



El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Governance Manual

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Governance Manual was developed in 2017 and is a living document that is regularly reviewed, and as needed, revised by the Board.

This manual outlines practices that build and sustain positive Board relationships and define a culture of quality, equity and respect.

Table of Contents

Effective Governance In El Dorado County	4
Effective Governance	4
Governance Mindset	5
Effective Boards	6
Unity of Purpose	7
Vision, Mission and Core Values.....	7
Strategic Goals	8
Governance Principles	8
Roles & Responsibilities	9
Board Roles	10
Board Responsibilities.....	10
Norms for Positive Governance Culture	11
Definition	11
Rules of Engagement	11
Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership	12
Definition	12
Unity of Purpose – Setting Direction	
Protocol: Using Meetings as Strategic Leadership Tools (TBD)	
Protocol: Board Assignments (TBD)	
Protocol: Role with Advisory Boards	
Protocol: Role – Collaboration with other elected officials (TBD)	
Protocol: Use of Board Work Study Sessions	12
Roles and Responsibilities	
Protocol: Interactions with County Staff (TBD)	
Protocol: Individual Supervisor Requests for Information (TBD)	
Protocol: Individual Supervisor Requests Requiring Resources (TBD)	
Protocol: Role of Supervisor’s Assistants (TBD)	

Board Operations

Protocol: Board Meeting Agenda Development

Protocol: Agenda Item-Related Questions (TBD)

Protocol: Role of the Board Chair

Protocol: Role of Individual Supervisors

Protocol: Public Comment in Board Meetings

Protocol: Bringing up new ideas - Deciding on whether to move an idea forward (TBD)

Protocol: Confidentiality (TBD)

Protocol: Self-Monitoring of Board Effectiveness (TBD)

Board of Supervisors in the Community

Protocol: Handling Complaints from the Community

Protocol: Reliance on majority rule, standing behind the decision of the board

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Effective Governance in El Dorado County

The El Dorado Board of Supervisors is committed to the highest standards of governance of the County of El Dorado. The Board of Supervisors and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) work together in a unified, collaborative manner and share a deep commitment to the well being, safety and health of the citizens of El Dorado County. This Governance Handbook represents the Board and CAO's dedication to principles of effective governance.

Utilizing effective governance practices, the Board of Supervisors, works with the County Administrator to keep the organization's efforts focused on its mission, values and strategic goals. The community elects Board members to set and monitor the direction of the County with the County Administrator, who translates this direction into action. It is therefore vital that the Board of Supervisors and County Administrator have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communication.

The Eldorado County Board of Supervisors embrace effective governance tenets that encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors which enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in the organization. Whether in Board Chambers, out in the community or at home, Supervisors are always stewards of the County. The integrity of the County is dependent upon the responsible and professional manner in which each Supervisor, and the Board of Supervisors collectively, fulfills its governance roles and responsibilities.

Working as a group, Supervisors and the County Administrator leverage the efforts of the professional staff by:

- Setting direction for the organization reflective of the community's priorities;
- Creating a supportive framework for action in the organization;
- Holding the organization accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms;
- Providing support to staff through behaviors and actions; and
- Demonstrating community leadership on behalf of residents

When done effectively, the opportunity to create a climate for excellence increases dramatically.

Effective governance, begins with effective board members. Although elected from individual supervisorial districts, County Supervisors work together as a governance team with the CAO. Even though it is the Board that governs El Dorado County, the Board is made up of individuals and it is the professional governance manner and effectiveness of individual supervisors that determines the effectiveness of the Board. Highly effective board members demonstrate a number of common characteristics. Perhaps the most important of these is presence of a governance mindset.

Governance Mindset is an essential characteristic of an effective Board member. It is knowing how to think about governance and always applying that knowledge and understanding during Board operations. It Governance mindfulness is understanding the role and responsibilities of the governing board and how individual members, working together with their supervisor colleagues, can enhance their positive, value-added impact.

There are four characteristics of a governance mindset:

1. System Thinking

The heart of a governance mindset is the fundamental realization by board members that counties are complex systems. A systems thinker has transitioned from single issues, narrow thinking to a fundamental understanding of how all pieces in the organization connect. This transition is a fundamental, core characteristic of effective boards and good governance. System thinkers connect the dots. They understand that one policy or decision in one place will impact a policy and decisions in another. They realize and appreciate the implications that governance is often a zero sum game. One decision can stimulate a domino effect in other often-unrelated areas.

Governance is the only organizational function focused on the whole, not just pieces. System thinkers understand that anytime they get too deep in detail and administrative issues, they risk losing their perspective and objectivity. They try to not be distracted by day-to-day tactical issues.

2. Strategic Focus

Effective board members always maintain a strategic focus in their Board work. They understand that they are not on the Board of Supervisors to administer the County, but rather to govern it. Governance is a strategic function. Board members with a governance mindset understand they are the keepers of the mission, vision and strategic direction of the county. They understand that effective governance requires the board approach all their responsibilities with a clear focus on achieving the strategic outcomes they have set.

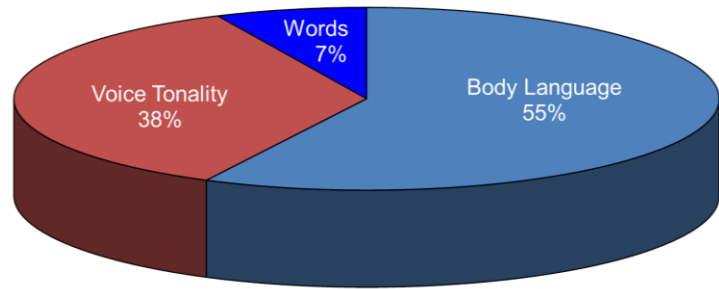
3. Preparation

Effective Board members are always prepared. El Dorado County Supervisors are committed to doing the hard work of being a Board member and leading on behalf of the community they serve. They are committed to making decisions based on quality information, evidence and data.

4. Manner

Effective Board members understand that how they govern is often more important than what they say or do. Working toward a common goal with other independently elected individuals in a collaborative setting requires patience, understanding, respect and most importantly, common courtesy. They are always respectful of other members' opinions. Effective board members with a governance mindset model the civic behavior they expect the employees of the County to exhibit.

Communication is both verbal and non-verbal



Effective Boards

It is important to understand that the Board of Supervisors, as is true, with all governing boards, operates as a well defined, highly structured, organizational unit. The Board as a whole has specific governance duties and responsibilities. For example, the Board of Supervisors, sets direction for the county through formally adopted policies and recommendations. The Board of Supervisors has financial oversight including **adopting the budget and monitoring county finances on a regular basis.**

High performing Boards have four essential characteristics that are the building blocks of effective governance:

- 1. Governing with a Unity of Purpose**

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, overarching goals, the values and beliefs governance team members share in common about the organization and the residents they serve that help them transcend their individual difference to fulfill a greater purpose.

- 2. Governing within the role as a Board**

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

- 3. Creating a positive governance culture**

Culture is the tone 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 with others. These behavioral ground rules (norms) enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture, or shift a negative one.

- 4. Structuring the work for effective governance**

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structure and processes used by the Board and the County Administrator in their functioning as a team; how they operate and do business.

Unity of Purpose

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, mission, values and goals Board members share. A unity of purpose is a clear and unambiguous sense of purpose that becomes the inspiration for all Board efforts and the lens through which those efforts are viewed.

Having a unity of purpose demonstrates that governance team members care most of all about what is best for all residents and understand that they must identify common ground in order to provide focused leadership and direction to the County. They have a commitment to a common County vision and goals, and to principle-centered County policies. A defined unity of purpose focuses Board members on desired end results and supports their ability to display a singular focus on achieving those results.

In all relationships, dealings and transactions, Supervisors act with integrity, openness, respect and honesty. Through these values, the governance team strives to earn and convey trust. The board retains public trust through efficient and cost-effectiveness stewardship of resources.

Governance teams work most effectively when they have a rational and purposeful framework to focus and guide their work. A unity of purpose helps team members transcend their differences to fulfill a greater purpose. A unified board is collaborative, cohesive, committed, and consistent.

El Dorado County Unity of Purpose

Vision and Mission

Vision: Safe, healthy and vibrant communities respecting our natural resources and historical heritage.

Mission: El Dorado County government shall provide efficient, courteous, and effective services and infrastructure for safety, protection, and well-being of our residents, businesses and visitors.

Core Values

1. **Accountability:** Responsible for our decisions and behavior. Creating a safe environment where we are answerable to our citizens, co-workers, superiors, direct reports, and other stakeholders
2. **Collaboration:** Cross-functional teamwork, communication, and cooperation countywide, while creating a silo-free organization.
3. **Integrity:** Doing what is right legally and morally at all times regardless of whether or not someone is watching.
4. **Service Excellence:** (Citizen-Oriented Service)- Provide comprehensive service to all citizens of El Dorado County while loyally doing our job without expectation of recognition or personal gain

Strategic Goals

1. **Public Safety:** Protects the community, prevents crime, enforces the law, administers justice, provides rehabilitative services, and promptly responds to emergencies and calls for service.
2. **Economic Development:** Enable a Prosperous and Vibrant Economy
5. **Good Governance:** Achieving the best possible process for making & implementing decisions; characterized by honesty, integrity, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equitability, inclusion, effectiveness, efficiency and following the rule of law.
6. **Infrastructure:** Provide, operate and maintain infrastructure, public facilities, and associated services that protect our community, environment and economic well-being.
7. **Healthy Communities:** Improved health, well-being and self sufficiency of El Dorado County communities, residents and visitors.

Governance Principles – Draft

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors will:

1. Govern as a team, strategically focused and mission driven.

- Think and act strategically with:
 - Shared purpose and direction
 - Long-term view on strategy and performance, focusing on sustainable success.

2. Make well informed and transparent decisions.

- Be rigorous and transparent about the Board of Supervisors decision making process.
- Have quality information and advice available to support high quality decisions.
- Align goals and resources. Constantly measure results based on facts.
- Ensure that goals are calibrated with resources; staff are not asked to deliver without the tools and means to do the job.

3. Be accountable to each other for the highest standards of Board performance and effectiveness.

- Promote a culture of discussion and inquiry, shared acceptance of disagreements and the ability to find common ground.
- Govern in a collaborative manner with the community, staff and within the Board.
- Assess the board's effectiveness and adherence to adopted protocols.

4. Establish clear roles, responsibilities and delegated decision making responsibility.

- Members and officials work together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.
- Commitment to creating and maintaining a collaborative environment respecting roles of staff and board.

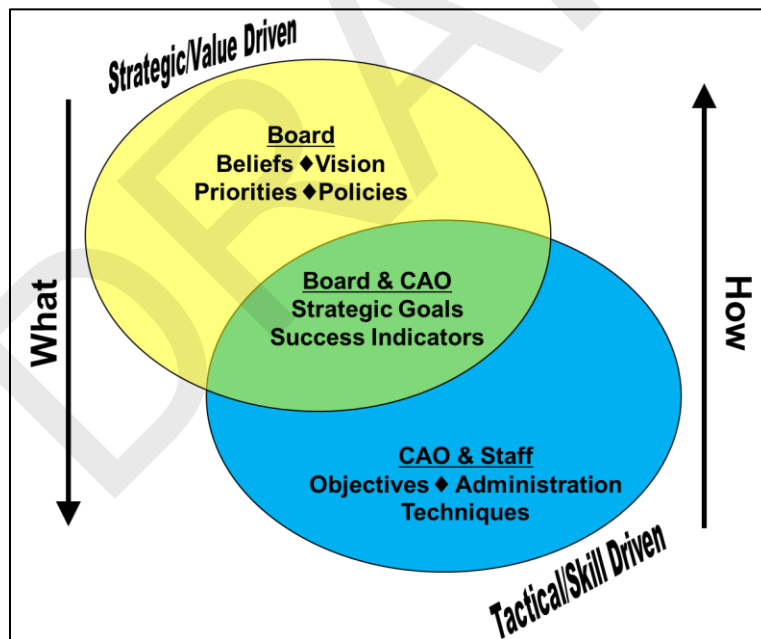
5. Develop the organizational capacity and competencies of Supervisors, staff and other officials to operate effectively and fulfill the purpose of the organization.

- Commit to continuous learning and improvement.
- Ensure that members and officials have the supports and appropriate structures they need to perform effectively in their role.

Roles & Responsibilities

One of the most important characteristics of an effective Board is their understanding and agreement on their roles and responsibilities. Generally, governance is about setting policy by defining the “what” of the organization, and administration is focused on the “how” policy gets implemented. If the discussion is focused on long-term outcomes, it tends to be strategic; if it is about short-term objectives or incremental steps, it tends to be administrative. Since the line between policy and administration can vary from topic to topic or issue to issue, it is essential that the County Administrator and the Board have a clear, mutually agreed upon understanding of how their roles and responsibilities will be defined.

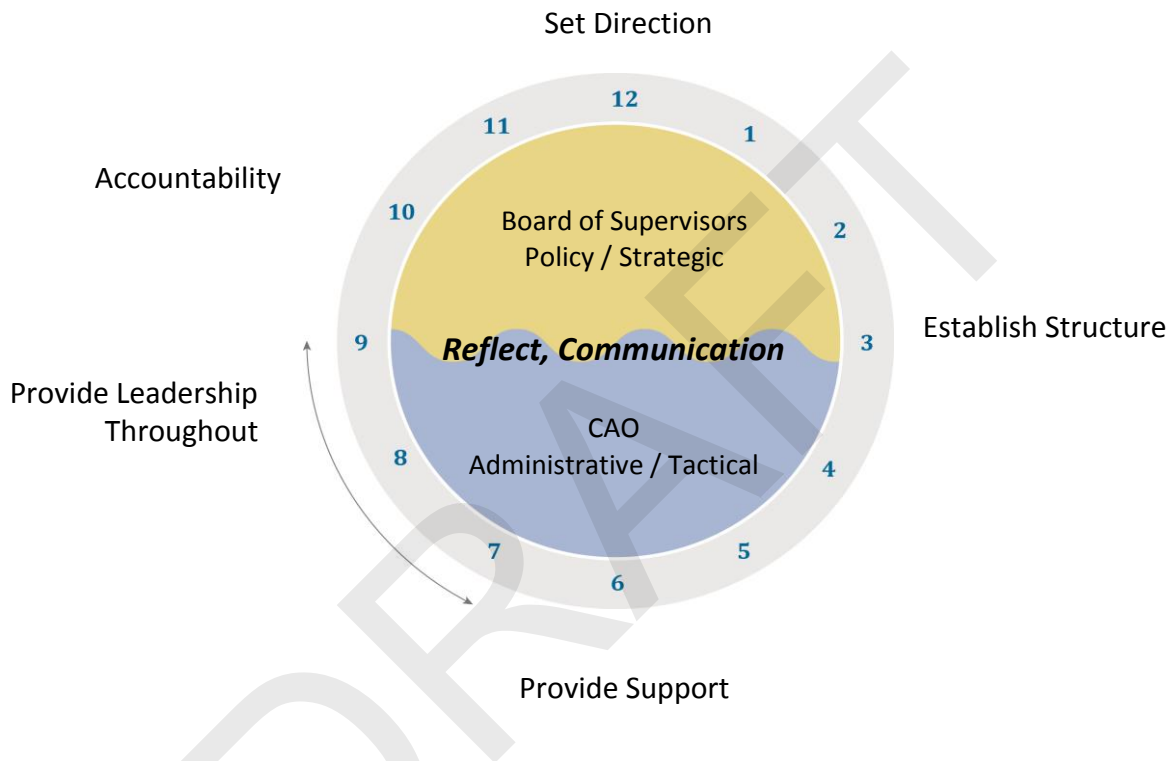
Board Roles



Source: California School Boards Association

The **primary role of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors** is to collectively set the direction and policy for the County as representatives of the people which:

- Identifies countywide issues (and supervisorial district issues with countywide impact) and puts strategies and coalitions in place to address them
- Defines and supports the objectives of the County Strategic Plan
- Ensures fiscal sustainability



Board Responsibilities

The **primary responsibilities of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors** are to:

Set the strategic direction for the County

- Ensure the long term vision is established for the County
- Identify strategic priorities and goals
- Charge staff with tactical decisions to support strategic direction

Establish the governance structure for the County

- Appoint the County Administrator and set policy for the hiring of other personnel
- Establish budget priorities, adopt the County Budget and oversee facilities issues
- Adopt ordinances and policies
- Attend and advise numerous boards, commissions and committees
- Work with affiliated elected officials

Provide support to the County - After establishing the structure, boards – through their behavior and actions – have a responsibility to **support** the chief administrative officer and staff as they carry out the direction of the board. This involves:

- Providing clear and consistent direction
- Support and advocate for programs and policies adopted by the Board
- Provide policy direction that supports programs and aligns resources
- Support staff carrying out the Board’s direction
- Hold the Board accountable for high quality governance and adherence to Board protocols and policies

Ensure accountability

- Hold the County Administrator accountable for achieving the goals set by the Board
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs approved by the Board
- Monitor the fiscal health of the County

Demonstrate community leadership

- Engage and involve county residents and other stakeholders in appropriate and meaningful ways in setting the goals, objectives and major programs of the County
- Communicate clear information about County policies, the fiscal condition and progress on goals
- Identify cross cutting issues through ongoing interaction with a wide variety of stakeholders
- Become and remain immersed in the needs and concerns of residents
- Represent the needs of individual districts as well as the needs of the county as a whole
- Be visible and accessible

Norms for Positive Governance Culture


Definition

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

An excellent governance culture is characterized by a Board that operates in an environment of trust, respect and professional demeanor at all times. The Board sets the tone for the entire County in how it carries out its governance responsibilities.

Rules of Engagement - Draft to be discussed

Norms within which we agree to work:

- Listen carefully and intuitively; work to understand other’s perspectives 
- Be open to challenge our own beliefs and ideas
- Accept constructive disagreement as necessary to yield the best decisions – nothing personal
- Respect each others’ thinking and value individual contributions

Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

Definition

Effective Boards operate with formally adopted protocols that provide an operational framework for how Board members will work together. Protocols are descriptions of the “way we do things here” and are important as guides for what is an acceptable and unacceptable process and behavior. Protocols exist whether they are identified or not. When they are not overtly stated, they become the habits by which groups perpetuate behaviors, some of which can become detrimental to the effective operation of the Board.

Topic	Board Work Study Sessions – Discussion Meetings
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study session/discussion meetings provide opportunities to dialogue and study content and governance issues in more depth. • The process is rooted in dialogue and deliberation, not in debate. The purpose is to uncover areas of agreement and concern and to promote a shared and deep understanding of topics and issues that the Board of Supervisors will address. • The study sessions and discussion meetings are designed to be both educational and collaborative.
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board work study sessions- discussion meetings are public meetings subject to the provisions of the Brown Act and no action is taken. • During the study sessions, the governance team will ensure an orderly structure for input with flexibility to allow for effective deliberation among governance team members. • Work study sessions may involve agreeing on guiding principles and developing criteria to be used for problem solving, action planning, and/or decision-making on major county issues. • The board may identify study session topics to consider for the coming year during the annual goal setting process. Work study sessions may also be scheduled on an as needed basis. • When possible, background materials will be distributed prior to the work study session.