

Culver City Unified School District
GOVERNANCE TEAM HANDBOOK

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Culver City Unified School District

GOVERNANCE TEAM HANDBOOK

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Culver City Unified School District
GOVERNANCE TEAM HANDBOOK

SECTION I

Working as an Effective Team

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, super-ordinate goals, and the core values and beliefs governance team members share in common about children, the district and public education. Unity of Purpose helps them transcend their 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.

Structures 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., processes or structures for agenda setting, set-up of board room and table, agenda structure, visiting schools, handling complaints or concerns from the community, bringing up a new idea); how boards operate, how they do business.

Culver City Unified School District

The following Beliefs were developed during the Culver City Unified School District Strategic Planning process and are reflected in the Mission Statement that was adopted by the board.

BELIEFS

We believe that:

- **each person deserves to be safe.**
- **everyone deserves to be treated with respect.**
- **honoring diversity makes us stronger.**
- **peace is worth pursuing.**
- **the quality of life is determined by the harmony among emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual pursuits.**
- **everyone has a right to a belief system.**
- **aesthetics is essential to life.**
- **we are responsible for ourselves and accountable to each other.**
- **individuals have the right to express their views, opinions and thoughts.**
- **the sense of family and belonging is integral to our lives.**
- **everyone has the right to preserve his/her dignity.**
- **each person has the capacity for goodness.**

Culver City Unified School District

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Culver City Unified School District, a diverse haven of excellence, is to ensure that each student possesses the academic and personal skills necessary to achieve his/her highest potential as a valued, responsible member of society by providing challenging, personalized educational experiences in a safe, nurturing environment and by fostering a passion for teaching and learning with committed parent and community involvement.

Culver City Unified School District

The following Objectives and Parameters were developed during the Culver City Unified School District Strategic Planning process and are reflected in the Mission Statement that was adopted by the board. (See Appendix page x)

OBJECTIVES

- **Each student will master the academic and interpersonal skills necessary to achieve his or her individual goals.**
- **All students will meet or exceed recognized standards of excellence as measured by local, state, and national assessment.**
- **All students will leave our schools equipped to be successful in further education, in the world of work and in life.**
- **Each student engages life with passion and understanding.**

PARAMETERS

- **We will make all decisions based on the best interest of the student.**
- **Nothing will take precedence over the K-12 instructional program.**
- **We will always honor the principles of equity, fairness, and respect for every person.**
- **We will make optimal use of technology in both teaching/learning and administration.**

Culver City USD Governance Team Goals

What We Want To Accomplish

(Prioritized)

(See Appendix page vi for total list of comments)

1. We want to become a team – to become a “WE” – to work and speak as a team by operating through agreements we reach together.
2. We want to become a stronger team – to disagree without taking things personally, and to aim at a common goal.
3. We want to develop a regular method to discuss board understandings, expectations and agreements.
4. We want to come to agreement about how we are going to behave, conduct our business, share information, etc.

How We Want to Be Perceived

(Prioritized)

(See Appendix page vii for total list of comments)

1. We want to be seen as focused on the students.
2. We want to be known as knowledgeable and passionate about public education-and always willing to learn more.
4. We want to be seen as caring, honest, trustworthy and for having integrity. We want people to believe the district is a good place to be – to learn and to work.

Agreements for Achieving our Goals

Meeting Guidelines

WE AGREE TO . . .

- ✓ SHOW RESPECT (NEVER DISMISS / DEVALUE OTHERS)
- ✓ USE “I” MESSAGES (NO BLAME) “WE” IN DISCUSSION
- ✓ ADDRESS PROCESS – NOT PERSONALITIES
- ✓ PARAPHRASE FOR UNDERSTANDING
- ✓ BE COLLABORATIVE (LOOK FOR COMMON GROUND)
- ✓ BE OPEN TO IDEAS OF OTHERS (LISTEN WITHOUT PREPARING RESPONSES)
- ✓ MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY (BUILDS TRUST)
- ✓ WORK TOWARD THE FUTURE – LEARNING FROM THE PAST
- ✓ EACH BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE MEETING – PARTICIPATE EQUALLY – RAISE CONCERNS)

AND – ABOVE ALL...



FOCUS ON STUDENTS’ BEST INTEREST

Agreements For Carrying Out Our Role:

ISSUE	AGREEMENT
Equal access and fair treatment for all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members will review the policies in this area to ensure they are aligned with the governance team values and beliefs. • The superintendent will ensure that there is compliance with the policies.
Responding to community concerns or complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Question: Who else have you spoken to? Direct them back to the appropriate person in line of authority. If they have not discussed the issue with the person directly involved in the complaint they should start there. • The district has complaint policies in place – if appropriate, let the community member know what the complaint policy is and how to have access to the process or procedure. • Inform the superintendent of pertinent conversations with community members so the superintendent is aware of the issue, and so the superintendent knows what the board member said to the community member, and therefore does not get “caught in the middle”. • If the community member asks to remain anonymous – explain that no action can be taken based on anonymous information. <u>Anonymous information may be shared with other board members and the superintendent, but the community member should not expect any steps toward resolution as a result of an anonymous conversation.</u> This keeps the superintendent aware of community concerns and board member responses.
Responding to staff concerns or complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First question: Who else have you spoken to? Direct them back to the appropriate person in line of authority. If they have not discussed the issue with the person directly involved in the complaint they should start there. • Staff rights are clearly defined in law and in

ISSUE	AGREEMENT
	<p>district policy. Direct staff to district policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff has rights to union representation if necessary. • Inform the superintendent of pertinent conversations with staff members so the superintendent is aware of the issue, and so the superintendent knows what the board member said to the staff person, and therefore does not get “caught in the middle”. • If a staff member asks to remain anonymous – explain that no action can be taken based on anonymous information. <u>Anonymous information may be shared with other board members and the superintendent, but the staff member should not expect any steps toward resolution as a result of an anonymous conversation.</u> This keeps the superintendent aware of staff concerns and board member responses.
<p>Everyone understands that the superintendent can only be given direction by the board as a whole rather than by individual members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board must reach consensus before directing the superintendent to do anything <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board members only have authority at a duly called board meeting. The authority lies with the board as a whole, not with individual members ○ The board will give direction to the superintendent by voting or coming to consensus on issues before the board. The board president will give direction to the superintendent following board determination. • The board president will always clarify for the superintendent any direction from the board. • The board president will be the last to speak on each agenda item so that direction to the superintendent is clear.
<p>The board understands its governance responsibilities are to set the direction and provide a policy and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual board members shall not give direction to staff. • All staff, including the superintendent, shall be empowered to refuse individual board

ISSUE	AGREEMENT
<p>accountability framework for the district, not to perform management functions.</p>	<p>member demands or direction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the superintendent’s discretion, individual member direction may be referred to the board for consensus at the next board meeting
<p>Individual board member requests for additional information and/or materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual board members shall not approach staff members with requests or demands for additional materials or information. • All board member requests for additional information and/or materials shall be made through the superintendent. • The superintendent may refer individual member requests to the board for consensus at the next board meeting • Relative to additional information or questions about items on a board meeting agenda: Requests will be made in a timely way – as early on Monday as possible - so that the superintendent has an opportunity to provide or obtain the necessary information or materials before the board meeting. • Veteran board members are often a good source of historical information and perspective, and should be approached first with historical questions.
<p>Focused on learning and achievement for <u>all students</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance team members will further define what is meant by <u>all students</u>. What students are we talking about? • Board members will ask the “helicopter questions” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What opportunities / programs are provided for students with different learning styles / gifts / talents, etc.?(Students identified in first bullet above.) ○ What are the Intended Results (goals) of the program or opportunity? ○ Are special resources necessary to carry out the program? ○ What does success look like? (What are the success indicators)

ISSUE	AGREEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How are we measuring success? ○ How well does the proposed plan fit within the values and beliefs of the district? ○ What can be done to mitigate any issues/concerns that might arise in the community (external or internal)? ○ How can the board perform its Support and Community Leadership responsibilities? ○ When will progress reports be brought to the board? ● Board members will look at test scores and other measurements to see how students are achieving. Data will be requested for groups identified in the first bullet above and will be reviewed across cohort groups. ● How are School Improvement Plans identifying and dealing with the varying needs of students at the school site?
<p>Imperfect, (inaccurate), recall of policies – quoting policies at board meetings without researching and checking for accuracy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask the superintendent (or staff at superintendent request) to come back to the board with appropriate policy information. The superintendent (or staff member at superintendent request) may also respond with accurate policy information if appropriate. ● Look into having policies available on disc.
<p>No regulation or policy to cover some personnel areas. Expectations are not clear to some people. (ex: using district vehicle for personal business.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governance team will discuss whether the issue warrants a policy or regulation being developed – or if some other action or remedy is appropriate (ex. a staff “handbook”).
<p>Expulsion and personnel hearings being handled by an outside agency other than the board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This issue will be placed on a regular board meeting agenda for consideration and action by the board.

ISSUE	AGREEMENT
No regulation or policy to cover some personnel areas. Expectations are not clear to some people. (ex. using district vehicle for personal business.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance team will discuss whether the issue warrants a policy or regulation being developed – or if some other action or remedy is appropriate (ex. a staff “handbook”).

Culver City Unified School District
GOVERNANCE TEAM HANDBOOK

SECTION II

Community Leadership

The Board's Role in Community Leadership

- **Build and maintain public awareness and support**
 - **Work to provide a quality education program**
 - **Be responsive to the concerns and interests of the community**
 - **Encourage active community involvement in the schools**
- **Establish effective communications systems**
- **Engage in effective governmental and advocacy effort**
- **Ensure accountability to the community**

Effective Communication

Community Relations Advocacy

We must know the district, schools, programs and students well enough to be able to discuss them and be knowledgeable about education issues and trends that impact the schools.

We must ensure that the district has a proactive, cohesive communication plan based on issues in the community and the schools.

- Agreeing on key messages
- Identifying individuals and or groups that can help us achieve our goals
- Tailoring strategies to different audiences
- Providing timelines for each activity
- Identifying spokespersons
- Addressing budget and other resource implications

Effective Communication Strategies

Stephen Covey's 5 Levels of Listening:

Empathetic	<i>From the other person's frame of reference</i>
<hr/>	
Attentive	} <i>From my own frame of reference</i>
Selective	
Pretend	
Ignore	

The 4 R's:

*When responding to community or staff members.
Helps move us toward empathetic listening.*

Recieve – listen openly to what the other person is saying

Repeat – paraphrase or ask a question for clarification to ensure you have heard accurately

Request – ask what they want done with the information or what their solution might be

Review – go over the first three R's – review options available to them

The ABC's:

*When responding to the media about district issues.
Keeps us centered on our core values and our key message.*

Acknowledge - Acknowledge the question or issues by stating the core value or belief in that area.

Bridge – Correct misinformation, Clarify the question and/or state the issues clearly

Convert – State the key message

Governance in Our Democracy

Because locally elected school board members are accessible to members of the community, (internal and external), everyone has an opportunity to participate in our governmental processes.

The governance team has a responsibility to inform and educate community members so they are able to participate in the process.

We have a representative form of government, so the governance team has the responsibility to take all perspectives into consideration, make the final decision and stand behind it.

Because our only job is the education of our students, locally elected school board members are more able and likely than state or national legislators to focus on the needs of all students within the district.

The governance team defines the responsibilities of the district and of the individuals within the district. The system helps us ensure that people take responsibility for their own actions.

As part of a governance team we can't do whatever we want as individuals.

Leadership

Means others believe they made it happen.

Is presenting an optimistic outlook.

Is providing a framework and focus so that the best, most appropriate decision is made.

Embraces risk-taking

Means being an advocate, running interference and moving things forward.

Leading Through Change Requires:

Holding true to values and beliefs

Having a clear, strategic focus

Being flexible, adaptable and creative

Why Community Leadership Is Important to Our Governance Team...

Community leadership is democracy in action.

When we're focused – we can do a better job for our students.

Provides positive promotion of our district and of our team – we can serve as good role models for the district.

Allows for a positive explanation of current programs and to give an honest, real, true story and status of district.

How the district is perceived directly impacts the community's well being.

Motivates people to promote and support leadership they trust.

Provides opportunities to support students and staff in public settings.

When we are in the community in our leadership role, we will hear what people think about the district – positive or negative

Community leadership is necessary to attract the outside resources that are increasingly more necessary to carry out the many additional responsibilities of the district

Advocacy efforts sometimes result in getting what the district needs

Governance team advocacy efforts educate local, state and national legislators on issues of importance to our district

What Community Leadership Means to Our Governance Team ...

Publicly supporting school district students and staff

Publicly supporting Culver City Unified School District families

Being effective, positive spokespersons for the district

Providing opportunities for input to the district from students, parents, community members and staff

Participating in non-school community events in order to be more visible develop broader ties and connections

Providing a united front when communicating district goals and priorities

Advocating for Culver City Unified School District and for public education in general

Educating community people about how they can affect decisions being made at the local, state and national levels

Culver City Unified School District Governance Team Community Leadership Goals

To dispel inaccuracies about district activities, issues and programs

To provide the community with accurate information about the school district

To be proactive about the district and district issues – not just reactive

To provide opportunities for community members to approach the board and district personnel with their concerns

To ensure that people can approach the governance team and receive reasonable answers

To bring additional resources into the district to achieve our mission and goals

Demonstrating Community Leadership to Achieve our Goals ...

*We want to be seen as caring, honest, trustworthy and for having integrity.
We want people to believe the district is a good place to be – to learn and to work.*

- **Consciously and consistently delivering key messages on district issues**
- **Being visible at community activities**
- **Demonstrating by word and action that we are all “on the same page”**
- **Establishing a special time at board meetings to hold discussions to educate the public on district issues**
- **Special articles or space in the staff newsletter**
- **Take time to educate and communicate with the media about budget realities**
- **Put “faces” on district issues**

We want the governance team to be seen as academically and fiscally responsible.

- **In “cutting” decisions, try to preserve educational program to the best of ability**
- **Educate the public about what being academically responsible involves**
- **Educate the public the public about necessary compliance requirements**
- **Not be “penny-wise and pound foolish” as we examine spending issues:**

We want to be known as an educated and knowledgeable governance team

- **Utilize time at board meetings to focus on specific district issues**
- **Set-up appointments for board members to speak at different district and community events**
 - **Equitably for all board members**
 - **Speeches should be centered around agreed upon “key messages”**
- **Ask to be on parent meeting agendas**
- **Letters sent out to community organizations about availability of board as “speakers bureau”.**

Culver City Unified School District Governance Team

Key Messages

Student Learning and Achievement:

- **All district decisions are based on the best interest of students**
- **We provide a variety of educational options for each student to succeed**
- **We have high expectations for all students and staff within a standards based educational system**
- **We offer education to students from “school to world” – and show the connection of academic subjects to the real world**

Core Values Driving Our Community Leadership Plan 2003-2004 Budget Issues:

- *Focus on all students
equal access to all programs – and
competent staff for all students**
- **Governance team is perceived as honest and trustworthy**
- *Student success is a whole community responsibility**
- **Governance Team to be seen as academically and fiscally responsible**
- *Recognized as an educated and knowledgeable governance team**
- *Culver City Unified School District maintains an environment where
risks can be taken**

- * Key messages will be developed around these core values**
- **The community leadership plan will include opportunities for governance
team members demonstrate these core values.**

Community Leadership Activities

Board members rotate schools on a semester or annual basis so that all schools have board representation at school activities

Specific opportunities to be developed for board members to speak at school events

Periodically send out letters to district families to inform them of district activities and/or issues

Board members to attend athletic events (more than at football games)

Develop a “key communicators” list so that accurate information can be sent out to influential community members quickly

Community Leadership

NEXT STEPS

- **Synthesize material from the 5 workshops into information that can be shared with community**
 - **Board President and Vice President – First part of February**

- **Develop Speaker's Bureau**
 - **Superintendent – Letters out in January and February**

- **Calendar time to create and finalize additional key messages: budget and other important district issues**
 - **Superintendent and Board President – by February 25**

- **Self-Evaluation – Progress Reports every 6 months**
 - **Board President and Superintendent – by July 2003**

APPENDIX

(The Appendix includes contents of all charts from all five workshops.)

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Why We Are Here ...

(Unity Of Purpose)

July 29 – 30, 2002 Workshop

I thought I had something to give the district, that I brought a different perspective to the table and that I had some areas of expertise to share.

I had been coming to the board meetings for ten years – since my children were in Kindergarten. I wanted to be involved in the decision making process.

I felt there was a need for diversity on the board. We have a diverse community that isn't reflected in our staff or on the board. I didn't feel that all students were getting the same benefits. I want to see the best education for every student that our tax dollars can buy.

I have been a volunteer in the district since my children were in Kindergarten. That was the best way to find out what was going on. I reached a point where I felt I knew as much as the board members – and I decided it was time.

Serving on the board seemed like the logical next step for me. I had been volunteering in the district, and was President of the Education Foundation, before my children were in school. I had served on just about every possible committee – so it seemed like the logical next thing to do.

I have worked in several other places and know that this is a very special place with a special community. There are more pluses here than can be counted.

My children have received an extremely good education in this district and I wanted to give back for all they have received.

What We Value and Believe In ... (Unity of Purpose)

July 29 – 30, 2002 Workshop

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

Public education is the backbone of our community. It is the common denominator that binds us a community.

Public education helps us have less of a class structure in our society.

Public education provides access to all - incorporates more people – leads to a stronger community.

Public education prepares our children to deal with a diverse society. Children enrolled in private schools are often less connected to the community.

Private schools do not operate in the “real” world, and are able to teach only a particular ideology. Public school children have an opportunity to gain a broader perspective.

Because public education is funded by tax dollars, there is access to more research. Everything is developed for public education - (example: academic standards) – and the public education system reaps the benefits.

The public education system provides more competent staff overall than the private school system.

GOVERNANCE:

Locally elected “governors” live in the community so they know what is going on and are more likely to know what is best for the community than long distance officials who don’t always have local understanding, (for example: state or federal legislators)

Locally elected school board members are a reflection of the community, and serve as a “safety valve” for the community. Government “By the People” is a very important concept in our democracy.

Local school boards don’t always have as much control as we think. We have some constraints – but within those constraints there is some “wiggle-room”.

People in our community trust us to make good decisions.

What We Value and Believe In ... (Unity of Purpose)

July 29 – 30, 2002 Workshop

STUDENTS:

Our focus needs to be on every child to ensure that every child has opportunities to succeed to the best of their potential. We need to make sure there are opportunities available for each student to succeed.

Our job is to educate students so that they can be successful, contributing members of society.

It's important that learning problems are identified and that students are assisted rather than labeled and left on their own. In our schools we need to do our best to provide differentiated instruction to meet individual needs.

We have an obligation to identify at-risk students and to provide multiple options so that they have numerous choices that will provide the best possible future for them.

Students have a right to learn about the wide variety of career options they have to choose from.

We need to have high expectations for overall student achievement, and to provide a well-rounded education.

Students have the right to an education that is delivered well by a competent, caring staff.

We want our students to become enthusiastic, interested learners.

What We Are Proud Of ... (Unity of Purpose)

July 29 – 30, 2002 Workshop

This district is not complacent. We are always looking for ways to improve. As a result, we have made significant improvement in all areas.

We live in a very diverse community both economically and racially. In spite of that we are pretty homogeneous and all get along.

We have the ability to be close knit because of our size. We are small and progressive.

Because we are small we are flexible and change can occur fairly quickly. We developed an excellent strategic plan with input from the community and staff.

People in our district are willing to take chances. We are innovative and take risks. If something doesn't work, we rethink the situation and move on.

I am most proud of our uniqueness. We are a small town within a big city – so we are able to accomplish things. Everyone, staff and students, have a willingness to go forward and change.

What We Want to Accomplish

July 29 – 30, 2002 Workshop

- Become a stronger team
- Disagree without taking things personally
- Aim at a common goal
- Clarify that the board reflects the community, that the district is an “open book”, there are no “secret” decisions, and no one is hiding things.
- Unity – in spite of differences. All of listen to each other with an open ear and an open heart
- Implement our strategic plan
- Be open to new ideas and changes within the district
- Ensure that all of the students meet the basic standards
- Set goals and meet them
- Ensure that everyone feels comfortable taking risks so that we can accomplish the things we want to accomplish.
- Provide enough opportunities and options for students that they can make progress and be successful
- The community believes that we are honest – and that we are doing “their” work.
- Not accept mediocrity
- Develop a regular method to discuss board understandings, expectations and agreements
- WE start speaking as a team – as a result of agreements we reach together – become “WE”
- Come to agreements about how we’re going to behave, conduct business and share information, etc.
- Determine how to handle large, hostile audiences
- Create a more professional and positive perception of the governing board
- Follow our own district policies
- All members of the board read the Board President’s Handbook and review every year.
- Stay focused on our goals of high student achievement and maintain high expectations

How We Want To Be Perceived

July 29 – 30, 2002 Workshop

- We want to be seen as being professional and open
- We want to be known for being prepared and ready to discuss district business – (background information read prior to meetings, etc.)
- We want to be perceived as caring, honest, trustworthy, and having integrity
- We want to be perceived as being the best board the district ever had.
- We want to be known for being progressive, thoughtful, responsible, and honest
- We want to be seen as responsive to the needs of the district, students and the community but recognizing that we can't always make everyone happy
- We want to be perceived as realistic
- We want to be known for being focused on the students
- We want to be seen as cohesive and respectful
- We want to be seen as knowledgeable and passionate about public education and always willing to learn more
- We want to perceive the district as a good place to learn and work – we want people to like working for us.
- We want to be seen as having no axes to grind and to be working as a team
- We want to be seen as five independent people – not operating in voting “blocks” – working together
- We want to be seen as trustworthy.

Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose)

September 24, 2002

The governance team agreed that the concepts of *effective communication* and *shared decision-making* should be threads that flow throughout each of the theme areas.

Core Value and Beliefs Theme Areas:

Students:

- Focus is always on the students
- High achievement / High Expectations
- Access / Opportunities that will enable all to succeed
- Be successful in society
- It's all about the students
- Focus on student's best interest
- High achievement
- Equal access / equal and fair
- Deserve to be safe
- Become interested, enthusiastic learners
- Provide opportunities to develop academic and life skills
- Student's rights
- Students assisted rather than labeled
- Achieve their best potential
- Broader perspectives

Learning / Academics:

- Standards based
- Academic rigor
- Set goals and meet them
- Ensure all students meet basic standards
- Provide opportunities for each student to succeed
- Learn about a wide variety of career opportunities
- Enthusiastic, interested learners
- Master skills necessary to achieve individual goals
- Meet / exceed recognized standards of excellence
- Challenging, personalized educational experiences
- Flexible
- Innovative
- "Real world" education
- High expectations

Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose)

September 24, 2002

The governance team agreed that the concepts of *effective communication* and *shared decision-making* should be threads that flow throughout each of the theme areas.

Core Value and Beliefs Theme Areas:

Staff / Personnel Quality:

- Life-long learners
- Passionate about education
- Competent
- Caring, nurturing
- Strive for fully credentialed teachers
- Provide appropriate staff development
- Competent
- Ethical / fair treatment
- Need to feel comfortable to take risks
- Best possible wages /benefits
- High staff morale / appreciation
- High expectations
- Providing well-rounded education
- Progressive / caring
- Not accepting mediocrity
- Responsible, honest, trustworthy, having integrity
- Focused on students
- Identify at-risk students
- Caring passionate
- Shared decision making
- Focused on high achievement
- Willing to go forward
- Willing to change

Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose)

September 24, 2002

The governance team agreed that the concepts of *effective communication* and *shared decision-making* should be threads that flow throughout each of the theme areas.

Core Value and Beliefs Theme Areas:

Governance Team:

- Members of community
- Labor under constraints
- Have trust of community
- Common beliefs transcend differences to a greater good
- Value their roles
- Agree on structure and process
- We establish and share core values and beliefs
- Unity of purpose
- Responsibility to be honest and trustworthy
- Follow district policies and agreements
- “WE” speak as a team – strong, unified
- Unity in spite of differences
- Stay focused on students and learning
- Close knit
- Trusted and trustworthy
- Safety valve of community

Environment / Safety:

- Everyone treated with dignity and respect
- Characterized by honesty and fairness
- Equal access
- Caring, nurturing, supportive environment
- Comfortable
- Deserve to be safe
- District to be a good place to work and learn
- Everyone treated with dignity and respect
- Safe, drug-free environment
- Willingness to take risks
- Security force to meet needs
- Physically and psychologically safe
- Follow own district policies

Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose)

September 24, 2002

The governance team agreed that the concepts of *effective communication* and *shared decision-making* should be threads that flow throughout each of the theme areas.

Core Value and Beliefs Theme Areas:

Community / Community Relations:

- Aim at common goal
- Diverse
- Unity (Speak as a “WE”)
- Public education: backbone of democracy
- Less Class structure
- Access for all
- Funded by tax dollars
- Teamwork
- “By the People”
- Share information
- Trust
- Complaint policy
- Community reflected in school board
- Board members from the community
- Responsibility for student success
- Serve as safety valve
- Implement strategic plan
- Focus on students
- Open book – no secrets except closed session
- Develop more effective ways to deal with the community
- Knowledgeable and passionate about education

Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose)

September 24, 2002

The governance team agreed that the concepts of *effective communication* and *shared decision-making* should be threads that flow throughout each of the theme areas.

Core Value and Beliefs Theme Areas:

Finances / Resources:

- Development of balanced budget
- Collective bargaining
- Watchdog awareness of encroachments on the general fund
- Cost containment
- Maintain facilities
- Funded by tax dollars
- Responsive to needs
- Realistic / some constraints
- Career options
- Economically diverse
- Good working environment
- Community
- Provide differentiated instruction
- Optimal use of technology

Accountability / Responsibility:

- Locally elected
- Live in community
- Limited control
- Community trust
- Every child has opportunity for success: academic and life skills
- Obligation to identify at-risk students and to provide options
- Implement strategic plan
- Provide well-rounded education
- Focus on students
- Giving in community
- High student achievement
- Follows our district policies

Other:

Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose)

September 24, 2002

First Draft Core Values and Beliefs Statements:

Students:

We believe that students have rights, deserve assistance instead of labels based on focus achievement, so they can be successful contributors in society by having a broader perspective while being safe. They become enthusiastic learners because of the opportunities provided to develop academic and life skills creating successful contributors to the community while exploring a variety of career choices.

Learning / Academics:

We believe that through high expectations in setting goals for a standards based education, it mandates academic rigor ensuring that all students exceed recognized standards of excellence, mastering academic and interpersonal skills, honoring the principles of equity, finances and respect for every person.

Staff / Personnel Quality:

We believe that staff should stay focused on high student achievement by holding high expectations and participating in staff development.
We believe that staff should be passionate, caring, trustworthy and brave.

Governance Team:

We believe that the governance team has a unity of purpose with established core values and beliefs. We believe that the governance team stays focused on students and learning.

Environment / Safety:

We believe there should be equal access to a safe and caring, supportive and nurturing Learning / working environment while remaining within the guidelines of district policy.

Community / Community Relations:

We believe that we can create a more professional and positive perception of the governance team by staying focused on our students, doing our business in public, (open board meetings), with no secrets, (except closed session), sharing information, and showing UNITY by speaking as a “WE”.

Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose)

September 24, 2002

First Draft Core Values and Beliefs Statements:

Finances / Resources:

We believe in developing a realistic balanced budget within the context of responding to educational needs and maintaining facilities, staying alert to encroachment while exercising cost containment measures, and including the community in the process. Security should meet our needs and staff needs to feel comfortable taking educational risks.

Accountability:

We, as locally elected community members, believe that we will earn the community's trust if we implement our strategic plan, provide a well-rounded education for our students, (including those at risk), keep focused on our students and high levels of achievement and consistently follow district policies.

We believe that every child should have the opportunity for success in terms of academic and life skills and that we have an obligation to identify at-risk students in order to provide a variety of educational options.

Other:

Culver City Unified School District Core Values and Beliefs (Unity of Purpose) Culver City Unified School District

Draft Statements

Students:

We believe all district decisions should be based on the best interest of the student. We believe the focus of the district must always be on all students so they can develop the academic and life skills necessary to become successful, contributing members of society. We believe students should have reason to be enthusiastic learners and should have opportunities to explore a variety of career options. We believe we have responsibility to provide a variety of educational options to students so that all students have opportunities for success.

Learning / Academics:

We believe in setting high expectations for all students within a standards based educational system. We believe all students deserve a variety of opportunities that will allow them to exceed recognized standards of excellence and master both academic and interpersonal skills.

Staff / Personnel Quality:

We believe that our well-trained staff must remain focused on high student achievement. We believe that all students deserve to be served by competent staff members who provide a caring, nurturing environment. We believe that Culver City Unified School District should be a community of life-long learners. We believe all staff has the right to be treated fairly, ethically and with integrity.

Governance Team:

We believe the governance team has both academic and fiscal responsibility. We believe the governance team must be educated and knowledgeable about public education in our district, at the state level and nation wide. The governance team must be honest and trustworthy and must create an environment where risks can be taken without repercussion.

Environment / Safety:

We believe that students, staff and community should view the district as a safe, caring, supportive learning and working environment. We believe everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We believe the district environment should be one where risks can be taken without fear of repercussion. We believe we must make optimal use of technology in both teaching/learning and administration.

Community / Community Relations:

We believe that student success is a whole community responsibility. We believe the community should be encouraged to participate with our schools and with the school district on issues of interest. We believe all community members have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Finances / Resources:

We believe we have a responsibility to maintain a realistic balanced budget while responding to educational needs and maintaining our facilities. We believe we have a responsibility to stay alert to encroachment and to exercise cost containment measures. We believe the community has the right to be involved in our finance and resources processes.

Accountability:

We believe we have a responsibility to implement our strategic plan, provide a well-rounded education for our students, and to remain focused on high levels of achievement for all students. We believe we have a responsibility to educate and communicate to the community about the district and about state and federal education issues. We believe we have the responsibility to establish effective district policies, to monitor them as necessary, and to consistently follow them.

“Grains of Sand”

(Issues we want to come to agreement about so that we can fulfill our role as effectively as possible.)

(Role)

September 24, 2002

- Quoting or referring to policies at board meetings without prior research – with imperfect recall and/or providing inaccurate information
- No policies to cover some personnel areas. Expectations are not clear to people.
- Not following agreements we have made causes problems of trust. Don't know where the breakdown has occurred – so don't know whom to trust.
- We don't have a regular method for coming to understand with each other, for determining expectations or coming to agreements (outside of these workshops)
- When any of us “grand-stands” at a board meeting we may be giving out incorrect information. People in the audience don't know we're not always right.
- Demeanor of board members at board meetings and out in the community.
- Responding to community members at board meetings (particularly hostile or angry people)
- Board members talking about staff / programs / schools when staff doesn't have an opportunity to respond.
- Everyone not being willing to bring things up to be discussed.
- Upset when I believe all staff is not up to par and not focused on student achievement
- Individual board members asking for materials and/or information from staff. What is the role? What is the appropriate process?
- Board members focusing on a particular “constituency” – asking for specific information from staff (other than the superintendent), asking staff members questions about other staff members, taking sides in disputes.

Possible Community Leadership Activities

(Brainstorming Activity)

Developing an annual advocacy plan

Televised board meetings

Radio transmission of board meetings

**Sponsoring a school district newspaper that would be
distributed to the community**

**Creating a speaker's bureau of board members –
Sending a letter to various community groups to
announce availability of board members to speak at
meetings**

Rotating board member attendance at city council meetings

**Investigate the possibility of including a district column in
the local newspaper**

“Sponsor” neighborhood events at schools

Taking turns attending parent group meetings