



SIERRA SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK 2021

Board of Trustees

Mr. Bill Farris, President
Mr. Kurt Rockwell, Vice President
Dr. Chad Houck
Mr. Tim Johnson
Mr. Mike Scott

Superintendent

Dr. Dave Ostash



SIERRA SANDS Unified School District

This handbook reflects the governance team's work on creation of a framework for effective governance. This involves ongoing discussions about unity of purpose, roles, commitment to norms and coming to agreement on protocols/formal structures that will enable the governance team to perform its responsibilities in a way that best benefits all students.

Board of Trustees

Mr. Bill Farris—Board President



Mr. Farris has lived in Ridgecrest since 1969 and served on the Board of Education from 1984 through 2006 and 2008 to the present. His children and grandchildren have been continuously enrolled in Sierra Sands schools since the early 1980s. For the last couple of decades, he has extended that service by representing Kern and Tulare counties on the board for the California School Boards Association as the Region 12 Director. He is also a director on the Kern County School Boards Association, and serves on the School District Organization Committee for Kern County.

Mr. Kurt Rockwell—Board Vice President



Mr. Rockwell was elected to the Board of Education in 2006. He is the Director of the Tactical Weapons Office for the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division at China Lake and Pt. Mugu, CA. All of his children have attended elementary, middle, and high school at Sierra Sands and are all graduates of Burroughs High School. Mr. Rockwell is a graduate of the California School Boards Association Masters in Governance Program.

Dr. Chad Houck—Trustee



Dr. Houck was appointed to the Board of Education in 2020. He currently works as the Dean of Instruction for Cerro Coso Community College. Prior to that he was the principal of South Tahoe High School for 3 years, the principal of Mesquite High School for 1 year, and an assistant principal at Burroughs High School for 8 years. Four of his six children are currently attending schools in the Sierra Sands Unified

Mr. Tim Johnson—Trustee



Mr. Johnson has served on the Board of Education from 2008 - 2012 and 2014 until the present. He serves as Delegate for Region 12 of the California School Boards Association. He is currently on Active Duty serving as the Assistant Program Execution Officer (Tactical Aircraft) for Integration and Interoperability. Tim also serves as a unit Commanding Officer and Captain in the Navy Reserve. He has four children, all of whom graduated from Sierra Sands schools. His wife Barbara is a retired Sierra Sands teacher. Mr. Johnson is a graduate of the California School Boards Association Masters in Governance Program.

Mr. Mike Scott—Trustee



Mr. Scott was elected to the Board of Education in 1996. He previously served as the DARE officer for our schools during his 34 year career in law enforcement. He achieved the position of Sergeant with the Ridgecrest Police Department, a Lieutenant with the Kern County Sheriff's Office and the Chief of Police with the China Lake Police Department. He recently retired from law enforcement and is now working as a Security Specialist for NAWS China Lake.

GOVERNING EFFECTIVELY

GOVERNANCE—A Definition: *School district governance is the process of reaching agreements that balance and reflect community values, beliefs and priorities in policies that focus and align all district efforts to enhance student achievement.*-CSBA

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of a school district:

- The actions and behaviors of individuals
- The board and superintendent coming together to govern, and
- The performance of governance roles and responsibilities by the governance team

In a school district, the board and superintendent work together as a governance team. For a governance team to work together effectively, members need to **(1) maintain a unity of purpose; (2) agree on and govern within appropriate rules; (3) create and sustain a positive governance culture; and (4) create supportive structures and processes for effective governance.**

Why adopt and utilize CSBA's Professional Governance Standards?

The Overall Purposes of CSBA's Professional Governance Standards:

- Help increase the effectiveness of governing boards, and
- Raise parent, public and media awareness about the critical role of governing boards.

Why Adopt and Utilize?

Because local governance teams are critical to positive, sustained public school reform, and the Professional Governance Standards:

- Help keep governance teams focused on learning and achievement for all students.
- Promote dialogue about governance, which leads to a greater understanding among members of the governance team about roles and expectations.
- Help establish a common vocabulary about governance and serve as a framework for building or maintaining a district culture focused on effective governance.
- Publicly affirm the board's commitment to effective governance.
- Demonstrate the willingness of board members to be accountable to each other and to the public.
- Provide a tool for governance teams to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Help governance teams identify areas where continuing education would be useful.
- Help formalize a positive governance culture for when new board members or superintendents join the governance team.
- Promote a greater awareness and understanding among parents, the media and the public about what boards do and how they can operate most effectively.
- Help build trust and foster greater participation by parents and the public in the schools.
- Provide parents, the media and the public with a meaningful basis for assessing the effectiveness of their local governance teams.
- Help promote the value of local governance in our democracy.
- Provide a way for effective governance teams to receive recognition.
- Help educate future candidates and voters about the critical jobs of boards.

Role and Responsibilities

Citizen Oversight of local government is the cornerstone of democracy in the United States. School board members are locally elected public officials entrusted with governing a community's public schools. The role of the school board is to ensure that school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of their communities. Boards fulfill this role by performing the following major responsibilities:

Setting direction:

- Establishing an effective and efficient structure
- Providing support
- Ensuring accountability
- Providing community leadership as advocates for children, the school district and public schools

These responsibilities represent core functions that are so fundamental to a school system's accountability to the public that they can only be performed by an elected governing body. Authority is granted to the board as a whole, not each member individually. Therefore, board members fulfill these responsibilities by working together as a governance team with the superintendent to make decisions that will best serve all the students in the community.

In California, there are approximately 1,000 school districts and county offices of education that are governed by more than 5,000 school board members. California's is the largest public school system in the nation, serving more than 6 million students - a collective student body larger than the total population of many other states.

The Individual Trustee

In California's public education system, a trustee is a person elected or appointed to serve on a school district or county board of education. Individual trustees bring unique skills, values and beliefs to their board. In order to govern effectively, individual trustees must work with each other and the superintendent to ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student.

TO BE EFFECTIVE, AN INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEE:

- Keeps learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.
- Values, supports and advocates for public education.
- Recognizes and respects differences of perspective and style on the board and among staff, students, parents and the community.
- Acts with dignity, and understands the implications of demeanor and behavior.
- Keeps confidential matters confidential.
- Participates in professional development and commits the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.
- Understands the distinctions between board and staff roles, and refrains from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the superintendent and staff.
- Understands that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individuals.

The Board

School districts and county offices of education are governed by boards, not by individual trustees. While understanding their separate roles, the board and superintendent work together as a “governance team.” This 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 A UNITY OF PURPOSE AND:

- Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students.
- Communicate a common vision.
- Operate openly, with trust and integrity.
- Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
- Govern within board-adopted policies and procedures.
- Take collective responsibility for the board’s performance.
- Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness.
- Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations.

The Board's Jobs

The primary responsibilities of the board are to set a direction for the district, provide a structure by establishing policies, ensure accountability and provide community leadership on behalf of the district and public education. To fulfill these responsibilities, there are a number of specific jobs that effective boards must carry out.

EFFECTIVE BOARDS:

- Involve the community, parents, students and staff in developing a common vision for the district focused on learning and achievement and responsive to the needs of all students.
- Adopt, evaluate and update policies consistent with the law and the district's vision and goals.
- Maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress.
- Hire and support the superintendent so that the vision, goals and policies of the district can be implemented.
- 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.
- Adopt a fiscally responsible budget based on the district's vision and goals, and regularly monitor the fiscal health of the district.
- Ensure that a safe and appropriate educational environment is provided to all students.
- Establish a framework for the district's collective bargaining process and adopt responsible agreements.
- Provide community leadership on educational issues and advocate on behalf of students and public education at the local, state and federal levels.

Superintendent Governance Standards

As a corollary to the CSBA Professional Governance Standards, a team of California superintendents including the ACSA Superintendents Committee and the CSBA Superintendents Advisory Council has developed a set of Superintendent Governance Standards. We highly recommend that these be included as part of the Professional Governance Standards adoption.

The Superintendent:

- Promotes the success of all students and supports the efforts of the Board of Trustees to keep the district focused on learning and achievement.
- Values, advocates and supports public education and all stake holders.
- Recognizes and respects the differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community — and ensures that the diverse range of views inform board decisions.
- Acts with dignity, treats everyone with civility and respect, and understands the implications of demeanor and behavior.
- Serves as a model for the value of lifelong learning and supports the Board’s continuous professional development.
- Works with the Board as a “governance team” and assures collective responsibility for building a unity of purpose, communicating a common vision and creating a positive organizational culture.
- Recognizes that the board/superintendent governance relationship is supported by the management team in each district.
- Understands the distinctions between board and staff roles, and respects the role of the Board as the representative of the community.
- 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.
- Communicates openly with trust and integrity including providing all members of the Board with equal access to information, and recognizing the importance of both responsive and anticipatory communications.
- Accepts leadership responsibility and accountability for implementing the vision, goals and policies of the district.

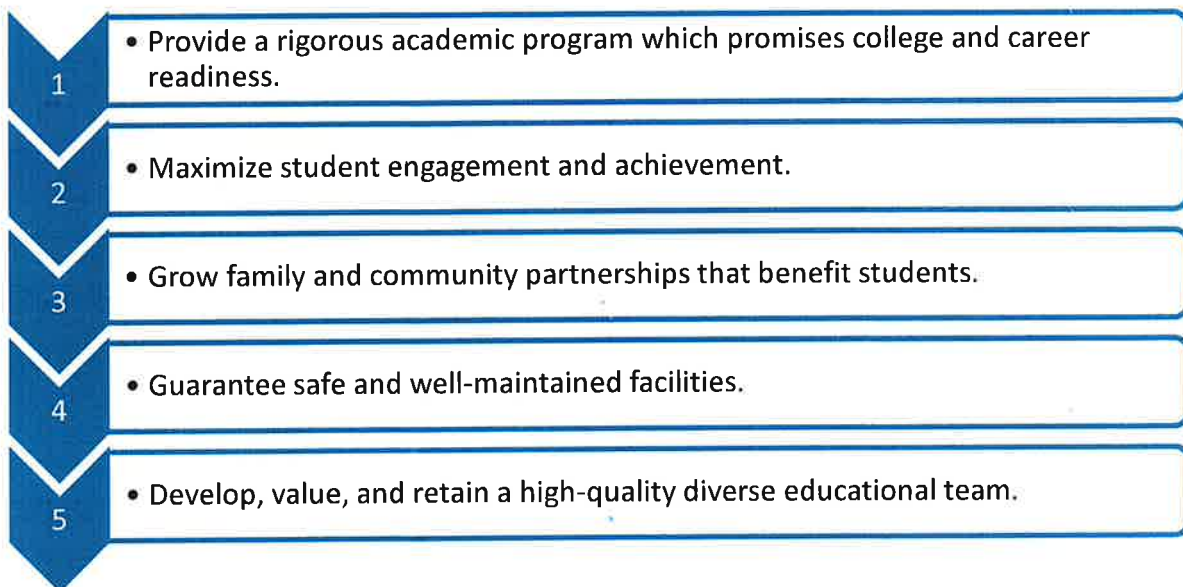
IDENTIFYING OUR UNITY OF PURPOSE

SSUSD Vision, Goals, Guiding Principles

VISION: Growing a Community of Engaged Learners Connecting to Future Opportunities through Innovative Education

GOALS:

**SIERRA SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
2020-2023 Goals**



GUIDING PRINCIPLES DURING 2020-2021 PANDEMIC

- Health and safety of students and staff
- Follow the law and take all reasonable steps to follow appropriate guidance
- Socialization and connection with students
- Provide nutritional services to our students
- Optimize our means of educating our students

AGREEMENTS TO SUPPORT GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

The Board of Trustees for the SSUSD is entrusted by the community to uphold the constitutions of California and the United States, to protect the public interest in schools, and to ensure that a high quality education is provided to each student.

The board and superintendent must function together as a governance leadership team in order to effectively meet district challenges. Agreed upon behaviors, or norms, and operating procedures, or protocols, support consistent behaviors and actions among team members. The purpose of the SSUSD District governance team agreements is to ensure a positive and productive working relationship among board members, the superintendent, district staff, students, and the community.

We have reviewed and agreed to the aforementioned governance team roles and responsibilities in order to support a positive and productive working relationship among the SSUSD Board of Trustees, staff, students, and the community. We shall review, revise, or renew these agreements at our annual governance workshop.


Affirmed on this 18th day of February, 2021




Mr. Bill Farris, Board President



Mr. Kurt Rockwell, Vice-President



Dr. Chad Houck, Trustee



Mr. Tim Johnson, Trustee



Mr. Mike Scott, Trustee



Dr. Dave Ostash, Superintendent

What Every Board Member Needs To Know

– About The District –

Need to Know:

1. Name of school district: Sierra Sands Unified School District
2. School district address: 113 Felspar Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
3. Main district phone number: (760) 499-1600

4. Superintendent:	Phone:	Email:
Dave Ostash	760-499-1600	dostash@ssusd.org

5. Superintendent's Secretary / Assistant:	Phone:	FAX:	Email:
Diane Naslund	760-499-1600	760-375-3338	dnaslund@ssusd.org

6. Other board members:	Phone:	Email:
Bill Farris	760-677-9102	bfarris@ssusd.org
Chad Houck	213-305-2360	chad.houck@ssusd.org
Tim Johnson	760-977-1167	tjohnson@ssusd.org
Kurt Rockwell	760-382-9287	krockwell@ssusd.org
Mike Scott	760-608-9072	msscott@ssusd.org

7. Communities served by the district: Ridgecrest, Inyokern, Randsburg, Johannesburg, Pearsonville

8. Number of employees in district: Certificated 290 (268 DATA, 22 DAGA)
Classified 317 (164 full time, 153 part time)
Management 27 Confidential 8
Substitutes Certificated 88, Classified 89

9. What unions are in place? Desert Area Teachers Assoc. President Eileen Poole
CA School Employees Assoc. President Sylvia Payanes
Desert Area Guidance Assoc. President Brianna Rivera

10. Grade levels served by the district: Transitional Kindergarten (TK)-12. Plus adult school

11. Number of students enrolled: Total: 4,903

Pre-school _____ Elementary school 2167 Middle school 1193

High school 1473 Continuation school 70 Adult Ed. 173

12. Student Population:

Ethnic Groups by Percentage: 56.6% white (non-Hispanic), 28.3% Hispanic, 5.2% African American

Percentage of English language learners: 6.3%

Primary languages spoken at home other than English: Spanish

Percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch: 60%

13. Number of square miles the district covers: 970

14. Home to school transportation: District operated? Yes Contracted to? Occasionally we will contract out a field trip, or high school athletic trip, with Kern County Superintendent of Schools if we are short a driver.

15. Number of schools: Total: 10

State Pre-schools 3 (Faller, Inyokern, Pierce) Elementary schools 6 Middle schools 2

High schools 1 Continuation schools 1 Charter schools 0 Adult Ed. 1

District Office Departments:	Title & Name of Department Head:	Phone Number:
Human Resources	Assistant Superintendent, HR Bryan Auld	760-499-1620
Curriculum and Instruction	Assistant Superintendent, C&I Michelle Savko	760-499-1640
Business Services	Assistant Superintendent, Bus. Services Pam Smith	760-499-1604
Special Education Local Plan Area, SELPA	Executive Director, SELPA Paul Delbick	760-499-1702
Technology	Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Donnie Morrison	760-499-1633
Pupil Support Services	Coordinator of PSS Kevin Wythe	760-499-1700
Special Projects	Coordinator of Special Projects Lisa Decker	760-499-1640

Construction	Director of Construction Randy Coit	760-499-1870
Finance & Budget	Director of Finance & Budget Lori McGuire	760-499-1604
Maintenance/Operations	Director of Maintenance Shane Herbert	760-499-1870
Nutritional Services and Warehouse	Supervisor of Nutritional Services/Warehouse Kristen Groves	760-499-1880

17. Standing Advisory Committees,

Panels or Commissions:	Staff Member Responsible:	Board Representation:
Community Advisory Committee	Paul Delbick, Executive Director, SELPA	N/A
CTE Stakeholder Advisory Committee	Lisa Decker, Coordinator Chris Ostermann, BHS Assistant Principal	N/A
District English Learner Advisory Committee	Lisa Decker, Coordinator Michelle Savko, Assistant Supt. Jennifer Williams, EL TOSA	N/A
District Instructional Materials Review Committee	Michelle Savko, Assistant Supt.	N/A
English Learner Advisory Committee (per site)	Jennifer Williams, EL TOSA Site administration	N/A
GATE Advisory Committee	Lisa Decker, Coordinator	N/A
Parent Advisory Committee	Michelle Savko, Assistant Supt. Lisa Decker, Coordinator	N/A
Superintendent's Council	Dr. Dave Ostash, Superintendent	N/A

18. District Schools:

Name of School:	Grade Levels:	Principal:	Phone Number:
Burroughs High School	9-12	Carrie Cope	760-499-1800
Faller Elementary School	TK-5	Amy Self	760-499-1690
Gateway Elementary School	TK-5	Margaret Bergens	760-499-1850
Inyokern Elementary School	TK-5	Beverly Ewbank	760-499-1683
James Monroe Middle School	6-8	John Cosner	760-499-1830
Las Flores Elementary School	TK-5	Sarah Tate	760-499-1860
Mesquite High School	9-12	Jo Anne McClelland	760-499-1810
Murray Middle School	6-8	Cody Pearce	760-499-1820
Pierce Elementary School	TK-5	Shyanne Ledford	760-499-1670
Richmond Elementary School	TK-5	Michael Yancey	760-499-1840
Sierra Sands Adult School	9-12	Jo Anne McClelland	760-499-1811

What Every New Board Member Needs To Know

– About Governance Team Operations –

Need to Know:

1. Board meeting dates and times: Third Thursday every month at 7:00 pm (Sept. & Mar. are 2nd Thur.)

Board Officers:	Role:
President:	Bill Farris
Vice President/Clerk:	Kurt Rockwell
Secretary:	Dave Ostash
Other:	

3. Order of items on the board meeting agenda:

1. Adoption of Agenda	6. Educational Administration	11. Business Administration
2. Approval of Minutes	7. Policy Development/Review	12. IKSFA Directors Meeting
3. Programs & Presentations	8. Personnel Administration	13. Consent Calendar
4. Public Hearing	9. General Administration	14. Future Agenda Items
5. Reports & Communications	10. Construction Administration	15. Adjournment

4. The purpose of the Public Comment section of the board meeting: Hear input from community members for items not on the agenda.

5. The purpose of the Board Comment section of the board meeting: Hear any comments or updates from members of the Board