

GOVERNANCE

Governance Standards

The Governing Board believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the District. The Board also has major responsibilities 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.

*(cf. 9000 - Role of the Board)*  
*(cf. 9270 - Conflict of Interest)*

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

*(cf. 9010 - Public Statements)*

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

*(cf. 9011 - Disclosure of Confidential/Privileged Information)*

6. Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader

*(cf. 9240 - Board Development)*

7. Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff

*(cf. 2110 - Superintendent Responsibilities and Duties)*

8. Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals

## **Board Bylaw 9005(b)**

*(cf. 9200 - Limits of Board Member Authority)*

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

*(cf. 0000 - Vision)*

*(cf. 0100 - Philosophy)*

*(cf. 0200 - Goals for the School District)*

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

*(cf. 9310 - Board Policies)*

6. Take collective responsibility for the Board's performance
7. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness

*(cf. 9400 - Board Self-Evaluation)*

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

*(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)*

*(cf. 9323 - Meeting Conduct)*

### **Code of Ethics**

This Code of Ethics expresses the personal ideals which the Board believes should guide each school Board member's activities.

As a member of the West Sonoma County Union High School District (WSCUHSD) Board of Education, I will perform my duties in accordance with my oath of office. I am committed to serving the educational needs of the students in our schools. My primary responsibility is to

## **Board Bylaw 9005(c)**

carry out our District Mission Statement, “The mission of the West Sonoma County Union High School District is to provide high quality instruction as student achievement is our top priority.”

As a Board Member:

1. I will hold myself to the highest standards of ethical conduct.
2. I will be responsible to all residents of the District and not solely to those who elected me nor solely to any organization to which I may belong, or which may have supported my election.
3. I will have a direct concern for my duties. I represent the authority and responsibility of government. This authority must be exercised with as much care and concern for the least influential as for the most influential member of the community.
4. I will keep in mind that my actions may impact the ability of District employees to practice their trade or profession.
5. I will be aware of, and comply with the Constitutions of State and Nation, the Education Code of the State of California, other laws pertaining to public education, and the established policies of the District.
6. I am obligated by law to participate in decisions pertaining to education in the District. As an elected representative of the people, I can neither relinquish nor delegate this responsibility to any other individual or group.
7. I have something to contribute to society, and to this District.
8. I consider my position on the Board as a public trust and will not use it for private advantage or personal gain.
9. I will remember at all times that, as an individual, I have no legal authority outside the meetings of the Board, and conduct my relationships with staff, students, and local citizenry, and the media on that basis.
10. I will encourage ideas and opinions from the residents of the District and endeavor to incorporate community views into the deliberations and decisions of the Board.
11. I will devote sufficient time, thought, and study to proposed actions so as to be able to base decisions upon all available facts and vote in accordance with honest convictions, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind.
12. I will remember that the basic functions of the Board are to establish the policies by which District schools are administered, implement those policies, and hold employees accountable for the operation of the District.
13. I will promote and participate actively in a concerted program of timely exchange of information with all District residents, parents, students and employees.

## **Board Bylaw 9005(d)**

14. I recognize that it is important for the Board to understand and evaluate the educational programs of WSCUHSD.
15. I will work with my fellow Board Members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during vigorous debates of points at issue.
16. I will base my personal decisions upon all available facts in each situation, vote my honest conviction in every case unswayed by partisan bias, and abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board.
17. I recognize that deliberations of the Board in closed session are not mine to release or discuss in public without the prior approval of the Board by majority vote.
18. I will keep informed about education research and the actions and positions of regional, state, and national School Board groups.
19. I will make use of opportunities to enlarge my potential as a Board member through participation in educational conferences, workshops, and training sessions made available by local, state, and national agencies.
20. I will strive to provide the most effective Board service of which I am capable, in the spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy.

Government Code 1098 (SB 1536, Ch. 962, Statutes of 1987) has made it a misdemeanor for any public officer or employee to willfully and knowingly use or disclose for monetary gain any confidential information acquired in the course of his/her official duties. (Disclosures excepted from this prohibition are those made to law enforcement officials or to the joint legislative audit committee when reporting on improper governmental activities.)

The Board, administration, and staff shall maintain the confidentiality of all confidential records until such time as laws, state regulations, and/or bylaws of this District permit disclosure. Information and records pertaining to closed sessions; negotiations and student records are not subject to public disclosure under Government Code 6252-6260.

Any employee or Board member who willfully releases confidential/privileged information about students, staff, or any topic properly confined to a closed session shall be subject to disciplinary action. Confidential information includes any information relating to the Board's employer-employee strategies on matters in negotiation or matters to be placed in negotiation.

Any action by a Board member that inadvertently or carelessly results in release of confidential/privileged information shall be recorded with the Superintendent's office.

Disciplinary actions, as deemed permissible and appropriate by the Board may include but not be limited to, injunctive relief to prevent the disclosure of confidential information, suspension from closed session, referral to the grand jury, suspension of any remuneration and/or

## **Board Bylaw 9005(e)**

benefits, elimination in the participation of District subsidies for future election filing fees, and private/public censure.

Depending on the circumstances, the Board may, if permissible, deny the Board member further access to any privileged information and shall take any steps necessary to prevent any further unauthorized release of such information.

*(cf. 5125 – Student Records)*

*(cf. 5125.1 – Release of Directory Information)*

*(cf. 9321 – Closed Sessions Purposes and Agendas)*

*Legal Reference:*

**EDUCATION CODE**

*35010 Power of governing board to adopt rules for its own governance*

*35160 Board authority to act in any manner not conflicting with law*

*35164 Actions by majority vote*

**GOVERNMENT CODE**

*1090 Financial interest in contract*

*1098 Disclosure of confidential information*

*1125-1129 Incompatible activities*

*54950-54963 The Ralph M. Brown Act*

*87300-87313 Conflict of interest code*

*Management Resources:*

**CSBA PUBLICATIONS**

*CSBA Professional Governance Standards, 2000*

*Maximizing School Board Leadership: Boardmanship, 1996*

**WEB SITES**

*CSBA: [http:// www.csba.org](http://www.csba.org)*

Bylaw

Adopted: Feb. 13, 2013

**WEST SONOMA COUNTY UHSD**

Sebastopol, CA