

Commandments for the Governance Team

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Oath of Office

"I, _____, do solemnly swear (*or affirm*) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties upon which I am about to enter...."

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#1. THY GOVERNANCE TEAM SHALL KEEP THE BEST INTEREST OF STUDENTS AS THE PRIORITY!

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- ▶ Today's quality of public education will determine the future quality of our nation; our people, government, military, economy, and our communities.
- ▶ The governance team gives direction, provides stability, and instills confidence in the staff and community

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- School districts perform best when there is a strong partnership between the Board and the Superintendent. This partnership doesn't develop by chance; the Superintendent and the Board members must carefully cultivate it to become a team.

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**#2. THOU SHALL SERVE WITH
DIGNITY AND HUMOR!**

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Dignity

Bearing, conduct or speech indicative of self-respect or appreciation of the formality or gravity of an occasion.

Worthiness!

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► #3. THOU SHALT UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE
AS A TRUSTEE!

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- ▶ A Trustee's job is not to run the District well, but to see the District is well run.
- ▶ Your actions and decisions, both individually and collectively, should always be guided by what is **best for the students** of the District; your personal commitment should never stray from a determination to provide the best possible education for each student.

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- Your authority, your power as a trustee lies not with you as an individual, but rather with you as a **member of the team**. It is the board, **not an individual**, that establishes the policies which provide direction for the district.
- Remember, you were elected to be a trustee, **not an administrator**.

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- Significant instructional change will not occur unless the Governance Team shows strong, passionate leadership and focuses on instruction.
- New? Do your homework - Review Board meeting minutes from the past six meetings.
- Meet with the Superintendent and ask to be introduced to key staff members

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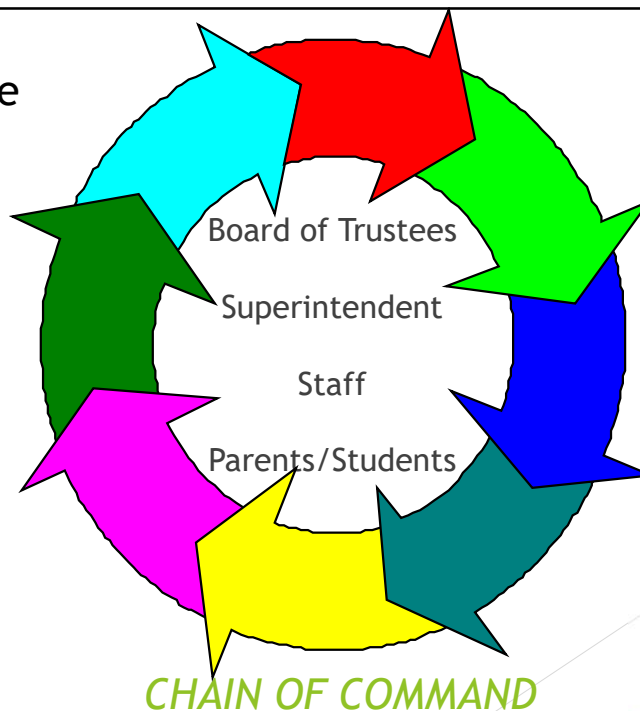
**#4. THOU SHALL ALWAYS
FOLLOW THE CHAIN OF
COMMAND!**

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- The Board's only employee is the Superintendent and the Board gives instruction to him or her alone.
- If the issue will affect the entire **organization**, it is a **policy**.
- If the issue will affect an **individual** employee, it is most likely **administrative** in nature.

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Remember -
Authority can be
delegated, but
accountability
cannot.



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#5. THOU SHALT HOLD CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE!

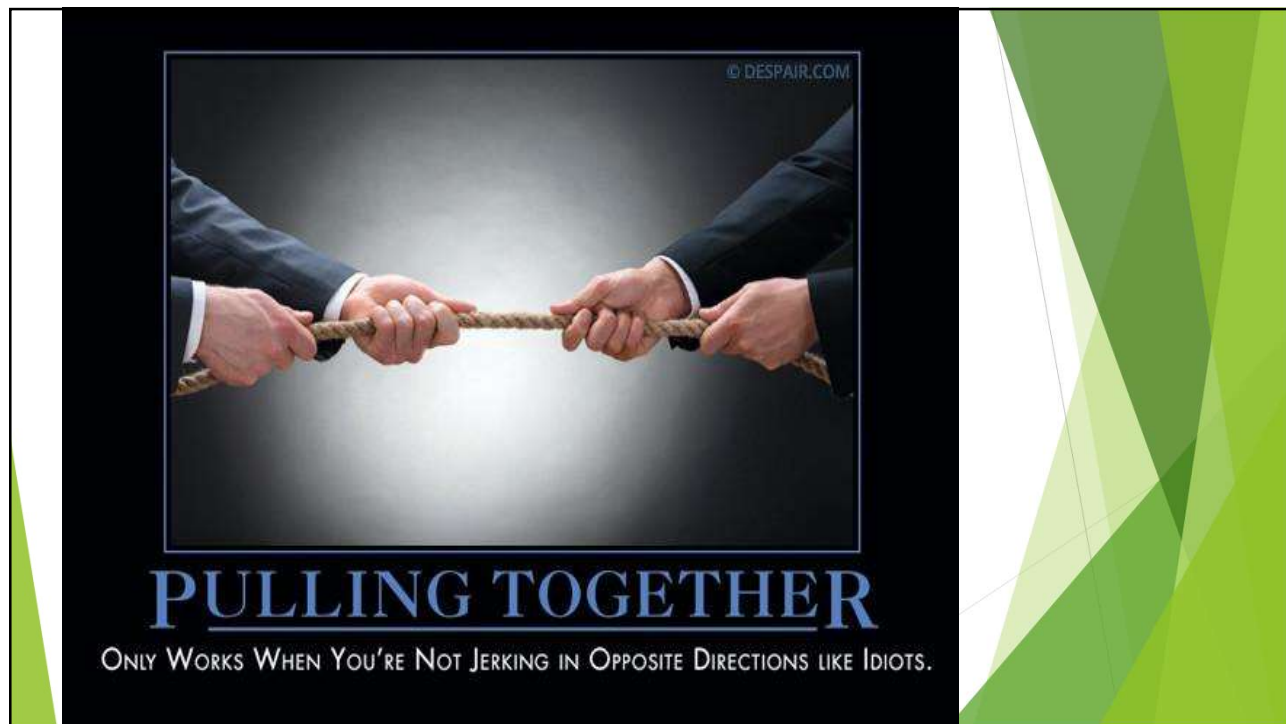
Closed session agenda items must be kept confidential! You have to be able to trust each other, and it is the law!

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6. THERE SHALL BE NO SURPRISES AT A BOARD MEETING!

- ▶ Adopt a “no secrets - no surprises” policy.
- ▶ Do not surprise your Superintendent, fellow Board Members, or administrators at your meeting in public with unexpected comments or requests

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7. THOU SHALL COME PREPARED FOR BOARD MEETINGS!

- ▶ Review your Board packet before the meeting.
- ▶ If you have questions, call the Superintendent.
- ▶ If you have not read your Board packet ...
 - Open it before you get out of the car.
 - Don't ask too many questions that expose ignorance resulting from your lack of preparation

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Never forget ...

**A school board meeting is a
meeting held in public,
not a public meeting!
(unless on agenda)**

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#8. How Long Should a School Board Meeting Last?

- ▶ Google it and you might be surprised ...
- ▶ How are you doing?
- ▶ Periodic Evaluation of your meetings
- ▶ Public Comment: Time Limit consistent

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#9. THOU SHALT NOT EXPECT UNANIMOUS VOTES ALL THE TIME

Expect to be in the minority on Board decisions once in a while, and accept the majority decision graciously. The time to voice your opinions about issues is before the vote is taken.

Agree to disagree, but don't be disagreeable.

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10. THOU SHALT REMEMBER THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE CONTROVERSY... THIS TOO WILL PASS

- Deal with issues and interest, not power and positions.

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11. THOU SHALL NOT SPEND MORE MONEY THAN THOU HASETH! TRUSTEES:

- ▶ Adopt and oversee the annual budget and allocate resources to the needs of the District.
- ▶ Adopt policies that give the District direction to set priorities and achieve its goals.
- ▶ Set perimeters for the collective bargaining process to guide the process.
- ▶ **Remember Rule 1: Students First with resource allocations!**

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FCMAT Predictors of School Agencies Needing Intervention

1. Leadership Breakdown
2. Ineffective Communication
3. Collapse of Infrastructure
4. Inadequate Budget Development
5. Limited Budget Monitoring
6. Lack of Data Accuracy, Collection, and Reporting
7. Human Resources Issues
8. Inattention to and/or High Levels of Debt
9. Cash Monitoring of Accounting Deficiencies
10. Related Issues of Concern

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12. THOU SHALT FOLLOW THE GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK!

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, DEVELOP ONE!

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#13. Don't Let The Public Dictate How The Meeting Is Run

- ▶ If the Board Room fills up....you should not tense up or feel the need to govern differently
- ▶ Practice running great board meetings all the time....then it is easier when a controversial meeting fills up the room

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