

2026-2027



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REDWOOD CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Governance

Handbook



750 BRADFORD ST.
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063

2026-2027



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REDWOOD CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Trustees

David Weekly, President
Cecilia I. Márquez, Vice President
Jennifer Ng Kwing King, Clerk
David Li, Trustee
Mike Wells, Trustee

Superintendent

Dr. Christian J. Rubalcaba



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Effective Governance

Unity of Purpose, Roles, Responsibilities, Norms & Protocols

The Redwood City School District Governance Handbook is a summary of the ongoing governance team's work on effective governance. This process involves discussions and reaching agreements on shared leadership, roles, and operating protocols that enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities to the community. Annually the team reviews and updates this Governance Handbook.



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Unity of Purpose

Our Vision

RCSD creates a safe and supportive, inspirational, and rigorous, joyful, and inclusive environment for all learners.

Our Mission

RCSD will be a thriving, dynamic, innovative, and nurturing community where each student realizes their unique gifts and strengths to achieve high intellectual performances for personal and academic success.

Our Values

RCSD has a collective responsibility to achieve our vision through a commitment to these values:

Innovation: To analyze systemic practices, including racial biases, through an equity consciousness lens that dismantle barriers to student learning and emotional well-being.

Student Voice: To encourage students' bravery, voice, & leadership.

Equity: To instill passion in learning emphasizing student strengths and gifts for all learners: all abilities, all ethnicities and cultural identities, LGBTQ + youth, and multilingual learners.

Engagement: To offer opportunities and access to joyful, rigorous, and enriching instruction and resources.

Partnerships: To build family and community partnerships for student success.



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Roles & Responsibilities

AN EFFECTIVE TRUSTEE

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 the professional expertise in the day-to-day management 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.



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Roles & Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees:
Sets the direction for the community's schools by:

- Focusing on student learning.
- Assessing district needs.
- Generating, reviewing, and revising setting direction documents: (values, vision, priorities).
- Ensuring an appropriate inclusive process is used to develop these documents.
- Ensuring that these documents are the driving force for all district efforts.

The Board of Trustees:
Establishes 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.



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Roles & Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees:
Provides 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.

The Board of Trustees:
Ensures 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



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Roles & Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees: Acts 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.
- Participate in professional development opportunities throughout the year to deepen our knowledge and expertise.



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Governance Standards

The Board of Education believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board also has major commitments to parents/guardians, all members of the community, employees, the state of California, laws pertaining to public education, and established policies of the district. To maximize Board effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

The Board expects its members to work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. Each individual Board member shall:

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.
2. Value, support, and advocate for public education.
3. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.
4. Act with dignity and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior.
5. Keep confidential matters confidential.
6. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.
7. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.
8. Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individual.



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Governance Standards

Board members also shall assume collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture. To operate effectively, the Board shall have a unity of purpose and:

1. Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students.
2. Communicate a common vision.
3. Operate openly, with trust and integrity.
4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures.
6. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance.
7. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness.
8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.



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Meeting Norms

We will:

- Be on time for meetings
- Come to meetings prepared to participate
- Model expected behaviors
- Ensure that all members have the same information
- Acknowledge all opinions in a positive manner
- Practice open and honest communication
- Accept differences in experience, culture, and value priorities
- Give and receive constructive feedback civilly
- Allow others to speak without interruption
- Listen attentively
- Have no side conversations (including text messages)
- Stay focused on our goals and student achievement
- Go the extra mile to support each other in our work
- Maintain flexibility in difficult situations



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Governance Team

Protocols

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 operation 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.

Conflicting Viewpoints

Recognizing that district improvement requires change, the board welcomes different opinions and ideas. However, the board also takes great effort to avoid lingering animosities which can result from different viewpoints.

The board actively solicits input and listens to all perspectives. The board values diverse opinions among its members and realizes that by respecting that diversity and seeking common ground it becomes a more effective board.

The board recognizes that it represents all students in the Redwood City School District and all facets of the community and, as such, it has an obligation to pursue different points of view with honesty and vigor. Each board member commits to hearing one another out. By doing so board members model for students the honest and respectful expression of different points of view.



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Governance Team

Protocols

If a member of the Governance Team cannot support the decision of the Board because it offends a moral/personal code, the member is expected, at a minimum, to refrain from undermining the decision or directive.

The above commitment to either support or refrain from undermining majority decisions does not preclude the member from asking for consideration at a future time of a more acceptable alternative. However, the decision of the Board should be considered final.

Managing Difficult Topics

Recognizing that the Board has been elected to conduct challenging conversations in public, members agree to discuss the issues in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Debate should only occur between board members. The Board will not respond to questions or statements made by members of the audience. Only the chair will respond to public comment during the meeting and only if warranted.

We do not have different values. We have different value priorities. Rarely are there single-value problems. We seek the best rather than the right solution.

Requests for Information

Any individual Board member who desires a copy of an existing written report or survey will make such a request to the superintendent. A copy of the material may also be made available to each member of the Board.



Governance Team

Protocols

The superintendent takes directions from the board as a whole; therefore, requests for the generation of reports or information must be placed on a meeting agenda for board consideration and approval. Because the board also believes in “no surprises,” board members agree to notify the superintendent of the information request discussion prior to the meeting.

Board members’ questions concerning material in the board packet should be referred to the superintendent in a timely manner to afford staff the opportunity to prepare a response during the meeting. If the information requested requires an inordinate amount of staff time to generate, the superintendent will place the request on the next board meeting agenda for discussion.

District staff are not expected to respond to directions or requests from individual board members.

Board Notification

The superintendent will inform the board of pertinent activities of the district. If it is likely to be in the newspaper, the board should know about it. The superintendent will use e-mail to communicate routine matters to the board on a regular basis.

During crisis situations, the superintendent will notify and then attempt to reach board members via telephone beginning with the board president.



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Governance Team

Protocols

Handling Complaints

If a Board Member receives a complaint, s/he will refer the complainant to the appropriate staff member. Afterwards, the Board Member will report the complaint to the superintendent.

Board members will be knowledgeable of the complaint processes outlined in Board Policies 1312.1, 1312.3, and 1312.4 along with the accompanying administrative rules.

While Board members may listen to complaints from staff regarding policies or procedures; members must be careful not to usurp the chain of command. Complainants are encouraged to discuss the matter with their supervisor or union representative.

However, with regard to the Board's Court of Appeals role, board members will not listen or respond to complaints against personnel. Board members will notify the superintendent of all complaints they receive.

Communications

When board members communicate with staff by email, the superintendent will be cc'd.



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Governance Team

Protocols

Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools

All governance team members agree that the board meetings are opportunities to strategically move the district forward, and to communicate direction, district priorities and progress to the community.

Prior to the annual reorganization meeting, the board will review the Board Governance Handbook and Board Bylaws (9000 series).

The board will annually meet with members of the administrative team to create the board's Governance Calendar. At the conclusion of each regular meeting, the superintendent will reference the calendar and note upcoming information and decision points.

Preparation for Meetings

Board members will review the board packet in advance of the meeting. Except in emergency situations, board members can expect the board packet to be uploaded by Friday before the meeting.

Board members will make best effort to contact the Superintendent in a timely manner with agenda item questions before Wednesday's board meeting and ideally no later than Monday afternoon.

Items requiring significant staff work may be discussed as a future agenda item to get the board's support before proceeding.



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Approval Signatures

We have reviewed and agree to abide by and institutionalize the aforementioned governance team standards and protocols in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the Redwood City School District Board of Education, Superintendent, staff, students, and the community. We shall renew this agreement at each Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education.

Date: _____

David Weekly
President

Date: _____

Cecilia I. Márquez
Vice President

Date: _____

Jennifer Ng Kwing King
Clerk

Date: _____

David Li
Trustee

Date: _____

Mike Wells,
Trustee

Date: _____

Dr. Christian J. Rubalcaba
Superintendent



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