



# **Reed Union School District Governance Team Handbook**

## **Board of Trustees**

A. J. Brady  
Amy Jacobs  
Sherry Wangenheim  
Liz E. Webb  
Afsaneh Zolfaghari

**Superintendent**  
Nancy Lynch, Ed.D.

Updated July 2020

# Demographics

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Name of School District.....Reed Union School District  
School District Address.....277 A Karen Way, Tiburon CA 94920  
Main District Phone Number.....(415) 381-1112  
Communities Served.....Tiburon, Belvedere, part of  
East Corte Madera

## District Office:

**Superintendent:** Nancy Lynch Ed.D.....nlynch@reedschools.org

**Chief Business Official:** Carlos Estrella...cestrella@reedschools.org

## School Names/Principals:

Reed Elementary School.....K – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades  
Dr. Mary Niesyn, Principal  
(415) 435-7840

Bel Aire Elementary School.....3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grades  
Ms. Lexie Cala, Principal  
(415) 388-7100

Del Mar Middle School.....6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grades  
Mr. Brian Lynch, Principal  
Ms. Ann-Marie Skaggs,  
Assistant Principal  
(415) 435-1468

## **RUSD Mission and Vision**

**Each student will be challenged and inspired to reach her or his fullest intellectual, social-emotional and creative potential to positively impact the world.**

### **Mission for the Reed Union Student**

**Each RUSD student will receive the support and opportunity to develop the skills to be a:**

#### **Motivated Learner Committed to Academic Excellence**

- Demonstrate responsibility, self-direction, and independence
- Take risks, are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them
- Take pride in accomplishments
- Understand learning is a lifelong process

#### **Creative Problem Solver**

- Apply critical thinking
- Integrate curiosity, imagination and insight
- Apply knowledge across disciplines, projects and in real life situations
- Generate ideas and best possible solutions

#### **Effective Communicator**

- Actively listen and acknowledge different points of view and cultural context
- Express and support positions considering multiple perspectives
- Use appropriate tools and language to inform, persuade, and convey ideas to diverse audiences
- Collaborate with others

#### **Engaged Citizen**

- Demonstrate empathy, ethical behavior, and respect for self, others, and the environment
- Actively contribute to school, local, and global communities
- Advocate for self and others
- Understand and appreciate cultures, histories, and contributions of people of the world

#### **Balanced Individual / Best Self**

- Demonstrate self-knowledge, integrity, good judgment, and honor
- Exhibit self-assurance, confidence, and social competence
- Persevere and are resilient amidst adversity, stress, disappointment, and conflict
- Make positive choices for personal and physical well being
- Believe in the power of the individual to make a difference

## **Governance Team Member Roles**

The Reed Union School District Governance Team is comprised of five locally elected public officials entrusted with governing the community's public schools. In addition, the Superintendent also serves as a member of the district's governance team and has responsibilities to support Board operations and decision-making.

### **President**

The Governing Board shall elect a President from among its members to provide leadership on behalf of the Board and the educational community it serves. The President shall preside at all Board meetings. He/she shall:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time
2. Announce the business to come before the Board in its proper order
3. Enforce the Board's policies relating to the conduct of meetings and help ensure compliance with applicable requirements of the Brown Act
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if it is not clear to every member
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Board
7. Rule on issues of parliamentary procedure
8. Put motions to a vote, and state clearly the results of the vote
9. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Board meetings

The President shall perform other duties in accordance with law and Board policy including, but not limited to:

1. Signing all acts and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Board
2. Consulting with the Superintendent or designee on the preparation of the Board's agendas
3. Working with the Superintendent to ensure that Board members have necessary materials and information
4. Subject to Board approval, appointing and dissolving all committees
5. Calling such meetings of the Board as the President may deem necessary, giving notice as prescribed by law
6. Representing the district as governance spokesperson, in conjunction with the Superintendent

The President shall have the same rights as other members of the Board, including the right to move, second, discuss and vote on all questions before the Board.

When the President resigns or is absent or disabled, the Vice President shall perform the President's duties. When both the President and Vice President are absent or disabled, the Clerk shall perform the President's duties.

### **Vice President**

At the annual organizational meeting, the Governing Board shall elect a Vice President from its own membership. When the President resigns or is absent or disabled, the Vice President shall perform the President's duties. Consult with the President and the Superintendent or designee on the preparation of the Board's agendas.

### **Secretary**

The Governing Board shall appoint the Superintendent to serve as Secretary of the Board. The Secretary to the Board shall be responsible for maintaining an accurate and complete record of all Board proceedings and shall:

1. Prepare, distribute and maintain the Board agenda
2. Record, sign, distribute and maintain the Board minutes
3. Maintain Board records and documents
4. Conduct official correspondence for the Board
5. As directed by the Board, sign and execute official papers
6. Perform other duties as assigned by the Board
7. Sign documents on behalf of the district as directed by the Board

### **Clerk**

At the annual organizational meeting, the Governing Board shall elect a clerk from its own membership.

The duties of the Clerk shall be to:

1. Certify or attest to actions taken by the Board when required
2. Maintain such other records or reports as required by law
3. Serve as presiding officer in the absence of the President or Vice President
4. Perform any other duties assigned by the Board

# Reed Union School District Governance Team Responsibilities

## **Set the direction for the community's schools**

Focus on student learning

Assess needs/baseline data

Generate, review or revise setting direction documents (strategic plan, mission, beliefs)

Ensure an appropriate inclusive process is used and these documents are a driving force

## **Establish an effective and efficient structure for the school district**

Employ and support the superintendent/set policy for hiring of other personnel

Set direction for and adopt curriculum

Establish budget priorities, adopt the budget and oversee facilities issues

Provide direction for and vote to accept collective bargaining agreements

## **Provide support through our behavior and actions**

Act with professional demeanor that models the district's beliefs and mission

Make decisions and provide resources that support mutually agreed upon priorities and goals

Uphold board approved district policies

Strive to maintain a positive personnel climate

Be knowledgeable enough about district efforts to explain them to the public

## **Ensure accountability to the public**

Evaluate the superintendent

Monitor, review and revise policies

Serve as a judicial and appeals body

Monitor student achievement and program effectiveness/require program changes as indicated

Monitor and adjust district finances/facilities issues

## **Act as community leaders**

Publicly support district priorities and goals

Involve the community/communicate information about policies, programs, and fiscal issues

Advocate for children, district programs and public education to the public, community, local and state leaders

## **Reed Union School District Governance Protocols and Norms**

The Governance team is committed to:

1. Be on time, focused and prepared for our meetings
2. Review all provided documents and back-up materials before deliberating an issue
3. Contact the superintendent for clarification about board items or issues
4. Focus on the issues at hand and do not have side discussions or involve other issues
5. Operate and communicate openly with trust and integrity
6. Govern in a dignified and professional manner
7. Treat each other and our constituents with respect and courtesy
8. Recognize and respect differences in leadership and style
9. Assume collective responsibility for the conduct and behavior of the governance team
10. Manage and resolve our own conflicts
11. Work on solutions rather than problems – debate issues not personalities
12. Contribute varied perspectives to further decision making
13. Put aside personal and political preferences and opinions in our deliberations – students needs and priorities drive our decisions
14. Recognize and appreciate the professional judgment of our staff and their commitment to our schools and students
15. Maintain confidentiality of closed session issues
16. Limit the personal use of technology during meetings
17. Use Robert's Rules of Order as a guideline and abide by Board Policies and agreed upon protocols

# **Reed Union School District Board Expectations and Norms**

## **1. Visiting Schools**

School visits are encouraged. Board Members will call the Superintendent ahead of time to arrange a formal visit. Governance Team members will be cautious about encroaching on the learning environment. To assist in this matter, the Superintendent will ensure principals and teachers know that a teacher does not need to interrupt their lesson when a Board Member visits a classroom.

## **2. Attendance at District Events and Functions**

The Governance Team wishes to maintain high visibility and to show support for school and District programs. The Governance Team will attend District functions whenever possible, but time constraints may prohibit members from attending all events. Those attending the event will represent the Governance Team.

## **3. Handling Concerns and Complaints from the Public and Staff**

When complaints are made, the Governance Team will listen carefully, remembering that it is only one side of an issue. The complainant will be directed to the staff member most appropriate and able to help them resolve their concern, will be informed about the appropriate order of whom to contact (teacher, then principal, then District staff), and will be advised about any formal policies that might assist them including Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures and Complaint Form. This will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, equally, and expeditiously and that the processes and procedures of the District are upheld. Individual Board Members understand that as individuals they have no authority to fix a problem. As representatives of the public, it is important to follow through if the issue is not resolved.

## **4. Board Meeting Management**

Board Members understand and agree that Board meetings are meetings of the Board held in public, not open forum town hall meetings. Board Members will keep this in mind as meetings are conducted, providing the public an opportunity for input at the time allotted to ensure multiple voices of the community to be heard. Board Members will consistently abide by our formal agreements and protocols in relation to this issue so that persons are treated fairly and equally.

## **5. Access and Requests of Information**

A Board Member who has a request for information shall go first to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will then work cooperatively with District staff to provide the information.



## **6. Individual Board Member Requests for Information**

When an individual Board Member requests information, it will be provided to all Board Members. An individual Board Member will – insofar as possible – work to let the Superintendent and staff know ahead of time when a request will be made in public. This will allow the staff member to be prepared to answer any questions or to prepare materials. Board Members will self-monitor their requests to ensure that one member's requests will not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve District goals. Board Members recognize the concept of "Nice to Know" vs. "Need to Know" in information and will seek information only needed for effective decision-making.

## **7. Individual Board Member Requests for Action**

A majority vote of the Board of Trustees sets the direction. The only authority to direct action rests with the Board when seated at a regular or special meeting of the Governance Team. Individual Board Members can request action by bringing up a new idea, explaining their interest and by working at a meeting to gain the majority support to approve the action.

## **8. Communication**

Communication and an open exchange of ideas are important to our Governance Team. The Governance Team accepts responsibility as a Team and as individuals to share news and information with all segments of our community and school groups. The Governance Team will strive to present honest and full disclosure of all financial and educational data. The Board President and Superintendent are designated as spokespersons for the Board with the media.

## **9. Written Correspondence**

The Governance Team recognizes that electronic and other written correspondence is an effective and convenient way to communicate among Board Members and between Board Members, District administration and members of the public. Members of the Governance Team shall exercise caution to ensure that electronic communications are not used as a means to deliberate outside of an agendaized Board meeting. If an individual Board Member chooses to respond to written correspondence received from a member of the community, the communication shall clearly state that the response does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board as a whole. Any complaint or request for information received by the Governance Team will be addressed by the Superintendent through the appropriate District process. Like other writings concerning District business, a Board Member's electronic communication may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

## **10. No Surprises**

In working as a Governance Team, it is important that whenever possible, Board Members communicate issues and concerns openly with the Superintendent prior to a public meeting. The Governance Team should work toward a professional manner and a standard of “No Surprises” or “Got Ya’s” during Board meetings.

In case of emergencies, it is the responsibility of the Superintendent to inform the Board immediately of any information crucial to the well being of the students, school, District or staff. In the event of an emergency situation involving the health or welfare of students or staff, disciplinary actions toward an employee, or other emergency situations, the Superintendent will work to keep the Board informed in a timely manner. It is also the responsibility of the Board to share with the Superintendent the same crucial information.

## **11. Voting**

Each Trustee recognizes and respects the right of other Trustees to vote “yes” or “no” on an issue, or to abstain from voting when there is a conflict of interest. Each Trustee will explain their reason for a vote or abstention either during deliberations or before casting the vote.

## **12. Confidentiality**

The responsibility of our Governance Team includes being privy to closed sessions or confidential information about District litigation, personnel, negotiations, Superintendent evaluation and other issues permitted under the Brown Act. Each Trustee will work to maintain the public’s trust by not breaching this confidentiality. If a Trustee inadvertently or accidentally violates this confidentiality, the Trustee will take immediate responsibility for their action.

## **13. Superintendent Evaluation**

Board Members recognize the value and importance of a comprehensive and formal evaluation process for the Superintendent. Board Members agree to abide by all contract terms concerning the Superintendent’s evaluation.

## **14. Orientation of New Board Members**

Immediately following the certification of public election or appointment of the Board, new Board Members will be seated following the oath of office. As soon as possible, the Board President will schedule an orientation session for the new members. The orientation session will include but not be limited to:

- Review the Governance Handbook protocols and agreements
- Review of Board agenda process and procedures
- Review of 9000 series of Board Bylaws
- Review of the Brown Act and discussion of confidentiality

- Review of ACSA/CSBA Professional Standards for the Superintendent as they relate to accountability of Superintendent to Board
- Review Superintendent contract provisions and evaluation procedures
- Discuss critical issues and any pending litigation
- Discuss responsibility of Board to monitor fiscal matters
- Review of Board calendar

### **15. Personal or Preferential Treatment**

Board Members do not seek or accept any special or favored treatment for their children, family or friends. Board Members expect equal and respectful treatment of all people. Board Members will model this behavior at all times.

### **16. Board Appointed Committees**

The Governing Board may establish Board committees as necessary. The Board shall determine the duties of the committee at the time of its appointment. Unless specifically authorized by the Board to act on its behalf, Board committees shall act in an advisory capacity. When its duties have been completed, the committee shall be dissolved. Board committees shall provide public notice of their meetings and conduct their meetings in accordance with the Brown Act. When a majority of the members of the Board attend an open and noticed meeting of a standing committee, the Board Members who are not members of the standing committee shall attend only as observers.

### **17. Citizen Advisory Committees**

When the majority of the Board deems it necessary, a Citizens Advisory Committee may be formed. The purpose of any such committee shall be defined and aligned to the District's mission and goals. The committee shall serve in a strictly advisory capacity to make recommendations, but their actions shall not be binding on the Board. The membership of Citizen's Advisory Committees should represent the diversity of the community and the diversity of viewpoints. Training and information shall be provided as necessary to enable committee members to understand the basic administrative structure, program processes, and goals of the committee.

### **18. Board Special Sessions**

To assist the Governance Team in making informed decisions and staying knowledgeable of current District issues, our Governance Team will periodically schedule Board Special Sessions.

### **19. Conference Attendance Procedures**

All Board Members may attend conferences for the purpose of Board development. The Superintendent or designee may approve Board Member requests to attend conferences in accordance with the adopted budget.

## **20. Follow-up on Items brought up by Community Members during Board Meetings**

There are times when a community member makes comments to the Board at a Board Meeting about an item which is not on the agenda. After the presentation, the Superintendent may assign the appropriate person to follow-up. The Superintendent will then report back to the Board.

## **21. Requesting Items to be Placed on the Board Agenda**

Any Board Member may request that a matter within the jurisdiction of the Board be placed on the agenda of a Regular Meeting. The request should be in writing with supporting documents and information, if any, and encouraged to be received by the Superintendent or designee at least one week before the scheduled meeting date. If a written request is denied by the Board President and Superintendent, the Superintendent will notify the Board Member in writing and give a brief explanation. A Board Member may also request that an item be placed on the agenda of a Regular Meeting by making a verbal request at a Regular Board Meeting during the "Information from the Board of Trustees" agenda item and polling the Board for support by asking for a "thumbs up" from his/her fellow Members. If a majority of the Board Members support the request, the item will be placed on the agenda of a subsequent Regular Board Meeting.

Any member of the public may request that a matter within the jurisdiction of the Board be placed on the agenda of a Regular Meeting. The request must be submitted in writing and be received by the Superintendent or designee at least two weeks before the meeting date requested. The Superintendent or designee will communicate with the person who submitted the request as to whether the request is approved or denied. If the request is approved, the person shall be informed of the date and time their item will be heard by the Board. If the request is denied, the person shall be provided the reason for denial in writing. All requests either approved or denied will be electronically sent to the Governance Team.

## **Superintendent Governance Standards**

The following professional standards recommended by the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) will be adopted.

### **The Superintendent:**

1. Promotes the success of all students and supports the efforts of the Board of Trustees to keep the district focused on learning and achievement.
2. Values, advocates and supports public education and all stakeholders.
3. 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.
4. Acts with dignity, treats everyone with civility and respect, and understands the implications of demeanor and behavior.
5. Serves as a model for the value of lifelong learning and supports the Board's continuous professional development.
6. 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.
7. Recognizes that the board/superintendent governance relationship is supported by the management team.
8. Understands the distinctions between board and staff roles, and respects the role of the Board as the representative to the community.
9. Understands the authority rests with the Board as a whole; provides guidance to the Board to assist in direction-making; and provides leadership based on the direction of the Board as a whole.
10. 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.
11. Accepts leadership responsibility and accountability for implementing the vision, goals and policies of the district.



# CSBA Effective Governance System

## I. THE TRUSTEE - INDIVIDUAL'S ATTITUDE

- T I keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus.
- T I value, support and advocate for public education.
- T I respect differences of perspective and style on the board and among staff, students, parents and the community.
- T I understand that manner and behavior make a difference.
- T I keep confidential information confidential.
- T I commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.
- T I understand the role and responsibilities of the board.
- T I understand that authority rests with the board as a whole.
- T I work hard to build and sustain an effective governance team.

ACSA Superintendent's Governance Standards

## II. THE GOVERNANCE TEAM - AT THE BOARD TABLE

**Unity of Purpose**

**Role**

**Culture**

**Structure & Process**

We keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students.

We communicate a common vision.

We are focused, remain on task and are consistent.

We operate openly, with trust and integrity.

We govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.

We govern within board-adopted policies and procedures

We take collective responsibility for the board's performance.

We periodically evaluate our own effectiveness.

We ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations.

## III. THE BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

We set the direction.

We establish the structure.

We provide support.

We ensure accountability.

We act as community leaders.

**Job Areas**

Setting the District's Direction

Student Learning and Achievement

Finance and Facilities

Human Resources

Policy and Judicial Review

Collective Bargaining

Community Relations and Advocacy

## STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

Current Trends and Issues in Public Education System

## **Important Links**

Board Policies and Board Bylaws (series 9000) can be found on the Gamut website at [this link](#).

At [this link](#) you will find:

- Reed District Teachers Association (RDTA) contract
- California School Employees Association (CSEA) contract
- Salary Schedules

Past and current budget information can be found at [this link](#).

School Accountability Report Cards (SARC) reports can be found at [this link](#).