


# OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT Board Orientation

December 18, 2024



**OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Community Schools, Thriving Students*



## **RESILIENCE** / rə'zilyəns / (noun):

The capacity to recover quickly from adversity, trauma, and significant stress, and to heal, organize, and evolve into a more just and equitable community.



## Purpose of Board Orientation

The 2024-25 Board Orientation is designed to prepare board members for effective governance that prioritizes student outcomes and ensures the district operates with clarity, cohesion, and purpose. This orientation emphasizes the foundational principles of governance, interpersonal team dynamics, and strategic district operations. Grounded in shared reflection and actionable learning, the sessions aim to equip board members with the tools needed to govern ethically, collaboratively, and with an unwavering focus on educational equity and excellence.

# Intended Learning Outcomes

1. **Deepen the Board's Shared Understanding** of Governance recognizing the critical role governance plays in driving student outcomes and ensuring the effectiveness of OUSD operations.
2. **Achieve Role Clarity** clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of board members, senior staff, and committees to enable more effective collaboration and accountability.
3. **Strengthen Team Dynamics** to foster high-functioning team dynamics grounded in shared governance norms, trust, and collective responsibility.
4. **Enhance Governance Competencies** including expanding the knowledge and application of foundational governance concepts, including ethical compliance, decision-making, and operational protocols.
5. **Improve Function of Board Committees**, developing strategies to maximize the effectiveness of committee structures, ensuring they advance district priorities and streamline board operations.

# Agenda

- Welcoming Remarks
- Board Community Building
- Effective Governance: Roles and Responsibilities
- Ethics and Conflicts of Interest
- Board Committees
- Closing and Next Steps

## Our Vision

All OUSD students will find joy in their academic experience while graduating with the skills to ensure they are caring, competent, fully-informed, critical thinkers who are prepared for college, career, and community success.

## Our Mission

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) will build a Full Service Community District focused on high academic achievement while serving the whole child, eliminating inequity, and providing each child with excellent teachers, every day.





# Board Orientation Circle

[www.ousd.org](http://www.ousd.org)



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1000 Broadway, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94607



# **Above/Below the Line Framework**

## **Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities to Enhance Governance**



# Outcomes

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of board members, superintendent, general counsel, student board directors, parliamentarian, and senior staff.
- Foster alignment and trust to establish shared commitments for effective governance.
- Connect role clarity to research and best practices for high-functioning teams.

# Above the Line/Below the Line Framework for Effective Governance

“Above the Line (Governance)”



“Below the Line (Management)”

# Above the Line/Below the Line Framework for Effective Governance

Set the district's vision and strategic goals.  
Adopt policies that guide the district.  
Approve budgets aligned with priorities.  
Monitor progress towards student outcomes.  
Evaluate the superintendent's performance.

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Implement board policies.  
Manage daily district operations.  
Develop and execute action plans.  
Supervise staff and oversee resources.  
Resolve operational challenges.

*Source: Student Outcomes-Focused Governance Framework*

# Viewing the Roles



Role of the  
Board of Directors  
(from 25,000 feet  
elevation)



Role of  
Superintendent  
(from 5,000 feet  
elevation)



Role of the  
Administrators,  
Teachers, and Staff  
("boots on the ground")

# Roles and Responsibilities

**Superintendent:** Executes the board's vision and policies, oversees district operations, and provides data-informed recommendations to the board.

**General Counsel:** Legal advisor to the Board and Superintendent on legal compliance, drafting and interpreting policy, and risk management.

**Student Board Directors:** Represent student voice and provide input on policies affecting students.

**Parliamentarian:** Ensures procedural adherence and effective decision-making processes.

**Senior Staff:** Executes operational strategies and provides expertise to support board decisions.

# Research on High-Functioning Teams

**Trust:** Clear roles build confidence and collaboration.

**Clarity:** Defined responsibilities reduce conflict and ambiguity.

**Communication:** Open dialogue fosters alignment and problem-solving.

**Accountability:** Each member fulfills their role to support shared outcomes.



## Exercise: Role Exploration



# Discussion: Shared Commitments

- How can the board ensure it remains focused on governance?
- What communication practices will help maintain trust and clarity?
- How can the superintendent support the board without crossing governance boundaries?
- What tools or processes can ensure clarity for general counsel, parliamentarian, and student board directors?





# Reflection and Closing



# Board Governance

# Regular Meeting Agenda

- Order of agenda set by **Board Bylaw 9322**
  - Any changes require amendment to BB 9322
- Agenda setting
  - President sets agenda after conferring with Board members, Superintendent, and staff
  - Consent agenda items (mostly contracts) are put forward by school sites and departments
  - New (non-consent) items put forward by senior staff based on legal requirements, upcoming decision points, strategic plan, Board member requests, public interest, etc.

# Board-Sponsored Legislation

- Under BB 9322, Board members may introduce legislation - usually Board Policies/Bylaws (for ongoing actions) or Resolutions (for one-time actions)
- Process:
  - Consult with GC regarding vision and approach
  - Consult with appropriate staff
  - Draft language and share with GC before requesting to add items to board meeting or committee agendas
  - Work with FGC to finalize language
  - GC submits final version to be introduced as new legislative item

# Regular Meeting Agenda

- Accessing agenda
  - Legistar (all items)
  - Share google folder (closed session items only)
- Expectations
  - Read agenda beforehand
  - Send in questions to GC and designated staff in advance
  - No surprises!
- Annotated agenda (attached) and Annotated Board Cover Memo (attached) will be used to explain flow and details



# Annual Meeting Preparation

# Regular Meeting Agenda

- Set regular meeting dates
  - Usually 2nd and 4th Wednesdays
  - No meetings in July
- Elect President and Vice President
- Ratified Board's assignments
  - Board votes it up or down (only Board President can make changes)
- Reminder: Submit board member interests



# Ethics in Governance



# Ethics and Conflicts of Interest



- Board Bylaw 9270 addresses Conflicts of Interest.

*The Governing Board desires to maintain the highest ethical standards and help ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the district and the public.....*

Question: What does Ethical Leadership Look Like?

## Why is Ethical Leadership Important?

- ☑ Avoid legal issues
- ☑ Set a positive tone for the organization
- ☑ Foster trust

# Ethics and Conflicts of Interest



- Board Bylaw 9270 addresses Conflicts of Interest.

*The Governing Board desires to maintain the highest ethical standards and help ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the district and the public.....*

*Accordingly, no Board member, district employee, or other person in a designated position shall participate in the making of any decision for the district when the decision will or may be affected by his/her financial, family, or other personal interest or consideration. (conflicts of interest)*

## Conflicts & Board Member To Dos

- ☑ Carefully review 9270 and any guidance from the General Counsel on Conflicts of Interest.
- ☑ If you are aware of any conflicts of interest, inform the General Counsel immediately (do not wait until after an item has gone to board for action).
- ☑ Even when you do not have an actual conflict of interest, be mindful of perceived conflicts - seek advice!



# Board Committees

# Board Bylaws

- Board Bylaws Series 9000 are the Board's bylaws under which it operates. These can be revised by Board action.
- Board Bylaw 9130 addresses Board Committees.
- Board Bylaw 9131 addresses Advisory and Oversight Committees and Commissions.

Series 9000 - Bylaws of the Board
Role of the Board (Powers and Responsibilities) 9000
Governance Standards 9005
Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools Protocols E9005
Public Statements 9010
Disclosure of Confidential/Privileged Information 9011
Board Member Electronic Communications 9012
Organization 9100
Terms of Office 9110
President 9121
Secretary 9122
Clerk 9123
Attorney 9124
Board Committees 9130
Board Representatives 9140
Members 9200
Board of Education Elections 9220
Resignation 9222
Filling Vacancies 9223

# Why Have Committees?



Board committees provide a wonderful and effective opportunity to delve deeply into a topic and to enable in-depth discussion. The committee then shares that information, as assisted by staff, with the full Board.

# Board Bylaw 9130 Committees

## The structure of the committee is as follows:

*Purpose* Board defines the purpose, any timeline for completion of assigned responsibilities, and length of time that members are expected to serve. Unless specifically authorized by the Board to act on its behalf, the committee shall act in an advisory capacity. Standing Committees of the Board are those that have a continuing subject matter jurisdiction or a meeting schedule established by action of the Board. (Government Code 54952)

# Board Bylaw 9130 Board Committees

**Committee Appointments** All committees are appointed by the Board President and the President shall designate the Committee Chair.

**Committee Meetings** Committee meetings shall be held pursuant to a schedule determined by the Committee to meet its mandate from or charge of the Board. Committee meetings shall be called and noticed pursuant to Board Bylaws 9320 and 9322.

# Board Bylaw 9130 Board Committees

**Standing Committees** The Board President shall appoint the following standing committee(s).

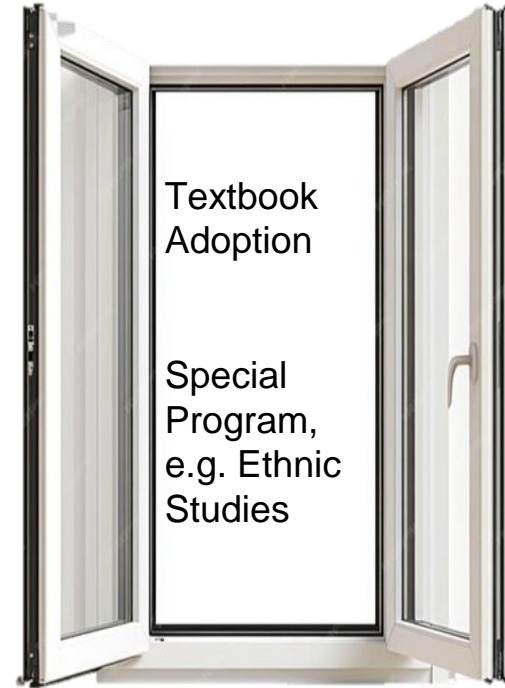
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Budget and Finance
- Facilities
- Charter Matters
- Teaching and Learning

**Committee Staffing** The Superintendent shall assign appropriate staff members to assist a particular committee of the Board with its work.



# Teaching and Learning

For example, Teaching and Learning often deals with a narrow window of specific tasks.



# Board Bylaw 9130 Board Committees

**Committee Actions** Committees shall only have the power to propose and to recommend action to the full Board. No action of a committee shall establish the official policy or position of the Board regarding any matter. No action of any committee shall be binding upon the Board. All proposals, reports and recommendations from committees shall be scheduled for consideration at a regular or special meeting of the Board. Such motion, reports and recommendations shall be scheduled and noticed for action pursuant to Board Bylaws 9320 and 9322.

# Example: Long Beach USD

- Committees: Committees are established by Superintendent and Board assignments are established by the Board President after the annual Board reorganization. The purpose of the committees is for a Board member to meet with district staff to review agenda items prior to the regular meeting.
- There will typically be two standing committees (business and instruction) and membership will be rotated between them every twelve months. Any other committees will be created as necessary on an ad hoc basis, will be given a specific deliverable and due date, and will sunset once their deliverable is achieved or due date is reached.

# Best Practices for Board Committees

1. A committee must have a clearly defined purpose per its Board Bylaws.
2. A committee meets when it has a charge assigned to it by the Board and observes an established timeline for the charge.
3. The work of a committee supports the goals of the district.
4. A committee observes good governance practices.
5. Committee members operate from an objective vantage point.
6. A committee reviews all possible options and venues pertaining to a charge being studied.
7. A committee makes good use of its time and that of the staff assisting it.
8. The Committee Chair keeps the Board President informed of progress and any issues that might arise during the course of the charge.
9. The Committee Chair consults with the General Counsel prior to introducing new legislative items.
10. Per its timeline for a charge, the committee with staff assistance prepares an update(s) and/or a final report to the Board.

# Committee Reflections

1. What do you think went well in your committee? What do you think could have been improved?
2. Which best practices, if any, from above did you use? If none, why, and what got in the way?
3. Based on this progress, what is one best practice or structure you are committed to strengthening and/or continuing in 2025?



# Committee Reporting Template



# 2025 Committee Interests



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