



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

REGIONAL
OCCUPATIONAL
CENTER

Governance Handbook

October 2023

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I. Preamble

Welcome to the Board of Education of the Southern California Regional Occupational Center (SoCal ROC) as established under the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). This Governance Handbook was designed to be a resource for outlining the roles, responsibilities, processes, and protocols of the SoCal ROC Board of Education and Superintendent acting together as the Governance Team.

In conjunction with protocols outlined in this document, Board Members and the Superintendent shall be aware of and comply with the JPA, Board Bylaws, Board Policies, Administrative Regulations, California Education Code, the Brown Act, and all other applicable state laws.

Board members are provided current copies of the WASC Action Plan, Strategic Plan, JPA and any Board approved updates to the JPA. Board Bylaws, Board Policies, and related Administrative Regulations are available through the SoCal ROC website. California Education Code, the Brown Act and other applicable state laws are available online. Questions concerning these may be directed to other Board Members, the Superintendent, or ultimately to SoCal ROC legal counsel for clarification.

II. Unity of Purpose

As members of the Governance Team, we model the type of behavior we expect to see throughout the SoCal ROC:

- Be prepared
- Be courteous
- Be good citizens
- Be personally responsible and proactive
- Be informed
- Be trustworthy (competence and character)
- Be respectful
- Be open-minded, good listeners
- Be confidential (when asked)
- Be inclusive

III. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board sets the direction of the SoCal ROC by establishing clear, meaningful goals. The Board supports the Superintendent and staff in carrying out the Board's direction by establishing and adhering to standards of responsible governance as enumerated in this Governance Handbook:

The Board of Education and the Superintendent will:

1. Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus with consideration of the institution's fiscal responsibility.
2. Value, support, and advocate for public education in general, and Career Technical Education specifically.
3. Operate openly with trust, integrity, and transparency.
4. Maintain a continuous nurturing and positive relationship with families, member school districts, and community partners.
5. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility, dignity, and respect, while honoring the right to disagree with each other.
6. Recognize and respect the difference between adopting policy and administering the policy.
7. Uphold the legal requirement for confidentiality on all matters arising from board meeting closed session; the Brown Act shall govern all Board of Education communications.
8. Keep communication open and courteous.
9. The Board of Education will review the Norms, Protocols, and Strategic Plan annually to ensure newly elected Board of Education members have an opportunity to review and give input as appropriate.

Board of Education Members will:

1. Hire and support the Superintendent.
2. Work with all members of the Board and the Superintendent to become an effective governance team devoted to students and their community; be dedicated to making all members of the team successful.
3. Act with a professional demeanor that models and communicates the SoCal ROC's beliefs and vision.
4. Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style within the Board, staff, and students.
5. Focus on policy making, planning, and evaluation to enable students to achieve their highest potential.
6. Understand and respect the distinction between the Board and staff roles.
7. Support decisions of the majority, while honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints.
8. Refer requests regarding reports and projects to the Superintendent.
9. Communicate directly with the Superintendent whenever a significant/sensitive question or concern is raised by a staff member, student, parent, or community member.
10. Communicate with the Superintendent whenever contacted by the media regarding an incident, event, or agenda item.
11. Prior to a board meeting, directly communicate with the Superintendent any questions and/or concerns about agenda items; honor the "no surprises" rule with the Superintendent.
12. Conduct an annual review of the Superintendent to provide appropriate feedback and objectively evaluate the Superintendent's performance.
13. Understand the importance of using one's best judgment to represent all members of the community.

14. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness; take collective responsibility for the Board's performance.
15. Be encouraged to vote on all matters except when a conflict of interest arises. As a courtesy to the team, explain the reasons for the "no" vote either during deliberation or before casting the vote.
16. Board Member visits are encouraged; as a professional courtesy, Board Members will call the Superintendent ahead of time to arrange the visit.
17. Represent the SoCal ROC when possible, by attending site events and/or functions.
18. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.
19. Understand that authority to direct actions rests with the Board as a whole and not with individual Board Members.
20. Understand that while individual Board Members represent their respective districts, while on the dais as a member of the SoCal ROC Board, shall represent all students of the joint powers agreement.
21. Adopt a fiscally responsible budget and monitor the fiscal health of the institution.
22. Speak on behalf of themselves, not on behalf of the Board; only the Board President can speak on behalf of the Board.
23. Ensure a safe, appropriate, and equitable educational environment for students.
24. Understand that they represent the SoCal ROC in their communities and on their respective member district Boards.

The Superintendent will:

1. Work with the Board, creating a team dedicated to students.
2. Work with the Board to reinforce and communicate a clear vision for the SoCal ROC.
3. Recognize that the Board/Superintendent governance relationship requires support from the SoCal ROC's management team.
4. Understand the distinction between Board, Superintendent, and staff roles, and respect the role of the Board as the maker of policy.
5. Accept leadership responsibility and be accountable for implementing the vision, goals, and policies of the SoCal ROC.
6. Prepare preliminary goals annually for the Board's consideration.
7. Provide data to the Board so data-driven decisions can be made.
8. Make personnel recommendations and changes, in consultation with the Board.
9. Communicate with Board Members frequently, promptly, succinctly and effectively.
10. Inform the Board prior to critical information becoming public; apprise all Board Members in a timely manner of any major incident or when they may be called on to answer or explain.
11. Distribute information fully and equally to all Board Members.
12. Provide information requested by one Board Member to every Board Member, as appropriate.
13. Distribute the Board's agenda in a timely fashion and with enough time for Board study and, as requested, to clarify information prior to the scheduled meeting.
14. Except in the event of urgent information, never bring a matter to a public meeting that is a surprise to a Board Member or cabinet member.
15. Provide additional information as requested through a Board update, special report, Board agenda item, or at a Board workshop.
16. Treat all Board Members professionally.
17. Visit SoCal ROC classrooms regularly.
18. Represent the SoCal ROC by being visible in member districts and in the community.
19. Model the value of life-long learning.
20. Meet and communicate with Superintendents of JPA member districts.

IV. Board Meeting Preparation

1. The week prior to the board meeting, the Superintendent and Board President will order the agenda for each meeting for maximum effectiveness, as well as determine the time for closed session.
 - a. The Board Vice-President or Clerk will fill in on agenda setting meetings as needed.
 - b. Priority will be given to critical Board business and additional considerations will include staff time, likely public comment, and anticipated Board Member discussion.
 - c. Out of courtesy to staff and the community, whenever possible, the published agenda will reflect the actual order of the meeting. However, there may be times that the Board will reorder the agenda at the beginning of a meeting.
2. Board agendas will be published as required by law and within required Brown Act timelines.
3. Board Members will regularly attend all scheduled board meetings.
4. Board Members will cooperate in scheduling and attending special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.
5. Individual Board Members will uphold legal requirements for confidentiality on all matters arising from closed session.
6. Board Members will come to meetings well prepared. This includes reviewing staff updates, written comments, the agenda, and meeting materials in advance of the meeting. Discussion outside of board meetings should be limited, as required by the Brown Act.
7. Out of courtesy to the Superintendent and cabinet and to ensure effective board meetings, when possible Board Members will ask questions for clarification and information regarding agenda items before the board meeting using one of three methods:
 - a. Individually call or email the Superintendent questions as soon as possible. If the item is confidential, do not use names of personnel or students in the email.
 - b. Make an appointment through the Executive Assistant and ask the questions in a meeting with the Superintendent.
 - c. For time sensitive inquiries, text the Superintendent and see if there is time for a brief call prior to the board meeting.

When possible, Board Members will notify the Superintendent or cabinet of a question that may be asked during open session.

8. General Consent items allow the Board to deal with routine and customary business (including items that are covered by Board Policy) with minimal discussion. In the spirit of “no surprises,” when possible Board Members will notify the Superintendent by the morning of the board meeting if they intend to pull an item; the Superintendent may inform the Board President. This is particularly important if a Board Member is going to ask staff for additional information on the item before casting a vote.

V. Protocols During the Board Meeting

1. All Board Members will participate meaningfully during the meeting. It is not necessary for a Board Member to comment on every agenda item for the sake of participating, but every Board Member should be truly engaged and participate in Board business.
2. The Board will honor these norms during the board meeting:
 - a. Seek first to understand, then be understood.
 - b. Remain objective and deliberate on facts.
 - c. Keep discussion moving forward, stay on topic, and be efficient.
 - d. Be conscientious of time.
 - e. Address each other, staff and members of the public, with respect and civility.
 - f. A Board Member abstaining should provide a brief explanation for the abstention. Abstention should only occur when there is a conflict of interest, a Board Member is too conflicted on an issue, or there is a lack of information. It should be noted that abstentions are not counted toward quorum.

- g. Protect confidential information, including all Closed Session information.
 - h. Wait to speak until a Board Member has finished talking and keep remarks brief, so that all opinions can be expressed.
 - i. Avoid cell phone use during the board meeting.
 - j. When making difficult decisions, remember to keep students' interests and the institution's fiscal responsibilities first.
 - k. Consider the recommendation(s) of staff, knowing they have discussed, researched, and prepared the topic in detail.
3. During meetings, Board Members will remain focused on agenda items and be aware of when items are being discussed, requests for information or clarification are being made, and when action on an item is needed.
 4. Assignment for leading the Pledge of Allegiance will be made by the Board President. Leading a moment of silence will be made at the discretion of the Board President.
 5. Board Members will speak to the issues on the agenda and should avoid engaging in unrelated side conversations. Facts and further information needed from administration may be referred to the Superintendent.
 6. Board Members will use surnames and titles when addressing Superintendent and cabinet members during board meetings. The use of first names will be avoided during the board meeting.
 7. As a matter of courtesy, and to allow all Board Members access to the most complete information possible, Board Members will refrain from engaging in private conversations during board meetings, including during breaks, and with members of the public on matters which the Board will be deliberating.
 8. The Board will not engage members of the audience (this does not include presenters or public comment). The Board President shall respond to an audience member with brief comments on how to resolve their concern or how to communicate to staff.
 9. Board Members will listen attentively to Public Comments and, in accordance with the Brown Act, will not engage in dialogue with speakers on non-agenda items.
 10. Presentations at a regular board meeting should generally be no more than 5-7 minutes in length, followed by an opportunity for Board questions and comments with no time constraints.
 11. The following are times that call for a General Consent item to be pulled by a Board Member:
 - a. When a Board Member plans to vote "no" or abstain from voting.
 - b. When a Board Member needs further information or discussion before a vote.
 - c. When a Board Member wants to highlight an item.
 - d. When a recommendation to table the item for a future meeting is made.
 12. Board Members may request that a break be taken during long meetings (by passing a note to the President). Board Members may also leave for a brief personal break, if necessary.
 13. Anyone may call for a "Point of Order" if it appears that meeting norms are not being followed. The Board President will make a determination as to how to proceed.
 14. The purpose of Board Member remarks is to report to the public and other members of the Board. As such, Board Members will limit their remarks to district responsibilities, upcoming events, and information about important activities they have attended related to the SoCal ROC. This should not be a time to relay personal political beliefs; limit remarks to SoCal ROC and partner district-related announcements, news, and events. Board Member reports

are not a time for discussion; therefore, Board Members should not comment on others Board Members' reports. Clarifying questions are acceptable.

15. Requests for future agenda items may be stated during "Parking Lot", or made in accordance with Board Bylaw 9322.
16. It is understood that while individual Board Members represent their respective partner districts, when on the SoCal ROC dais, they represent all SoCal ROC students.

VI. Superintendent and Board Member Roles and Relationship Protocols

1. The Board and the Superintendent will collaboratively work to become a team devoted to students.
2. The Board and Superintendent will facilitate goal setting for SoCal ROC.
3. The Board and Superintendent will participate in establishing annual expectations and goals for the Superintendent.
4. The Board will establish the vision, create policies and assure accountability. The Superintendent will manage SoCal ROC.
5. The Board will understand that it is the Superintendent's role to make personnel recommendations.
6. Individual Board Members will communicate directly with the Superintendent when informal complaints or criticism is voiced to them by staff, students, parents or community members.
7. At all times, the Superintendent will be copied in any emails a Board Member sends to cabinet members.
8. If there is a desire to speak to any other staff member (e.g. Assistant Superintendent, director, etc...), the Superintendent will be notified and consulted. When possible, the employee will be directed back to his/her supervisor. If a meeting occurs with a staff member, the Superintendent will be informed.
9. The Superintendent will schedule Budget Study Sessions, Board Workshops, or Special Board Meetings for in-depth discussion or training on one or two agreed-upon topics.
10. It is a best practice that all Board Members and the Superintendent attend the CSBA Annual Education Conference.

VII. Other Items - Site Visits

1. Board Members will be invited to conduct site visits with the Superintendent annually.
2. As a professional courtesy, Board Members will inform the Superintendent when requesting a visit to campus during school hours.
3. Board Members shall check in at the main office prior to any visit.
4. Board Members are welcome to attend SoCal ROC and community events where families are invited without prior notification to the Superintendent. However, it is suggested that Board Members inform the Superintendent or Executive Assistant of attendance at an event so the school can prepare parking and introductions of Board Members at the event.