



SANTA CRUZ CITY SCHOOLS

Governance Handbook

Board of Trustees

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Superintendent

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The Santa Cruz City Schools Board of Trustees and Superintendent developed the SCCS Governance Handbook in 2016. The Governance Handbook outlines practices that build and sustain a positive Board-Superintendent relationship and define a culture of quality, equity, and respect.

In February 2015, the Board adopted the CSBA Professional Governance Standards. These standards serve as a companion to the SCCS Governance Handbook. The intent of the standards is to enhance the public's understanding about the critical responsibilities of local boards and to support boards in their efforts to govern effectively.

Annually the Board conducts a self-evaluation and recommits to the Professional Governance Standards and reviews and updates their Governance Handbook.

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ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

There are three dimensions to the effective governance of any organization. The SCCS Governance Handbook documents the governance responsibilities within these three dimensions.

1. **Governing as a unified team with a shared vision to lead and serve the community.**
2. **Governing within a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.**
3. **Creating and sustaining a positive governance leadership culture.**

I. UNIFIED COMMITMENT TO LEAD AND SERVE

The foundation of effective governance is the common focus governing board members share that transcends individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose. A unity of purpose exists when the commitment to achieving these goals becomes the guiding principle for all trustees.

The focused efforts of Santa Cruz City Schools are reflected in the District vision, core values, mission, and strategic initiatives.

Santa Cruz City Schools District Vision

“We create and support a learning environment that challenges and enables students to achieve their highest potentials.”

CORE VALUES

We believe...

- that public schools are the foundation of our democracy.
- that every person has intrinsic worth.
- in treating people with dignity and respect.
- that high standards and expectations foster greater achievement.
- that each of us shares responsibility for the welfare of our community.
- that diversity is an asset in our community.
- that honesty and integrity are essential in building relationships.
- that schools must provide access and equity.
- that people thrive in safe environments.

STRATEGIC GOALS

All Santa Cruz City Schools students will be prepared to successfully access post-secondary college and career opportunities.

SCCS will create positive, engaging school environments that promote the development of cognitive skills and the social emotional well-being of all students.

We will eliminate the achievement gaps that currently exist between demographic groups within the SCCS student community.

We will develop a highly collaborative, professional culture focused on supporting effective teaching.

SCCS will maintain a balanced budget and efficient and effective management.

SCCS will maintain strong communication and partnerships with its diverse community.

II. SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The second essential element of effective governance is defining roles and responsibilities and working with leadership, commitment and passion within those agreed upon roles.

Effective Governance Teams

- Communicate a common vision.
- Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for ALL students.
- Value, support and advocate for public education.
- Govern within board adopted policies and procedures.
- Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations.
- Periodically evaluate the governance team's effectiveness.

Effective Trustees

- Govern in a dignified, professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
- Operate openly, with trust and integrity.
- Take collective responsibility for the governance team's performance; agree on behavioral norms and operational protocols.
- Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.
- Understand the distinctions between board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the superintendent and staff.
- Understand that authority rests with the board as a whole and not with individuals.
- Keep confidential matters confidential.
- Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be informed and effective leaders.

Effective Superintendent

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

III. GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP CULTURE

Exceptional boards make governance intentional and invest in structures and practices that can be thoughtfully adapted to changing circumstances. Protocols are tools to strengthen the capacity of the board to engage in a constructive relationship with the superintendent and staff— one that is grounded in a mutual understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities. Explicit norms and protocols, agreed to and upheld by the board and superintendent provide transparency and stability in the governance relationship as the board carries out its role.

MEETING GUIDELINES/NORMS/AGREEMENTS

To support positive, productive meetings in service to students, we use the following norms to guide our board collaboration and communication.

MEETING NORMS

- **Keep learning and achievement for ALL students as the primary focus**
As our primary mission is to ensure student achievement and this is the lens through which we examine every conversation and decision. Our District values and goals should serve as a primary guide for our actions.

- **Presume positive intentions**
Assuming that others' intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and discussion, and prevents unintentional put-downs. Using positive intentions in speech is one manifestation of this norm.
- **Pay attention to self and others**
Meaningful dialogue and discussion are facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others, and is aware of what (s) he is saying and how it is said as well as how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning and communication styles when planning, facilitating, and participating in group meetings and conversations. It also includes paying attention to our body language and the body language of others.
- **Seek to understand the diverse range of views in the community to inform board deliberations**
Use paraphrasing and clarifying questions to work to ensure understanding. Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you – “So...” or “As you are...” or “You’re thinking...” – and following the starter with an efficient paraphrase assists members of the group in hearing and understanding one another as they converse and make decisions. Pose questions to ensure thorough understanding and exploration of an issue. Questions may be posed to explore perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations, and to invite others to inquire into their thinking. For example, “What might be some conjectures you are exploring?” Use focusing questions such as, “Which students, specifically?” or “What might be an example of that?” to increase the clarity and precision of group members’ thinking. Inquire into others’ ideas before advocating one’s own.
- **Communicate to staff through the superintendent**
When concerns, questions or requests arise, it is important that the Superintendent knows and can support the board. It is also important for the Superintendent to monitor, supervise and support workloads, so all communication from the Board should come through the Superintendent.
- **Keep confidential matters confidential**

MEETING AGREEMENTS

- Use signal to speak; wait for recognition from Board President.
- Participants will ask one question at a time. If you feel like your question was misunderstood, please state that you will think about how to best rephrase your question while the next participant proceeds with a new question.
- Board Members will not directly engage with the public during Public Comments; however, the Board President will inform speakers that in the event clarification is needed regarding their comment, please use the sheet on the podium requesting name, contact information and topic so that follow-up may occur as needed.
- Sequence of items for action: a. Presentation; b. Board Questions; c. Questions and comments from the public; d. Motion; e. Board Deliberation; f. Call for vote on motion
- During public comments on agenda items, board members will use regular protocols for comments and questions.
- Board Reports will follow the Superintendent’s and Student Representatives’ reports on the agenda and will be limited to 2 minutes.
- We will be thoughtful and respectful about electronic device use and will excuse ourselves if we need to respond.
- We will use self-monitoring during Closed Session, Open Session and outside of meetings to remain in the guidelines of the Brown Act & other agreements.

PROTOCOLS TO FACILITATE GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structures and processes used by the trustees and the superintendent in their operations. The following protocols were developed to support and promote the effectiveness of the governance team.

Protocol	Agreement
Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools	<p>All governance team members agree that the board meetings are opportunities to strategically move the district forward, and to communicate direction, district priorities and progress to the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the annual governance meeting, the board will review the annual board meeting calendar of proposed meeting topics. Ongoing review of the annual calendar will take place during monthly Trustee/Superintendent meetings. • The board agenda items will be linked to the board commitments, as possible and appropriate.
Placing Items on the Board Agenda	<p>The following steps will be followed to place items on the board agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the trustee report section of the regular board meeting, trustees may request that specific items be added to future agendas. • The board president and superintendent will determine if a request is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. In addition, the board president and superintendent shall determine if the item is merely a request for information or whether the issue is covered by an existing policy or administrative regulation before placing the item on the agenda. • The Superintendent will communicate with the Board member or member of the public about when a requested item will be placed on an agenda or if it has been determined that an item is not within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board.
Developing the Board Meeting Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board president and vice president will meet with the superintendent to discuss the board meeting agenda the week before each board meeting. The planners will be mindful of time needed for staff to make any adjustments to the agenda or to prepare background information on issues/topics. • Agreement will be reached at the agenda planning session on which items require: additional background information in the agenda packet; a thorough staff briefing at the board meeting or a special meeting or study session to discuss the item in greater depth.

Protocol	Agreement
<p>Agenda questions answered before a meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board packet will be available to all board members by the end of the Friday prior to the board meeting. Whenever possible all relevant presentation materials, slides, analysis and information shall be made available as part of Board Docs. While from time to time additional information becomes available on the evening of the meeting, this should be the exception rather than the rule. • Board members agree to call the superintendent with questions or clarification on items in the board-meeting packet, as early as possible prior to the board meeting. The superintendent will use judgment as to whether this information will be distributed to all trustees. • The superintendent may direct a trustee to the appropriate staff member for answers to questions. • To the best of each board member’s ability, they agree to provide the Superintendent with a ‘heads up’ about questions they plan to ask at a board meeting.
<p>Individual Board Member Requests for information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members requesting information will contact the Superintendent. A Board member will try to give a minimum of one day’s notice for information requests before the board meeting. • The Superintendent may direct a trustee to the appropriate staff member or will work with staff to provide the information. • Board members will be mindful of the workload of staff and will self-monitor requests to ensure that one member’s requests will not divert an inappropriate amount of time from staff efforts to achieve district goals. • For the record requests made during a Board meeting will be noted by the recording secretary for follow up after the meeting. • Board members recognize the concept of “Nice to Know vs. Need to Know” information and will seek information only needed for effective decision-making.

Protocol	Agreement
<p>Staff Program Reports & Board Cover Formats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to promote an efficient and effective use of board meetings, staff reports will be submitted in the board packet prior to the board meetings, whenever possible. Staff will use the following guidelines for presentations whenever possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Program/Presentation Covers</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Recommendation:</u> If it is an action item, recommend approval of item. <u>Background:</u> If it is a program, include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted Students - grade span Number of students served (disaggregated if appropriate) Program purpose and goals Present program strengths, successes and areas for focused, needed improvement Process for developing program -- Who was involved and engaged? What data and needs informed the program development? Evaluation criteria - How is program/process evaluated? What will be evidence of impact? How will progress be monitored? When will it be revisited if needed? Include data from program outcomes (if baseline data and/or longitudinal data is available, be sure to include) When presenting data include percentages and “n” <u>Fiscal Impact:</u> Cost of program or service. If FTE are involved, the total FTE Cert. and Class. Indicate if costs are annual or one-time. Provide funding source and designation: Restricted/Unrestricted <u>Contracts Covers</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Recommendation:</u> Approval of contract <u>Background:</u> Project Description Type of Vendor Selection Process If appropriate include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date RFQ was issued How and where was the RFQ advertised? Date Prequalification Applications were due Date Sealed Proposals were due How and when was this contract advertised? How many vendors applied and how many and who were interviewed? Who served on the interview panel? Provide the scoring components / criteria Description of selected vendor <u>Fiscal Impact:</u> Cost of contract. Provide funding source and explanation of funding source. Note if the funds are restricted or unrestricted. Board members will review staff presentations prior to the board meeting, and call or e-mail in advance with questions as needed.

Protocol	Agreement
Board Deliberation	<p>Each board member brings unique skills, values and beliefs to the board table. The best possible decisions are likely when all members of the team have been part of the discussion and everyone is operating within the same parameters. This protocol promotes making the “best” decision by welcoming all viewpoints, exploring all options, being efficient and avoiding repetition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board President introduces the item, explains how/when the public may comment, and how the board will deliberate. The agenda describes when and how the public may speak to any given item. • The staff makes the presentation, including the staff recommendation. The board asks clarification questions about the presentation. • The Board President acknowledges any member of the public who wishes to speak. • The board may ask for further clarification, following public comments. • The board deliberates and advocates. • The board votes.
Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unless there is a good reason not to vote, all board members should vote on all motions. • It is common practice that when someone is silent when a vote is taken that their vote is counted with the majority. • Abstentions are a non-vote. A Board member might abstain because he believes there was insufficient information for him/her to make a decision. • A recusal is when a Board member believes that he or she has a conflict of interest, and the member must recuse him or herself and leave the room until the motion has been discussed and voted on by the remaining Board members.
Allowing the majority to set the direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board agrees there are multiple ‘right’ answers in addressing issues. Dissenting opinions are listened to respectfully. The final authority for board decisions rests with the board as a whole. • Prior to a board decision, if a member of the public asks a trustee about a future board decision, the trustee will clarify that he/she is voting as an individual (“I” message). • Following a board decision the trustee agrees to respect the majority decision (“we” message). • Following the decision, if trustees are approached by the media about the decision, they will refer the media to the Board President for additional information.

Protocol	Agreement
<p>Public Statements / Spokesperson for the Board</p>	<p>We believe it is essential that important information be communicated to members of the board, the staff and the community in as timely a fashion as possible. We recognize that some situations have legal or other considerations that may place restrictions on what may be told to the media or public. We believe it is important that we speak with one voice in order to maintain the trust of our community.</p> <p>The designated spokesperson will vary depending on the issue or situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis/Disaster: The superintendent will be the primary spokesperson and may involve the board president at her discretion. • Meeting Information (e.g. board meetings, agenda items, study sessions): The board president and the superintendent will serve as primary spokespersons. • Core Values /Vision / District Priorities / General District Information: All governance team members serve as spokespersons utilizing developed and agreed upon key messages. • Public statements authorized to be made on behalf of the Board shall be made by the Board president if appropriate, by the superintendent or other designated representative. • When speaking to community groups, the media, or other members of the public, individual Board members should recognize that their statements may be perceived as reflecting the views and positions of the Board. Board members have a responsibility to identify personal viewpoints as such and not as the viewpoint of the Board.
<p>Electronic and Social Media Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance team recognizes that electronic communication is an efficient and convenient way to communicate and expedite the exchange of information. • Board members shall exercise caution to ensure that electronic communications are not used as a means for the board to deliberate outside of an agenda board meeting. Board members will use the ‘reply all’ function in electronic communication cautiously. • A trustee may respond, as appropriate, to an electronic communication received from a member of the community and should make clear that his/her response does not necessarily reflect the views of the Board as a whole. • Any complaint or request for information should be forwarded to the superintendent in accordance with board bylaws and governance protocols so that the issue may be handled through the appropriate process. • The Board encourages members who participate on social networking sites, blogs or other discussion or informational sites to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner and to model good behavior for district students and the community. • Like other writings concerning school district business, a trustee’s electronic communication may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Protocol	Agreement
Handling Complaints from the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governing board is the unit of authority over the district and trustees understand that a board member has no individual authority or capacity to solve an issue or complaint. • When approached by a community member with an issue or concern, board members will listen openly and seek understanding of the issue or concern. • The trustee will explain that the district has complaint policies in place and if appropriate, will let the community member know what the complaint policy is and how they may access the process or procedure. • All complaints should be handled first at the level where the issue occurred. Board members will use judgment in responding, being mindful of their role in judicial review. • Trustees will call and/or email the superintendent when they direct a community member to contact her.
Individual Board Member Requests for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the board, by formal board action, may direct staff. No individual trustee has the authority to either direct staff to take action or to cause action to be taken by staff indirectly. • Individual trustees shall take great care to ensure that communication to staff not imply direction nor assume that staff should take action based upon individual trustees' comments.
Board Role in Personnel Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forge and maintain a supportive working relationship with the superintendent. • Adopt a mutually agreed-upon superintendent evaluation system. • Regularly use the superintendent evaluation system in a positive way in order to move the district toward achieving the district vision and to support the superintendent. • Review and adjust the superintendent evaluation system as needed. • Ensure a framework for sound hiring practices is in place. • Ensure a supportive and positive climate exists. • Ensure effective evaluation systems are in place and used.

Protocol	Agreement
Board Role in Negotiations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direction, ensuring the district’s mission and goals are incorporated into the bargaining process. • Understand the budget. • Establish specific, realistic collective bargaining goals, priorities, positions or interests. • Create a supportive environment. • Recognize the needs of the union. • Work with and support district staff. • Ensure that legal and fiscal certification requirements are met and that the proposed agreement is consistent with district vision and goals.
School Site Visitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board understands that periodic visitations to school sites are a valuable tool in understanding the culture of the school and increasing board member visibility. • Trustees wishing to visit a school site will inform the superintendent and contact the site principal in order to arrange a date/time for the visit. • The principal/designee will accompany the trustee when visiting classrooms and school/site departments. <p>Periodically, the superintendent will arrange for Trustees to accompany her to visit school sites. This may occur after monthly superintendent/trustee meetings or at other times as calendars allow.</p>
Self-Monitoring of Governance Team Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a governance self-evaluation demonstrates accountability to the community and the intention of the governance team to strengthen and improve governance practices. • Annually, during the governance meeting in May or June the board will schedule a conversation/study session meeting to reflect on governance practices, to review operating protocols and participate in a self-evaluation process.

Appendix A

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE¹

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.

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.

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.

¹Source: California School Boards Association

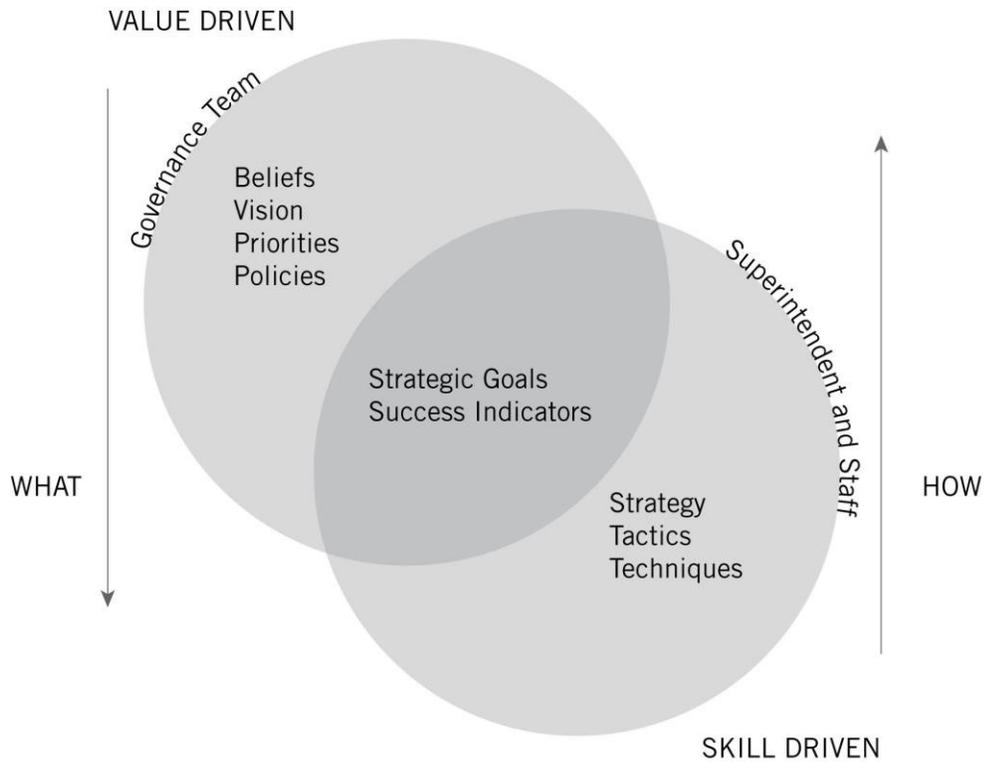
Appendix B

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE TEAMS ²

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.

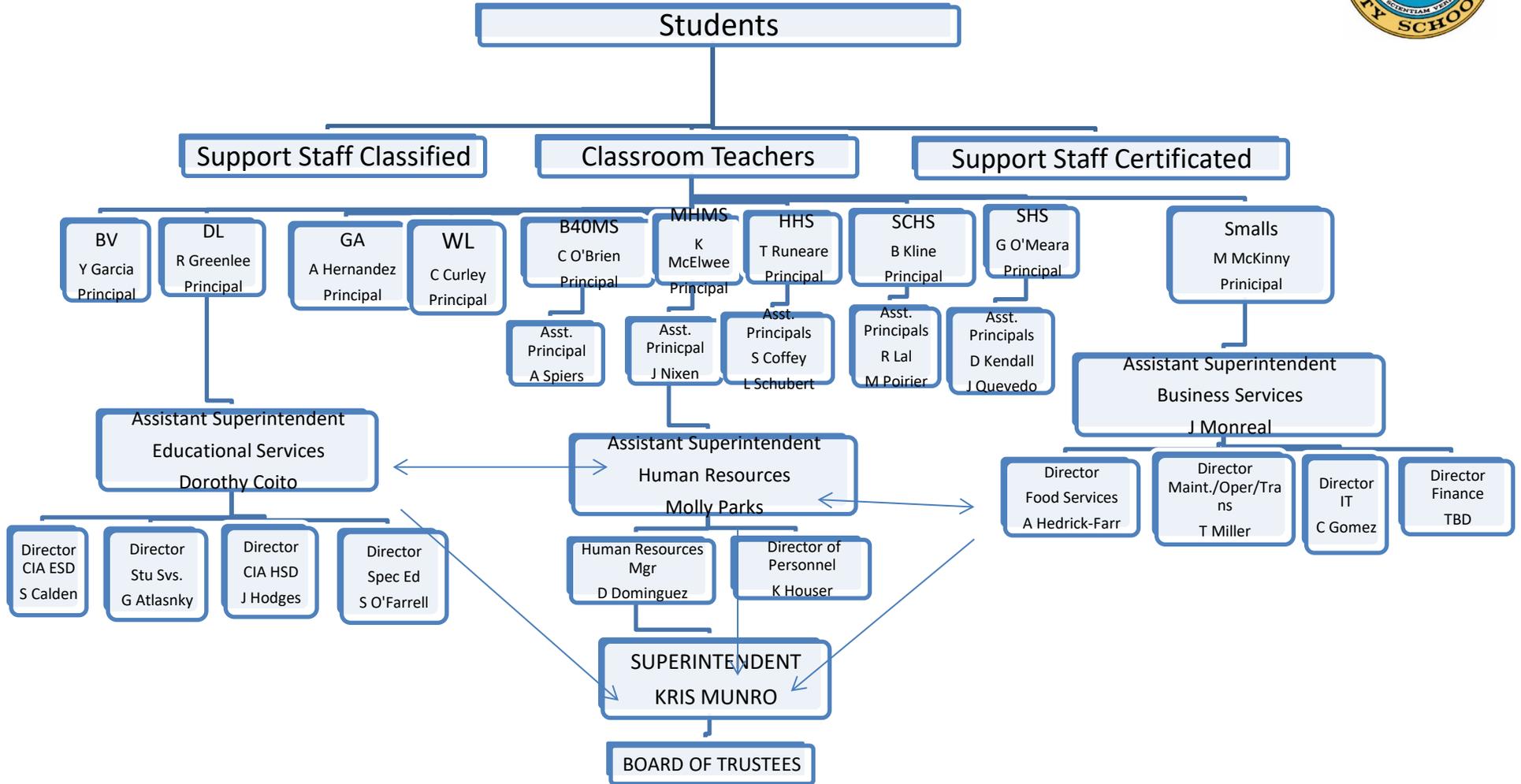
The community elects school board members to set and monitor the direction of the school district, and the district superintendent will translate all efforts into action. Boards and superintendents work together to ensure a district has effective leadership. There are important distinctions to be made between the board’s role and that of the superintendent and staff. The role of the school board is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are well run. It is therefore vital that the board and superintendent have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communications.

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNANCE ROLES



² Source: California School Boards Association

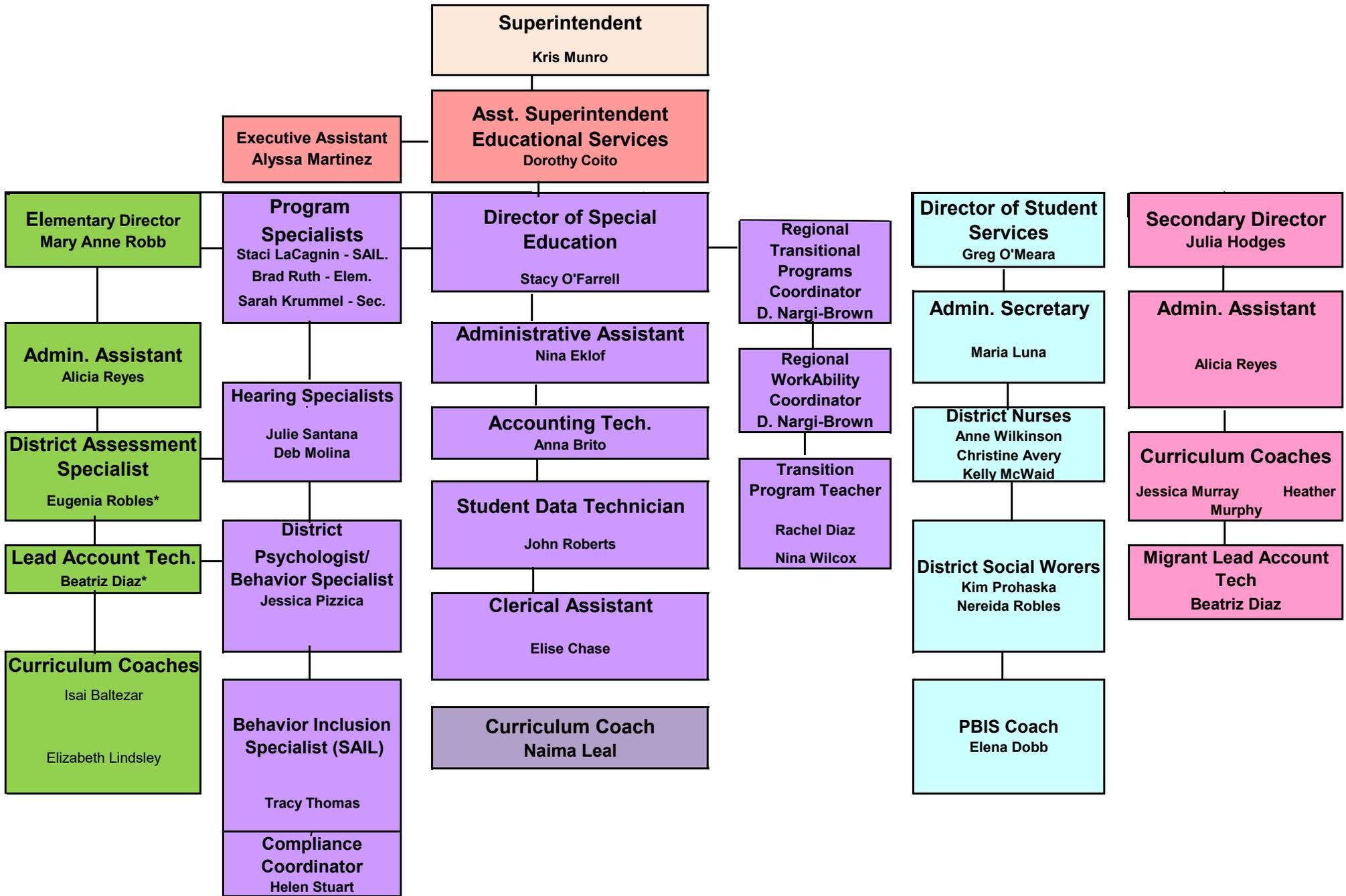
SANTA CRUZ CITY SCHOOLS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



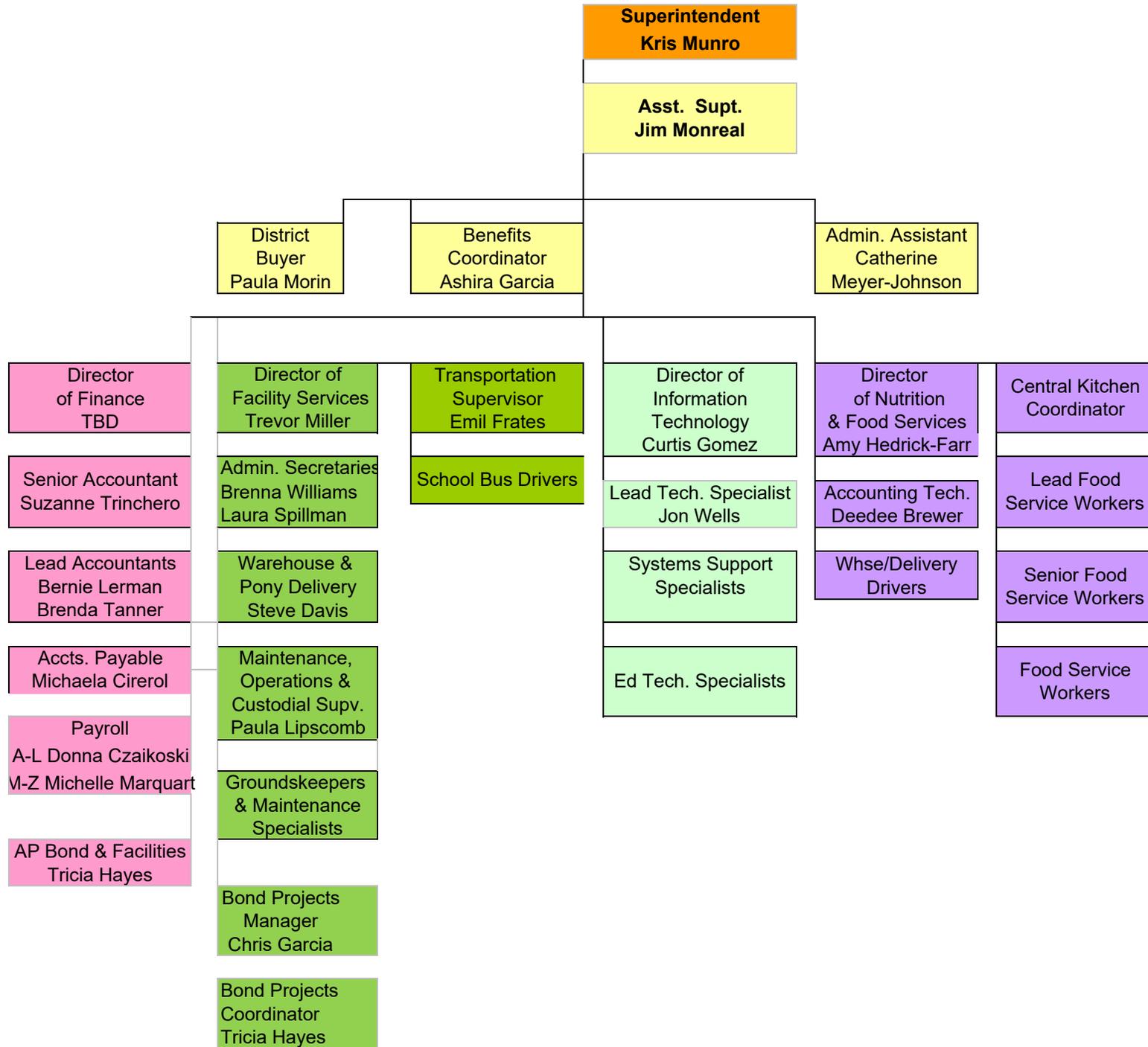
Board of Trustees: Sheila Coonerty, Cynthia Ranii, Jeremy Shonick, Patty Threet, Deb Tracy-Proulx, Claudia Vestal

Educational Services Organization Chart 2016-17

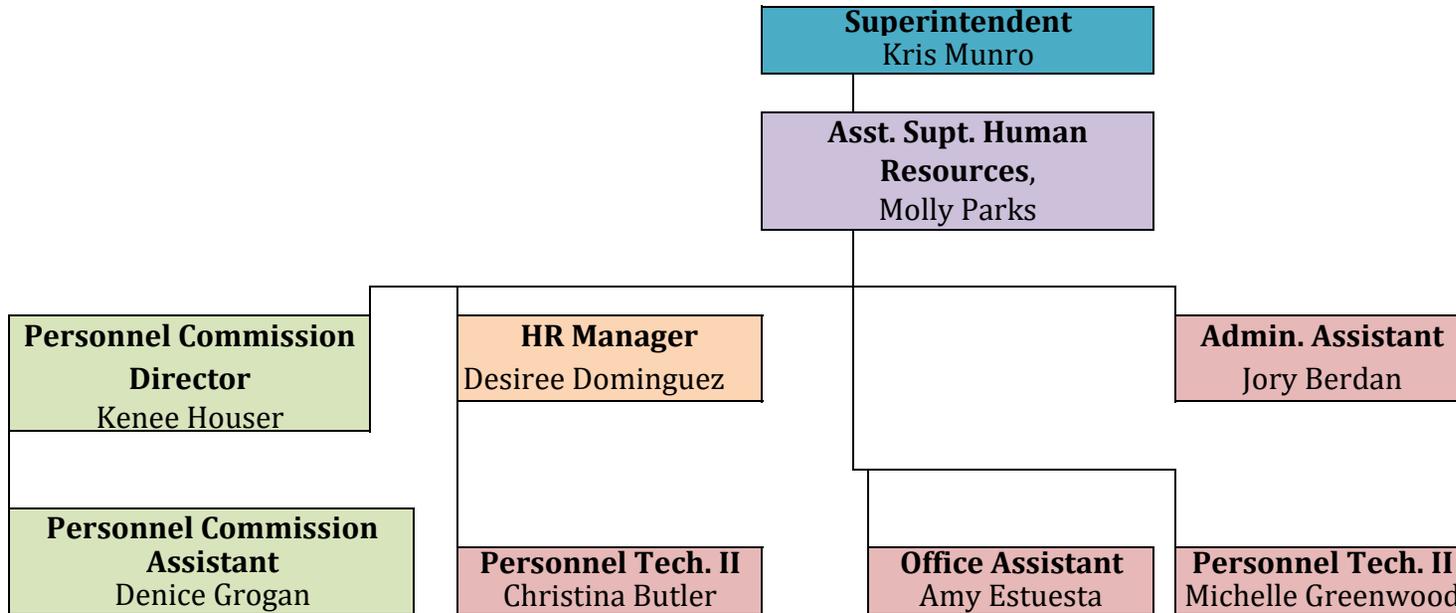
* supervised by Elementary and Secondary Directors



**SANTA CRUZ CITY SCHOOLS
Business Services Organization Chart 2019-20**



SANTA CRUZ CITY SCHOOLS
Human Resources Organization Chart
2019-20



Appendix D

CSBA PROFESSIONAL GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

The California School Boards Association (CSBA), representing nearly 1,000 local school districts and county boards of education, recognizes there are certain fundamental principles involved in governing responsibly and effectively. These principles – or Professional Governance Standards – reflect consensus among hundreds of board members, superintendents and other educational leaders throughout the state.

These Professional Governance Standards describe the three components vital to effective school governance:

1. *the attributes of an effective **individual trustee**;*
2. *the attributes of an effective governing board;*
3. *the **specific jobs** the board performs in its governance role*

The intent of these standards is to enhance the public’s understanding about the critical responsibilities of local boards and to support boards in their efforts to govern effectively.

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

To be effective, an individual trustee:

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

School districts and county offices of education are governed by boards, not by individual trustees. While understanding their separate roles, the board and superintendent work together as a “governance team.” This team assumes collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture in order to govern effectively.

To operate effectively, the board must have a unity of purpose and:

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

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

Effective boards:

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