



Petaluma City Schools

Governance Handbook

Developing Effective Communicators and Critical Thinkers

Board of Trustees

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Approved by the Petaluma City School District Board of Trustees on September 14, 2021

This handbook reflects the governance team's work on the creation of an effective framework for successful leadership and governance. This involves ongoing discussions about Unity of Purpose, District Goals, and agreement on protocols for formal structures that enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits each student scholar.

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Governance Team

The Governance Team is defined as the Petaluma City School District Board of Trustees working in concert with the Superintendent.

Mission Statement

What we do as an organization

Petaluma City Schools delivers a high quality, diverse, equitable, and inclusive education to all student scholars so they creatively explore interests, collaboratively solve problems, and fully develop as resilient, caring, and responsible members of our community.

Core Values

What we believe as an organization

1. All students have value, infinite potential, and the right to an excellent education.
2. All students learn in a safe and caring environment where they are motivated to do their best work.
3. All students reach high levels of achievement through rigorous and culturally-relevant curriculum.
4. Diversity is an asset that strengthens and enriches our learning community.
5. Parents and caregivers are recognized and engaged as partners.
6. The community supports the educational program and is engaged as a partner and resource in student learning.
7. District employees are dedicated to student success and operate as a high-performing, collaborative team.
8. Shared decision making is valued and active participation from all stakeholders is critical to student success.

District Goals

Goal One

All student scholars will experience an excellent, diverse, equitable, and inclusive education.

The District will:

1. Produce an equity study of our schools in order to address disparities;
2. Implement common assessments, starting with math;
3. Provide Professional Development for all staff in order to ensure our curriculum is representative and reflective of our students;

4. Provide implicit bias, restorative practices, and community wellbeing training for all staff in their work with students;
5. Create systems to hire new staff and retain current staff in order to ensure that our adults are reflective of our students;
6. Build a diverse teacher pipeline for our school district;
7. Review and ensure a meaningful evaluation process for all staff;
8. Develop a feasibility study and implementation plan for a dual-language immersion program.

Goal Two

All student scholars will have rich academic options that meet their unique needs. The District will:

1. Develop a study to better understand why and when students are leaving our District in order to develop our programs, attract, and retain students in order to build programs that will attract and retain families in our District;
2. Ensure that all high-school students have access to A-G courses;
3. Explore adding additional courses and pathways to enhance learning opportunities;
4. Open access to accelerated courses to increase student agency over course selection;
5. Provide Professional Development for all staff on how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students in accelerated courses.

Goal Three

All student scholars and families will be engaged in their learning community. The District will:

1. Create districtwide experiences that will allow all students to explore their interests;
2. Explore a two-way system to improve and expand stakeholder communication and feedback;
3. Expand participation for a diverse and representative group of stakeholders to be engaged in and support our schools;
4. Intentionally build community to ensure that every student in our District can identify a trusted adult at school.

Goal Four

Our District will enhance the long-term sustainability of our organization, infrastructure, and operations. The District will:

1. Match enrollment to the demand in our community and the capacity of our facilities;
2. Enhance the environmental sustainability of our infrastructure and operations;
3. Connect our District's financial plan to our District's priorities;

4. Ensure long-term fiscal stability in order to balance the needs of all stakeholders, focusing on our need for equity in all schools and programs throughout our District.

Governance Team Responsibilities

The Governance Team assumes collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively.

To operate effectively, the Board must have 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 respect;
5. Govern within Board-adopted policies and procedures;
6. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance;
7. Periodically evaluate the governance team's effectiveness;
8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations.

The Board's Responsibilities

Board Responsibilities	Board Responsibilities – Jobs
<p>1. Set direction for the District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and support the Superintendent so that the vision, goals, and policies of the District can be implemented. • Involve the community, parents, students, and staff in developing a common vision for the District focused on learning and achievement and be responsive to the needs of all students.
<p>2. Establish policies to create a structure for Board operation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ the Superintendent and set policy for hiring of other personnel. • Adopt, evaluate, and update policies consistent with the law and the District's vision and goals. • Adopt a fiscally responsible budget based on the District's vision and goals. • Affirm the District's collective bargaining process.
<p>3. Create a supportive environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students. • Act with a professional demeanor that models the District's beliefs and vision. • Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities.

Board Responsibilities	Board Responsibilities – Jobs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold District policies the Board has approved. • Ensure a positive personnel climate exists. • Understand and commit the time required to be informed and effective.
4. Ensure accountability and transparency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the District curriculum and monitoring student progress. • Conduct regular and timely evaluations of the Superintendent based on the vision, goals, and performance of the District, and ensure that the Superintendent holds District personnel accountable. • Regularly monitor the fiscal health of the District.
5. Provide community leadership on behalf of the District and public education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide community leadership on educational issues and advocate on behalf of students and public education at the local, state and federal levels. • Be responsive and accessible to the community. • Speak with a common voice about District priorities, goals, and issues.

The Superintendent's Responsibilities

1. Promotes the success of all students and supports the efforts of the Board of Trustees to keep the District focused on learning and achievement.
2. Values, advocates and supports public education.
3. Recognizes and respects the differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community, and ensures that diverse range of views inform Board decisions.
4. Leads in a dignified manner and treats everyone with respect.
5. Supports the Board's continuous professional development and models the value of lifelong learning.
6. Works with the Board and assures collective responsibility to build a unity of purpose, common vision, and create a positive organizational culture.
7. Recognizes that the Board/Superintendent governance relationship is supported by the administration team.
8. Understands the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and respects the role of the Board as the representative of the community.
9. Understands that authority rests with the Board as a whole; provides guidance to the Board to assist in decision-making; and provides leadership based on the direction of the Board as a whole.

10. Communicates openly with trust and integrity, providing all members of the Board with equal and timely access to information.
11. Accepts leadership responsibility and accountability for implementing the vision, goals, and policies of the District.

Building a Governance Team

Unity of Purpose

Unity of Purpose is a common focus and the core values and beliefs governance team members share about children, the District and public education. Unity of Purpose helps them transcend their differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

What does our governance team want to accomplish? What do we stand for?

1. Have the most appropriate and effective learning environment for each student.
2. Build trust.
3. Become an effective team with a focused direction.
4. Understand our individual jobs and collective responsibilities.
5. Become partners with staff and the community for positive change.
6. Make a commitment to continuous improvement.

Governance Norms

We agree to:

- Work in the interest of all students;
- Be prepared for Board meetings by asking questions ahead of time and follow the "No Surprise Rule";
- Share ideas, ask questions, draw others out - success depends on participation;
- Respect and give fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints. Respect each other's thinking and value individual contributions;
- Accept and encourage constructive disagreement as necessary to yield the best decisions - nothing personal;
- Be open to challenge your own beliefs and ideas. Stay open to new ways of doing things;
- When you have a problem, attempt to offer either a desired outcome, a solution, or share why it is a concern;

- Support decisions once made;
- Work toward the future, learning from the past;
- Celebrate success - take time to recognize small steps or progress toward goals.

Governance Leadership - Board Protocols

Effective governance teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the Board and Superintendent in their functioning as a team. These formal agreements about how groups will operate are often called protocols.

Petaluma City School District Board of Trustees has adopted the following protocols.

Preparation for Board Meetings

Topic	Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board meeting is a meeting to conduct District business in public. The Board meeting provides opportunities to share educational philosophy among governance team members and with the community. • Well-run efficient meetings model leadership, promote trust and confidence and demonstrate planning for the future and strategically moving the District forward. • Critical to effective governance is data driven decision-making that promotes clarity of direction, focus and alignment of resources.
Protocol	<p>Governance is a strategic function. The PCS governance team is responsible for setting the vision and adopting the strategic goals for the District.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance team demonstrates to the public, that the Board maintains focus on District priorities through professional and respectful deliberation. • The Board members share accountability for Board deliberations that spend appropriate time on District priorities while valuing the input of each member of the governance team. • The Superintendent’s reports will explicitly link Board meeting agenda topics to the District goals. • Board member comments at the Board meetings will focus on District goals, professional development, or educational trends. • Annually and as needed, the governance team will schedule study sessions and Board conversations linked to the District’s strategic priorities.

Topic	Developing the Board Meeting Agenda
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Board member or member of the public may request that a matter within the jurisdiction of the Board be placed on the Board meeting agenda. • Critical to effective discussion and deliberation is clarification of the agenda item placement process and sufficient time for gathering information on the topic.

Topic	Developing the Board Meeting Agenda
Protocol	<p>The following steps outline the process for submitting an item for the Board meeting agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board president, a Board member (rotating) and the Superintendent will meet approximately one week prior to the Board meeting to review the draft Board meeting agenda. • The annual Board calendar and minutes from prior Board meetings will inform placement of items on the Board meeting agenda.

Topic	Board/Superintendent Communication
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical to effective governance is good communication and an open exchange of ideas. Effective communication ensures a common and shared understanding of issues, priorities and successes, ‘No surprises’. • The Board’s ability to make thoughtful, responsible decisions on behalf of students and the community is dependent upon receiving timely, and sufficient information from the Superintendent. • Board members understand that the Board collectively gives direction to the Superintendent only through actions taken at a legally noticed Board meeting.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Superintendent will prepare a weekly update to the Board. • The Superintendent has an open-door policy and will schedule one on one meetings with Board members as needed. The Superintendent welcomes and invites informal visits with Board members. • Board members and Superintendent will strive to inform each other of any important situations. The Superintendent will contact the Board regarding situations that are urgent or that Board members may hear about in the community. • Annually, the Superintendent and Board members will confirm preferred methods of communication.

Topic	Board/Staff/Administrators Communication
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical to Board member’s ability to make informed and wise decisions is timely and equal access to information. • The Superintendent wants to be responsive to information requests, while maintaining the focus on District priorities and balancing management of staff time. • Only the Board, by formal Board action, may direct staff.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for information made by a Board member to staff or Administrators will be made through the Superintendent. • The Superintendent will ensure timely responses to requests and will provide the information or direct Board members to the correct source. As appropriate, the Superintendent will distribute answers to all Board members. • An individual Board member will, insofar as possible, let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request for information will be made public so the staff can be prepared to provide an 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.

Topic	Board/Staff/Administrators Communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Board members shall take great care to ensure that communication to staff not imply direction nor assume that staff should act based upon individual Board member comments. A Board member who is a parent at a school has the ability to discuss any matters or concerns regarding his/her individual child. However, when a Board member is present at a school site, it is important to remember that individual Board members do not create directives on policy or budgetary matters. The Board, as a whole, makes those decisions.

Conduct of Meetings

Topic	Staff Reports: Structure and Content
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reports will be structured to promote an efficient and effective use of Board meetings and support informed decision making.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reports will be submitted in the Board packet prior to the Board meetings, whenever possible. Board members will review staff presentations prior to the Board meeting, and call or e-mail in advance with questions as needed.

Topic	Board Member Interaction with the Public at Board Meetings
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees want to ensure that multiple voices of the community are heard, that the process for community input is clearly defined and that community members feel welcome. Important to the work of the District are Board meetings that are professional, stay on track and ensure timely decisions.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board president will remind the public of the purpose of the meeting is to conduct the District business in public. The Board president will outline the guidelines for public input and note that the guidelines are listed on the Board meeting agenda. The Board president acts as facilitator, focusing the dialogue and managing the public input. The Board president may ask the public to limit their comments to new information. The Board will consistently abide by agreements and protocols so that all persons are treated fairly and equally.

Topic	Bringing Up New Ideas/Strategies - Deciding on whether to Move forward on an Idea/Strategy
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members value opportunities to share best practices and innovative strategies for moving the District forward. Board members agree to a process that will support bringing forward new strategic goals while maintaining the focus on current District goals.

Topic	Bringing Up New Ideas/Strategies - Deciding on whether to Move forward on an Idea/Strategy
Protocol	<p>When bringing forward a new idea/strategic goal, Board members will proceed according to these guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the concept/idea to the Superintendent, Board President or during Board comments at a Board meeting. • Determine whether a new strategic goal will be held for consideration during the District annual goal setting process.

Board Structure & Operations

Topic	Special Board Meetings: Board Study Sessions and Discussion Meetings
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing Board recognizes the importance and value of exploring topics and issues in more depth. Situations will arise during the year that the Board may want to study or discuss further. These may be externally driven, of District-wide significance, on a topic with budget impact, or of public concern. • Topics are usually those where additional discussion is needed to inform the decision.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Board member may request a Board study session or discussion meeting. The Board agrees that when a request for a study session is made, it is because the Board wants to hear an in-depth presentation on a topic with the goal of greater understanding. • Study sessions and discussion meetings will be scheduled annually, or as needed, to gather representative opinions and perspectives and expand input on topics key to the educational quality of the District. • Study sessions and discussion meetings are open to the public.

Topic	Orienting New Board Members to the District and Work of the Board
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members must be knowledgeable about the District they are governing, about current issues in education that are impacting their District, and about roles and responsibilities of all members of the governance team. • The governance team recognizes the importance of supporting and promoting the smooth integration of new trustees to the work of the Board.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As soon as possible following the election, the Superintendent, and Board members will schedule an orientation session with the newly constituted Board. • The Board president may also assign a Board member to serve as a mentor for the new member.

Board Accountability

Topic	Responding to Concerns from the Community
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that the process and procedures of the District are upheld. • This protocol is intended to clarify that one Board member has no individual authority to solve a problem.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When someone shares a concern, a trustee will listen carefully, remembering that only one side of the story is being heard. A trustee will direct that person to the person in the District most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern. Trustees will make sure to clarify the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principal, then District staff). • The Board president is the spokesperson and answers email or delegates another Board member to answer emails directed to the full Board. The Board president will forward the email to the Superintendent and may also ask the Superintendent to answer on behalf of the Board. The Superintendent and/or the Board President will respond and copy the rest of the Board. • The Board agrees to go through the Superintendent with a staff issue. • The Board agrees that all legal questions will be directed to the Superintendent.

Topic	Establishing Multi-year and Annual District Priorities and Goals
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board will establish District multi-year and annual goals and measurements of success to promote good stewardship, clarity of direction, and focus and alignment of resources. • Board members agree to a process that will support bringing forward new strategic initiatives while maintaining the focus on current District goals.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance team will initiate an annual goal-planning session prior to the budget adoption so that the planning process will guide and inform budget development. • The annual goal setting process is directly linked to the evaluation of the Superintendent. • The Board is mindful of resources and the impact of decisions on the District and community resources.

Topic	Superintendent Evaluation
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards must have an agreed upon District mission, core values and priorities to effectively evaluate the Superintendent. • The Superintendent evaluation is an important leadership tool to focus and align all District efforts. The evaluation process must be clear and fair. It should be goals based, data driven, collaborative and ongoing.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance team understands that the manner in which the Superintendent is evaluated serves as a model for evaluation throughout the District. • The Board evaluates the Superintendent based on progress on the District goals and the

Topic	Superintendent Evaluation
	<p>PCS Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PCS Superintendent’s evaluation is an ongoing two-day communication process and involves both commendations and recommendations for improvement. • The formal Superintendent evaluation will be scheduled twice a year, constituting a mid-year check in and a final performance review.

Topic	Governance Self-Assessment
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board supports continuous improvement through ongoing evaluation of governance effectiveness. • Conducting a governance self-evaluation demonstrates accountability to the community and the interest of the governance team to strengthen and improve governance practices.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board will participate in a minimum of one workshop annually to review governance effectiveness and governance team agreements. The process will identify commendations and recommendations for improvement. • The evaluation process will align with assessment of progress on District goals and the Superintendent’s evaluation.

Board as Community Leaders

Topic	Board Office Hours
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing Board recognizes the importance of being accessible to the community and supporting the Board goal of building a community of trust.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Brown Act recognizes that no more than two Board members can be present at any given meeting and that no Board decisions will be made. • The Board will implement regular, open-door meetings with community members. <p>Process/Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board will create a schedule each school year to set the dates and times for office hours. • A designated location will be identified for each forum. • A calendar will be posted on the District website, school websites and social media.

Topic	Digital Communication and Social Media
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting of the Board of trustees is a meeting to conduct Board business in public.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of electronic mail (email), notes, and all digital communications including tweets, chats, and use of social media by trustees shall conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety, and ethics as other forms of school Board related communication. • Uses of electronic devices during Board meetings should be limited to instances where a family or business situation makes the communication necessary.

Topic	Digital Communication and Social Media
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Board members will refrain from personal and direct communications about Board issues on social media.

Topic	Responding to the media / speaking for the District
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is essential that important information be communicated to members of the Board, the staff and the community in a timely manner. Important to the work of the Board is that trustees speak with one voice in order to maintain the trust of the community.
Protocol	<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 for any emergencies. 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 utilizing developed and agreed upon key messages.

Topic	Role in Public/Community Visibility
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members understand the importance of being visible and accessible to the community. Board members will clarify their authority as one of five in all decisions and actions.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members represent the Board in what they say and do and will set an example of professionalism. Board members will strive to educate the public about their role as representatives, entrusted with the education of all the students of the community.

Topic	Visiting Schools, and Attending Events
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board wants to be informed about instructional practices, and the needs of the students and staff regarding school programs. The Board respects staff schedules and demands and the disruption that may be created by well-meaning, but unannounced visits to schools.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members are encouraged to visit schools and attend school events. Board members requesting a meeting with school staff or administration will schedule this meeting through the Superintendent. The Superintendent and/or principal will accompany trustees on classroom visits. The Superintendent will ensure that staff is aware of the process and protocols for Board members visiting the classrooms.

Appendix I

What Every New Board Member Needs to Know About the District

Petaluma City School District
200 Douglas Street, Petaluma, CA 94952
petalumacityschools.org

GOVERNANCE TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Position	Phone	E-mail
Matthew Harris	Superintendent	707-778-4604	mharris@petk12.org
Michelle Woelfel	Assistant to the Superintendent	707-778-4604	mwoelfel@petk12.org
Joanna Paun	Board President	707-778-4604	jpaun@petk12.org
Sheldon Gen	Board Clerk	707-778-4604	sgen@petk12.org
Mady Cloud	Member	707-778-4604	mcloud@petk12.org
Caitlin Quinn	Member	707-778-4604	cquinn@petk12.org
Ellen Webster	Member	707-778-4604	ewebster@petk12.org

DISTRICT OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

District Office Departments	Title & Name of Department Head	Phone Number	E-mail
Student Services	Liz Chacòn Assistant Superintendent	707-778-4960	lchacon@petk12.org
Business Office	Chris Thomas Chief Business Officer	707-778-4621	cthomas@petk12.org
Human Resources	Jason Sutter Assistant Superintendent	707-778-4608	jsutter@petk12.org
Educational Services	Tony Hua Assistant Superintendent	707-778-4619	thua@petk12.org
Technology	David Fichera Director of Learning & Innovation	707-778-4702	dfichera@petk12.org

DISTRICT SCHOOLS CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of School	Grade Levels	Principal	Phone Number	E-mail
Mary Collins School at Cherry Valley Charter	K-8	Liza Eichert	707-778-4740	leichert@petk12.org
Grant Elementary	K-6	Amanda Grey	707-778-4742	agrey@petk12.org
McDowell Elementary	TK-6	Samuel Martinez	707-778-4745	smartinez@petk12.org
McKinley Elementary	TK-6	Ani Larson	707-778-4750	alarson@petk12.org
McNear Elementary	TK-6	Vacant	707-778-4752	
Penngrove Elementary	TK-6	Amy Fadeji	707-778-4755	afadeji@petk12.org
Valley Vista Elementary	TK-6	Catina Haugen	707-778-4762	chaugen@petk12.org
Kenilworth Junior High	7-8	Bennett Holley	707-778-4710	bholley@petk12.org
Petaluma Junior High	7-8	Kelly Kriss	707-778-4724	kkriss@petk12.org
Casa Grande High School	9-12	Dan Ostermann	707-778-4679	dostermann@petk12.org
Petaluma High School	9-12	Justin Mori	707-778-4651	jmori@petk12.org
San Antonio High School	10-12	Becky Lofton	707-778-4758	rlofton@petk12.org
Valley Oaks Independent Study	7-12	Becky Lofton	707-778-4758	rlofton@petk12.org
Sonoma Mountain High School	10-12	Greg Stevenson	707-778-4738	gstevenson@petk12.org
Petaluma Accelerated Charter	7- 8	Ani Larson	707-778-4750	alarson@petk12.org
Carpe Diem High School	10-12	Greg Stevenson	707-778-4796	gstevenson@petk12.org
Petaluma Adult School	Varies	Nancy Emanuele	707-778-4633	nemanuele@petk12.org