporting documents, exhibits and discussions that have been shared during closed session.

Explaining No-Votes

Board members shall present their ideas and questions during deliberation. They should not explain their votes after the vote is taken and a decision has been made. Board members agree to stand behind the majority vote of the Board and not to be an impediment to its implementation. Similarly, Board members should not boast nor take personal credit for Board-majority positions.

Board Communication with the Media or Public

The Superintendent and Board president are the spokespersons for the district. The Superintendent is the primary spokesperson for the district and the Board president shall address Board positions and actions. When speaking to community groups, members of the public, or the media, individual Board members are to acknowledge that their statements may be perceived as reflecting the views and positions of the Board. Therefore, Board members have a responsibility to identify and clarify their personal viewpoints as not representative of the Board, as a whole

In addition, The Board encourages members who participate on social networking sites, blogs, or other discussion sites to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner and to model good behavior. Board Members should acknowledge that their actions could unintentionally reflect the larger opinions and viewpoints of the Board. Members should use caution and prudent discretion when posting or using social media.

Legal Counsel

Prior to consulting legal counsel for any issue, Board members shall consult with the Board president who will then inform the Superintendent, unless the issue directly involves the Board president or Superintendent.

Handling Complaints from the Staff /Community, outside of Board Meetings

Note: Uniform Complaint Policy required by law in responding to complaints, Board members will:

- 1) Receive. Listen graciously and respectfully.
- 2) Repeat/paraphrase the point for the benefit of the complainant.
- 3) Remind/ Explain that a Board member has no authority as an individual.
- 4) Redirect them back to the school system hierarchy, at the appropriate level.
- 5) Report to the Superintendent.

Note: If the matter involves personnel, go straight to step 5. Your judicial review responsibility should remain unbiased and you cannot become involved.

The Superintendent trusts the Board members to use their judgment in determining what matters must be reported. The Superintendent desires to know about any issues that involve student and staff safety concerns; anything illegal; and anything that is potentially litigious.

Board Members' Role in Public

Board members have a responsibility to involve the parents and the community in meaningful ways and advocate for all students, the district's programs, and public education while maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Strategic Plan

The Superintendent shall present a midyear and end-of-year Strategic Plan Performance Update and review. The Board and Superintendent will evaluate the year-end results of the strategic plan benchmarks and make the necessary adjustments for the upcoming year and for long term planning.

Superintendent Evaluation/Goals

The Superintendent shall be formally evaluated in writing by consensus of the Board at least once per year in May, with ongoing conversations and evaluation of benchmarks towards goals and evaluation of strategic plan goals. The Board will

meet with the Superintendent in August to set his/her upcoming goals and benchmarks in alignment with the strategic plan.

Emergency Operations and Preparedness

The Board shall annually review emergency operations and plans (e.g. active shooter, fire, earthquake, and technology functioning).

Bond Program

The Board will semi-annually, in conjunction with the audit, review the bond program and the facilities master plan and budget.

Orientation for New Board Members

The Board is committed to providing a formal orientation for new Board members to ensure the understanding of districtwide policy, procedures, goals and the strategic plan.

Annual Meetings

The Board shall commit to the following annual meetings:

August 2025

- August 5 - BOE Approval of 2025-2026 Strategic Plan and Goals

November 2025

- November 18, 2025 Strategic Plan Presentation Quarter 1 Data

February 2026

- February 24, 2026- Strategic Plan Presentation - Mid-Year Growth & LCAP

May 2026

- TBD iReady & NWEA Closes

June 2026

- June 9, 2026 - Strategic Plan Presentation - Final Review

August 2026

- Approval of 2026-2027 Strategic Plan

VI. Governance Agreements Signature Page

With our signatures below, we certify that we have reviewed and agree to follow the aforementioned governance norms and protocols, and to support a positive and productive working relationship among the BHUSD Board, Superintendent, staff, students and the community. This agreement shall be renewed annually. Affirmed on this 13th day of May, 2025.



Rachelle Marcus, Board President



Judith Manouchehri, Board Vice President



Dr. Amanda Stern, Board Member/Board Clerk



Sigalie Sabag, Board Member



Russell Stuart, Board Member



Remy Javidzad, Student Board Member



Dr. Alex Cherniss, Superintendent

SOURCE

The BHUSD Governance Handbook is an adaptation from the California School Board Association (CSBA) Board Governance Handbook.