

**KIT CARSON UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SUMMER SUMMIT BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

July 15, 2015; 5:30 PM

Kit Carson District Office, 9895 Seventh Avenue, Hanford, California

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Education Code 35140 and 35144 that a meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held at the time and place listed above. The Board will adjourn to closed session to conduct the Superintendent's evaluation immediately after opening. Open session will start at approximately 6:30 PM.

**DATE: July 15, 2015**

**TIME: 5:30 PM**

**PLACE: District Office, 9895 7th Avenue, Hanford**

OPEN SESSION - 5:30 PM

1. Opening:

- a. Call to Order - President Andy Atsma
- b. Establish a Quorum - roll call
- c. Flag Salute

ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION, c. 5:30 PM

The Board will conduct the Superintendent's evaluation, and review classified and certificated evaluations

RESUME OPEN SESSION

2. Report on closed session

3. Board Study Session

- a. Review CSBA conference topics
- b. Review Governance Handbook
- c. Review Core Values
- d. Establish goals for 2015-2016

4. Adjournment

# Kit Carson Union Elementary School District

## Governance Handbook 2015

### **Board of Trustees**

Andy Atsma, *President*

Sheree Deniz, *Clerk*

Joe Oliveira, *Trustee*

Jasmine Costa, *Trustee*

### **Superintendent**

Todd Barlow



Kit Carson Elementary School



Mid Valley Alternative Charter

*Kit Carson Union Elementary School District*  
**Governance Handbook**

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*The Kit Carson Union Elementary School District Governance Handbook was developed at workshops on July 24, 2001, January 26, 2002 and reviewed and revised at workshops on October 11, 2003, and January 10, 2009. Core Values were established at community meetings during the 2009-2010 school year. The Governance Handbook was developed in conjunction with staff from the California School Boards Association.*

## **Effective Governance**

*Governance defined: School district governance is the act of transforming the needs, wishes and desires of the community into policies that direct the community's schools.*

As the governance team fulfills responsibilities in the areas of setting direction, human resources, policies, student learning and achievement, finance, judicial appeals, collective bargaining, and community relations and advocacy, the way in which governance team members perform the governance role is critical.

Whether in the boardroom, out in the community or at home, board members are always trustees for the district. The integrity of the school district's educational program is dependent upon the responsible and professional manner in which each board member, and the board collectively, fulfills governance roles and responsibilities with the superintendent. The demeanor of governance team members sends an important message to the public.

Utilizing effective governance techniques, private citizens, once elected to school boards, work with the superintendent to keep all district efforts focused on student learning. Effective governance tenets encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors that enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in a school district.

The community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, but the district superintendent will translate all efforts into action. It is therefore vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

Working as a group, board members and the superintendent leverage the efforts of the professional staff by setting a direction for the district reflective of the community's wishes for its children, by creating a supportive framework for action in the district, by holding the system accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms, by providing support to students and staff through behaviors and actions, and by demonstrating community leadership on behalf of children, district schools and public education. When this is done effectively, the chances of a climate for excellence being created in which students thrive increases dramatically.

## **Effective Governance means...**

- Board members are always trustees for the district.
- Modeling expected behaviors for all – students, parents, staff, and the community.
- Never speaking negatively about the district or staff and always taking the high road.
- Never talking about confidential information outside of Executive Session.
- Always showing support of the superintendent in public.
- Staying together in public through difficult situations, and making sure we share our differences with each other in a respectful manner.
- Maintaining consistent, open, two-way communication so we never blindside others.
- Having enough time to review the board packet before the board meeting so we can ask our questions ahead of time.
- Behaving professionally, respectfully and always acting within our roles.
- Directing people with concerns or complaints back into the system to the appropriate person(s).
- Being in touch with our constituents' wishes and needs.

**Community ↔ Board ↔ School**

# Working As An Effective Team

To effectively focus all district efforts on student learning and achievement for all students, a governance team needs to have a unity of purpose, a mutual understanding of roles, positive working relationships and supportive structures and processes. One of the chief ways a governance team can strengthen or maintain its effectiveness is to periodically assess its own performance in these areas.

## **Unity of Purpose**

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, superordinate goals, the values and beliefs governance team members share in common about children, the district and public education that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

## **Roles**

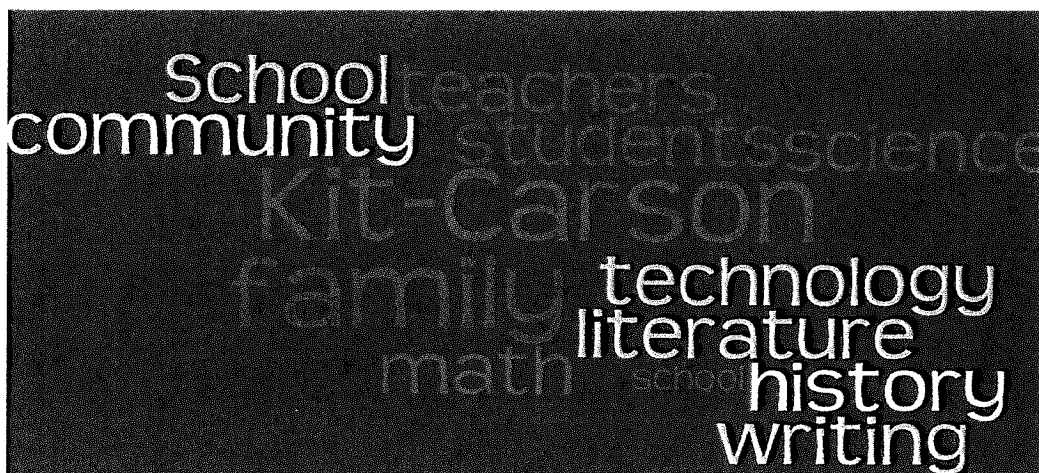
Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent and strive to operate within them.

## **Culture**

Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten, (implicit), or written, (explicit), agreements about how they will behave with each other and others. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

## **Structure and Process**

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the board and superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., agenda structure, visiting schools, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how boards operate, how they do business.



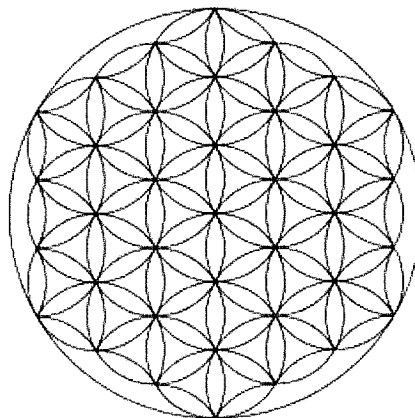
## **Unity of Purpose**

*Unity of Purpose is a common focus, superordinate goals, the values and beliefs governance team members share in common about children, the district and public education that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.*

The Kit Carson Union Elementary School District governance team's Unity of Purpose includes the governance team's *Core Values and Beliefs*. The governance team plans to involve the community in a vision setting process which will lead to the creation of a vision statement and long-term goals and objectives. These documents will become the driving force for all decision making.

Kit Carson Union Elementary District Core Values and Beliefs, (first developed in 2001, then reviewed in 2003, and revamped in 2010) were determined on the basis of community responses to the following prompts:

- *Why We Are Here*
- *What We Value and Believe In*
- *What We Are Proud Of*
- *What We Want to Accomplish*
- *How We Want to Be Perceived*





## **CORE BELIEFS**

### **Promoting Student Learning and Achievement:**

- We believe that all students should be challenged to achieve to their full potential
- We believe that students should feel safe to share their ideas and opinions
- We believe that families should be given regular feedback on their student's academic performance and that students will be held accountable for their learning

### **Providing a Safe Learning Environment:**

- We believe in promoting respectful relationships between all members of the school community
- We believe in well-maintained school equipment and facilities
- We believe in ensuring the safety of all students.

### **Maintaining High Quality Personnel:**

- We believe in maintaining high expectations for personnel and in holding them accountable for their performance
- We believe that each employee is valued and that teamwork and positive attitudes are essential
- We believe that highly trained staff members are necessary for student success
- We believe that all staff members have the responsibility to be good role models for our students

### **Communication:**

- We believe in open lines of communication throughout the school community
- We believe that the school community should have the opportunity to provide input into the direction of the district

### **Prudent Management of School Financial Resources:**

- We believe that the budget should support a high quality curriculum
- We believe that the district resources should be administered effectively for future growth, as well as the immediate needs of the district





## **VISION**

***Kit Carson Union School District has a positive image, and is cherished as a place that students, staff and families are proud of and promote to others.***

### **Kit Carson School District exists to promote student learning and achievement:**

1. Students are offered a well-rounded education that includes academics, music, art, and sports.
2. A competent and highly qualified teacher teaches each student.
3. Each student is taught grade level standards every day.
4. Students are offered opportunities for leadership.
5. Staff is attentive to the emotional needs of students.
6. Parents have the opportunity to meet with staff to discuss the progress of their students.

### **A safe learning and working environment exists for students, staff and families:**

1. Students and staff feel that the school is a safe and nurturing environment, where all people are valued and respected.
2. Rules are clear and consistently enforced.
3. Facilities and equipment are up-to-date and well maintained.

### **Competent, highly qualified staff is maintained to support student success:**

1. Hires, trains and retains competent, enthusiastic, highly qualified staff who serve as role models
2. Values, supports and provides opportunities for the professional growth of staff and the governance team.
3. Encourages and provides opportunities for staff members to work together to promote student learning.

### **Effective communication creates a predictable environment where excellence thrives:**

1. There are multiple ways for the school community to communicate and work together to support students.
2. Technology is utilized to foster effective communication among the entire Kit Carson community.
3. Parent and community involvement is actively solicited, sought, encouraged and promoted.

### **Prudent management of school financial resources benefits our students:**

1. The Kit Carson budget supports a high quality curriculum.
2. District resources are administered effectively
3. The budget process considers future growth as well as immediate needs.



## **Governance Team Priorities**

*Kit Carson Union School District has a positive image, and is cherished as a place that students, staff and families are proud of and promote to others.*

1. Continuous Improvement in student learning and achievement.  
Achieving 800 on the API.
2. Recognizing, increasing, and modeling respect for others, and our belief in the value of every individual.
3. Maintaining collaborative teamwork opportunities for staff that strengthen staff's ability to support students.
4. Better communication with our parents using technology.
5. The Kit Carson budget supports district priorities and goals.

# Governance Roles

*Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the board and superintendent, and strive to operate within them.*

There are important distinctions to be made between the board’s role and that of the superintendent and staff. Boards and superintendents must team together to ensure a district has effective leadership. Just as board members should govern and not manage a school district, superintendents should not administer a district in isolation from the representatives whom the public has entrusted with the schools.

<p>The Role of the <b>Board</b> is to <u>represent</u> the interests, wishes and hopes of the constituents in the school district and to <u>demonstrate leadership</u> to the community on educational matters.</p>	<p>The Role of the <b>superintendent</b> is to work with the board to facilitate effective governance, serve as the Chief Executive Officer for the district, implement the direction of the board, manage the day-to-day operations of the district, to provide leadership in representing the district to students, staff and the community, and to provide the professional expertise that will move the district forward.</p>
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<p align="center"><b>CSBA Guidelines on Governance Roles</b></p>	
<p><b>We set the direction for the community’s schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on student learning</li> <li>Assess needs/baseline data</li> <li>Generate, review or revise setting direction documents (beliefs, vision, priorities, strategic goals, success indicators)</li> <li>Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used</li> <li>Ensure these documents are the driving force for all district efforts</li> </ul>	<p><b>We establish an effective and efficient structure for the school district</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employ the superintendent and set policy for hiring of other personnel</li> <li>Oversee the development of and adopt policies</li> <li>Set a direction for and adopt the curriculum</li> <li>Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues</li> <li>Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements</li> </ul>
<p><b>We provide support through our behavior and actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act with professional demeanor that models the district’s beliefs and vision</li> <li>Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals</li> <li>Uphold board approved district policies</li> <li>Ensure a positive personnel climate exists</li> <li>Be knowledgeable enough about district efforts to explain them to the public</li> </ul>	<p><b>We ensure accountability to the public</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the superintendent</li> <li>Monitor, review and revise policies</li> <li>Serve as a judicial and appeals body</li> <li>Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness and require program changes as indicated</li> <li>Monitor and adjust district finances</li> <li>Monitor the collective bargaining process</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>We act as community leaders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speak with a common voice about district priorities, goals and issues</li> <li>Engage and involve the community in district schools and activities</li> <li>Communicate clear information about policies, programs and fiscal condition of the district</li> <li>Educate the community and the media about the issues facing the district and public education</li> </ul>	

Kit Carson Union Elementary School District

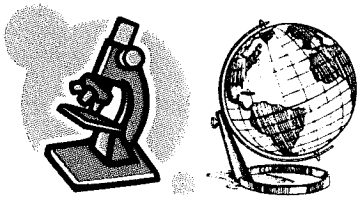
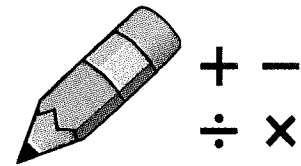
# Culture

*Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit), or written (explicit), agreements about how they will behave with each other and others. These behavioral ground rules, often called norms, enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.*

The Kit Carson Union Elementary School District governance team's work on developing a positive governance team culture includes a prioritized list of *How We Want to be Perceived*, and *Meeting Guidelines* which are *Governance Norms*. These will provide guidance for the way governance team members will behave with others and themselves.

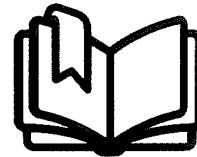
## How we want to be perceived:

1. We want to be seen as **CHILD FOCUSED**, basing all goals and decisions on what is best for our students.



2. We want to be known for valuing excellence in **learning opportunities** for all students.

3. We want to be seen as fair minded, open to **NEW IDEAS**, and not afraid of change



# Governance Protocols

## Structure and Process

*Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the board and superintendent in their functioning as a team (e.g., agenda structure, visiting schools, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how boards operate, how they do business.*

## Effective deliberation at the board table

In order to ensure effective deliberation on board meeting agenda items, the board table will be arranged so that board members are able to see each other at board meetings.

### We agree to...

- Listen openly
- Address process – not personalities
- Show respect
- Work toward the future – learning from the past
- and above all: **Focus on students' best interest!**

## Responding to community or staff issues and concerns

### Outside of board meetings

- When approached by a community or staff member with an issue or concern, board members will utilize the 4 R's:
  - **Receive** – *listen openly without preparing a response*
  - **Repeat** – *paraphrase or ask a question to clarify for understanding*
  - **Request** – *ask what the person would like the board member to do with the information and/or what they see as a solution to the problem*
  - **Review** – *go over the real options available to the person to remedy the situation and put them back into the system at the appropriate place*
- Following the conversation with the community or staff member the board member will notify the superintendent of the conversation as soon as possible:
  - so the superintendent can verify or clarify the situation and follow-through as necessary and/or appropriate
  - so that the superintendent knows first hand what the board member said to the community or staff member
- The superintendent will follow-through as necessary and/or appropriate and will report back to all board members
- Board members will refrain from becoming involved in personnel issues. Staff members have many remedies available to them under the law – and failing a resolution utilizing any of those legal remedies – the school board becomes the “court of last resort”. Individual board members who have become involved in the situation early on will be unable to be impartial at the board hearing and will be expected to remove themselves from the proceedings.

## At board meetings

- During the Public Comment section of every board meeting, community and staff members will have an opportunity to comment on any issues of interest or concern that are not on the board agenda.
- Prior to the Public Comment section, the board president will explain the Brown Act restrictions that limit the ability of board members to engage with community or staff members about topics or issues that are not on the board meeting agenda. The board president will explain that Brown Act restrictions are in place to protect the public and to ensure that any member of the public with an interest in a particular topic or issue has the opportunity to address the board and hear the board's deliberation and decision.
- Board members may ask clarifying questions of the community or staff member, and will notify the board president when they have a clarifying question they would like to ask.
- During the Superintendent's Report, immediately following the Public Comment section, the superintendent may: provide additional information or an answer if it is appropriate to do so; correct misinformation; explain the process the community or staff member needs to follow to seek a remedy for the situation; or refer the person to the appropriate person in the district.
- The public and staff will have an opportunity to comment on any agenda item when the agenda item comes up for consideration during the meeting. Public and staff comments will be heard prior to board deliberation.
- The superintendent, in consultation with the board president, will develop key messages using the "ABC" technique when there are "hot topic" issues that are likely to come up at a board meetings:
  - **Acknowledge** (*state a core value*)
  - **Bridge** (*correct misinformation, clarify the issue, pose the correct question, or bridge from the core value to the key message*)
  - **Convert** (*deliver the "key message" – the critical information that is important for people to know*)
- Key messages will be provided to all board members

## Obtaining answers to questions on agenda items before board meetings

Board members with questions about board meeting agenda items should call the superintendent as early as possible prior to the board meeting. The superintendent will determine how questions can best be answered: in a discussion with the individual board member, or at the board meeting

Following the superintendent's consultation with the board president, a complicated topic with questions from several board members may result in the agenda item becoming "for discussion only", (legal timelines permitting). The item may be referred to a study session for further staff clarification and discussion by the board. The item will return to a board meeting agenda for action when the board feels ready to take action. Board members should always feel comfortable asking pertinent questions at the board meeting – particularly if the answer to the question will have an effect on the board member's decision and vote.