



PROMOTING EXCELLENCE • CREATING THE FUTURE

Calallen ISD Board of Trustees Good Governance Handbook 2024-2025

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Statement of Purpose

The Calallen Independent School District Board of Trustees is committed to the highest levels of good governance. Our work is grounded in best practices for good governance:

- Alignment to the three essential roles; strategic, tactical, and operational.
- Utilizing a balanced scorecard to track progress.
- Systematically monitoring team trust.
- Clarity surrounding the difference(s) between the role of the Superintendent and the role of the Board (see CISD Board Policy BAA(Legal). BJA(Legal), BJA(Local)).
- Commitment to asking good questions that are aligned to the strategic role rather than the tactical role.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that a high performing board governs with a set of principles that guide their work. These principles serve as the framework of governance standards against which the Board will measure itself:

1. *Coherence* – Govern as a unified team in a coherent, consistent, and strategic manner utilizing thoughtful and respectful communication. Support the majority decision.
2. *Transparency* – Govern in an open and transparent manner; establishing strong lines of communication with the Superintendent, staff, and the community.
3. *Student and Staff Centered* – Place the well-being and growth of each student and staff member at the forefront of all decision-making.
4. *Continuous Improvement* – Set expectations for a mindset of continuous improvement for our Superintendent and Leadership Team. The Board will furthermore model this continuous improvement mindset in its governance work.
5. *Stewardship* – Govern in a way that is reflective and responsive to the interests of the Calallen community.

THREE ESSENTIAL ROLES IN AN ALIGNED SCHOOL SYSTEM

Strategic Role

- Board and Superintendent
- Big Picture...View from 50,000 feet
- Overlooks the entire system and sees how the parts relate to the whole
- Focuses on representing the community's needs and interests
- Looks to the long term...usually 3-5 years
- Provides overall structure for district-wide goals
- Sets clear targets for overall goals
- Works ON macro system

Superintendent

Superintendent

Tactical Role

- Superintendent and Leadership Team
- Sees the wide picture...View from 10,000 feet
- Coordinates the component parts of the organization
- Overlooks the schools and departments
- Focuses on working directly with internal/external customers (faculty and staff, parents, community & students)
- Looks out 1-2 years
- Provides structure at the campus and department level
- Creates and deploys plans that will lead to improvement
- Depending on the situation, the person may work either ON the macro system or IN a micro system

Administrator

Administrator

Operational Role

- Instructional & Operational Leaders and Front-Line Staff
- Focuses on the ground level picture...what is happening day to day
- Coordinates a specific part of the organization
- Overlooks a classroom, department or teaching team
- Focuses primarily on the students and parents
- Looks days or weeks out...sometimes looking at the full year during planning sessions
- Provides structure at the classroom level
- Refines and adjusts plans so that improvement will result
- Works IN micro system

Administrator

Administrator

Collective Board Responsibilities

A district is governed by a Board of Trustees who, as a body corporate, shall oversee the governance of the district, including the following powers and duties:

- Set the direction of the district including vision, mission, and district goals for student educational success and well-being.
- Set and approve district policies that reflect the educational needs and well-being of all students.
- Hire and annually evaluate the performance of the Superintendent.
- Approve the district’s budget.
- Levy taxes and oversee the collection there of.
- Order elections, canvass returns, declare results.

This is a brief overview of board duties, CISD School Board Policy BAA(Legal) provides a more detailed list of duties.

Strategic Role of the School Trustee

A school trustee is a member of the board of trustees who is responsible for representing the community and overseeing the district’s management. A trustee is not a delegate or representative, but a member of a board of people elected to represent the interest of the school and make decision that benefit the students of the district while representing the interests of their constituents.

Delegate / Representative	Trustee
Elected by the public	Elected by the public
Delegates are elected to express the will of their constituents	Have autonomy to act as they see fit
Limited autonomy and independent thought	Informed by knowledge and experience to serve the interest of others
The voice of those not present	Critical thinker and decision-maker

Strategic Questions to Guide Board Discussion

- How does this idea/program fit into our Strategic Plan?
- What is the vision for this program/idea/concept?
- How do we quantify progress in this area? How does it trend? How does it compare?
- How do our stakeholders know this service exists? How would we self-rate our marketing efforts?
- What percent of the total budget is dedicated to this effort?
- What is the best way for the Board to help?
- What else (do we need to know), (do you need in order to be successful), (have we not thought of)?
- What concerns us most about this?
- What is worthy of a celebration?
- Have we aligned the appropriate resources with this initiative?
- Do our measures appropriately address both progress and cultural impact?
- Are there budgeted items that are so removed from our strategic direction that they can be strategically abandoned?
- How does this proposed budgetary expenditure align to our strategic direction and how will it ultimately (positively) impact our community? How much does it cost to sustain? Can we afford it? Does it replace something else or is it an additional expenditure?
- Is our target set too high? Too low?
- Is this the best measure for success?
- Which perspective does this help? Is there a potential negative unintended impact on another perspective?
- What do these data seem to tell us? Not tell us?
- What improvement might arise from these data?
- Did we miss something in our Strategic Objective when we first defined it?
- Are we validating with our ears too much (anecdotal) and not with our eyes (data)? And, vice versa...?
- Are we maintaining our strategic focus or are we off track?
- What research would we need to undertake in order to “know what we don’t know”?
- How is this being perceived at the operational level (front-line)? (Besides anecdotal evidence)
- How do we know this is aligned to our customers’ needs?
- Are our Strategic Objectives well understood at the operational level? How do we know?
- Are we innovative enough? What is our tolerance/process for innovation?

Board Member Norms

Governance norms are board standards for how trustees will interact and work together. Norms are descriptions of how trustees treat each other and those with whom they interact. The CISD Board understands that high performing boards adopt norms, keep them fresh, and monitor them in practice.

Overarching Norms:

- The Board and Superintendent presume positive intent of Board members, staff, and community. Be cognizant of how questions are phrased.
- The Board is a governing body. The Board understands and respects the distinct role of the Board and staff.
- The Board's treatment of all persons is courteous, dignified, and fair. The Board maintains a respectful atmosphere at all times.
- The Board operates with a mindset of continuous improvement grounded in team trust that allows for a unified approach to governance.

Before Board Meetings, Members Will:

- Submit items to be placed on the agenda in ample time so the Superintendent may assemble information bearing on the item before the meeting. The Board meeting agenda is finalized the Wednesday prior to a Board meeting. A reminder will be sent two weeks before the monthly meeting as a call for items. To add an item to an agenda, it must be requested by two trustees and submitted twelve calendar days before a regular meeting.
- Ensure there is adequate time for Board members to prepare and review all relevant materials, information, data, etc. related to the agenda items. Whenever possible, contact the Superintendent with agenda questions well in advance of the meeting, allowing time for Superintendent and staff to gather pertinent information. Additional questions may still be presented during the Board meeting as necessary.
- Board members come prepared for each meeting.
- Request information from or through the Superintendent consistent with CISD School Board Policy BBE(Local). Formal information provided in response to a Board member's request will be provided to all members.
- Refer all persons with positive or negative comments regarding school district operations to the proper staff person or administrator directly responsible for the operational activity. Focus on the Board's role and do not become involved in the day-to-day operations of the school system. We will not engage in the resolution of problems; rather, we will refer these concerns to the Superintendent.
- When a member would like to visit a campus or district department/facility in their official capacity, notice should be provided to the Superintendent.

During Board Meetings, Members Will:

- Ensure they are fully prepared, on time and ready to participate.
- Endeavor to start and end meetings on time.
- Avoid hidden agendas and springing any surprises on other members.
- Once recognized by the Board President, ensure that each board member is allowed to speak without interruption.
- Focus on an agenda item until it is resolved or until a specified time has been reached to resume the resolution process.
- Say it once, say it well. Board members will state their position concisely and summarize. If another Board member has already captured the position on a subject, he/she will state that without repeating.
- Board members will maintain respective decorum, and model the behaviors the Board expects of students, staff, and community members.
- Before committing to a position on an agenda item or issue make sure all relevant information has been presented, including the Superintendent's recommendation.
- Electronic devices may be out during Board meetings, but should not be a distraction and should not be used for Board business.
- There are no side conversations or interrupting of other Board members during open and closed session meetings.
- All votes will be cast in an audible voice by indicating "yay" or "nay". If a trustee wishes to abstain, they must indicate the abstention prior to the vote.

Between Board Meetings, Members Will:

- Support the decisions of the Board and will not work to undermine Board decisions or encourage others to do so.
- Abide by the confidentiality laws of executive session and ensure all documents, records, reports, etc. are treated in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, etc.
- Serve in trust for the entire community.
- Endeavor to be transparent through timely communication of Board decisions.
- Take responsibility for correcting behavior that might negatively affect individual board members, the Board, or Governance Team.
- Stand behind the majority vote of the Board, no matter how each Board member individually voted. We do not undermine a decision that is made by the majority after the vote is finalized.

The CISD Board of Trustees will annually review and update the Board's Good Governance Handbook.