Board of Trustees
Good Governance Handbook

PISD 2025–2026 Board of Trustees

President – Clarence Grelle
Vice President – Cody Stegemoller
Secretary – Sharron Hohertz
Trustee – LaDonna Feist
Trustee – Wesley Peters
Trustee – Angie Sanchez
Trustee - TBD

Priddy ISD Board of Trustees
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Statement of Purpose

The Priddy Independent School District Board of Trustees is committed to the highest levels of good governance. We believe that good governance is not a destination, but a journey. To this end, we are committed to governance best practices such as, but not limited to:

- Alignment to the three essential roles (see model on the next page)
- Utilizing a scorecard to track progress in (at least) two ways:
    - District scorecard monthly report on Board approved strategic objectives.
    - Board progress monitoring of results from good governance inventory. This inventory may be utilized initially in 6-month time horizons, with an eventual minimum expectation of annul update.
- Systematically monitoring team trust utilizing a neutral/third party when needed.
- Clarity surrounding the difference(s) between the role of the Superintendent and the role of the Board (see Board Policy BAS (Legal), BJA (Legal), BJA (Local))
- Commitment to asking good questions that aligned to the strategic role rather than the tactical role (see sample strategic questions on the next page)

The Board of Trustees will set expectations for a mindset of continuous improvement for our Superintendent and Leadership Team. The Board will furthermore model this continuous improvement mindset as we strive to become THE BEST Board in the State of Texas.

Sample Strategic Questions

A. How does this idea/program fit into our Strategic Plan?
B. What is the vision for this program/idea/concept?
C. How do we quantify progress in this area? How does it trend? How does it compare?
D. How do our stakeholders know this service exists? How would we self-rate our marketing efforts?
E. What percent of the total budget is dedicated to this effort?
F. What is the best way for the Board to help?
G. What else (do we need to know), (do you need in order to be successful), (have we not thought of)?
H. What concerns us most about this?
I. What is worthy of a celebration?
J. Have we aligned the appropriate resources with this initiative?
K. Do our measures appropriately address both progress and cultural impact?
L. Are there budgeted items that are so removed from our strategic direction that they can be strategically abandoned?
M. How does this proposed budgetary expenditure align to our strategic direction and how will it ultimately (positively) impact our community? How much does it cost to sustain? Can we afford it? Does it replace something else or is it an additional expenditure?
N. Is our target set too high? Too low?
O. Is this the best measure for success?
P. Which Perspective does this help? Is there a potential negative unintended impact on another perspective?
Q. What do these data seem to tell us? Not tell us?
R. What improvement might arise from these data?
S. Did we miss something in our Strategic Objective when we first defined it?
T. Are we validating with our ears too much (anecdotal) and not with our eyes (data)? And, vice versa…?
U. Are we maintaining our strategic focus or are we off track?
V. What research would we need to undertake in order to “know what we don’t know”?
W. How is this being perceived at the operational level (front-line)? (Besides anecdotal evidence)
X. How do we know this is aligned to our customers’ needs?
Y. Are our Strategic Objectives well understood at the operational level? How do we know?
Z. Are we innovative enough? What is our tolerance/process for innovation?

Board Member Norms

A. The Board is a governing body. The Board understands and respects the distinct role of the Board and staff.
B. The Board and Superintendent presume positive intent of Board members, staff and community. Be cognizant of how questions are phrased.
C. The Board's treatment of all persons is courteous, dignified and fair. The Board maintains a respectful atmosphere at all times.
D. The Board agenda is developed to ensure the meeting is run efficiently.
E. The Board adheres to the topics of the agenda. Board discussion is for the business purpose of seeking clarity, furthering understanding and being prepared to take action.
F. After a motion on an important or controversial agenda item has been made and seconded, Board members are encouraged to share their perspective on how they intend to vote, in order to provide transparency to the community.
G. There are no side conversations or interrupting of other Board members during open and closed session meetings.
H. Board members come prepared for each meeting.
I. Board members are given an adequate opportunity to participate in discussion and decision making.
J. Board members will contact the Superintendent with agenda questions prior to the meeting (Monday/day of the meeting by 10:00 am at the latest). This will allow staff the time necessary to research the information. Additional questions may still be presented during the Board meeting as necessary.
K. Board members will state their position concisely and summarize. If another Board member has already captured the position on a subject, he/she will state that without repeating.
L. The Board President's role is to facilitate the meeting by monitoring the discussion. Based on the norms, the Board President will check in with Board members to invite any new comments or to move forward to the next item. The Board President will enforce the agreed upon norms.
M. Electronic devices may be out during Board meetings, but should not be a distraction and should not be used for Board business.

Priddy ISD Board of Trustees
Good Governance Guidelines

The Priddy ISD Board of Trustees welcomes community participation in the school district. The information in this handbook is designed to define some of the policies and procedures used during the Board's meetings, as well as review several practices of the PISD Board of Trustees.

1. **Developing the Board Agenda**

The Board meeting agenda is finalized three business days prior to a Board meeting. Two Board members may make an agenda request at least six days prior to a Board meeting. In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Board agenda must be posted no less than 72 hours prior to a Board meeting, except in an emergency. All agendas are posted at the front entrance of the PISD Administration building and on the District's website.

The Superintendent will provide Board members with Board packets three business days prior to a Board meeting. The Superintendent will provide the Board with a contact person for each agenda item. Board members are encouraged to contact the Superintendent or designated staff member for questions and shall copy the Board President on such correspondence or otherwise inform the Board President of such inquiries.

Written responses to questions about an agenda item will be provided to all Board members.

The Board and Superintendent will maintain a continuous calendar for the year but may add agenda items as appropriate.

2. **Board Agenda Format**

The Board may hold a general meeting or a special meeting. The primary distinction between the meetings is that a special meeting will have a narrower agenda and the public comment period is limited to the topics on the meeting agenda. Dates for general meetings are adopted annually. Special meetings are scheduled as needed.

The Board meeting agenda may include a period for recognitions, citizens' comments, discussion items, action items, information items, consent agenda, and other items as needed per Board President and/or District administration. One or more closed/executive session notices are placed on the agenda to address legally appropriate items including:

- Private consultation with the Board's attorney.
- Deliberating the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property.
- Deliberating a negotiated contract for a prospective gift or donation.
- Deliberating the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee; or to hear a complaint or charge against an officer or employee.
- Deliberating the deployment or specific occasions for implementation of security personnel or devices; or a security audit.
- Deliberating medical or psychiatric records of an applicant for a benefit from an insurance, health or retirement plan.
- Deliberating discipline of a public school child or a case in which a complaint or charge is brought against an employee of the school district by another employee.
- Deliberating a matter regarding a public school student if personally identifiable information about the student will necessarily be revealed by the deliberation.

- Deliberating the standards, guidelines, terms or conditions the Board will follow or instruct its representatives to follow in consultation with representatives of an employee group.
- Excluding a witness from a hearing.
- Deliberating economic development negotiations.
- Deliberating a test item or information related to a test item.
- Deliberating security assessments or deployments; network security information; or the deployment or occasions for implementation of security personnel, infrastructure or security devices.
- Deliberating information confidential under Local Government Code relating to Homeland Security.

No voting or polling of votes may be done in a closed/executive session.

3. **Public Addressing the Board**

The Board of Trustees welcomes comments from the public. A Public Comment period is held at each Board of Trustees meeting. Members of the public desiring to participate in the Public Comment period may sign up online prior to the start of the board meeting from when the agenda is posted to 1 1⁄2 hours before the meeting. The Board has allotted 30 minutes for this period, but the time may be adjusted at the Board President's discretion to allow for the orderly conduct of the Board's meeting. Adjustments may include lengthening the total time for the Public Comment period and shortening the time-period given to each speaker, although no individual will be given less than one minute. There is generally a three-minute time limit on individual presentations. If groups wish to speak on the same topic, the Board may ask (but it is not required) that a spokesperson be appointed to speak for the group. Comments should be concise and contain information not substantially addressed by previous speakers. The individual who is listed to speak must be the individual who actually speaks during the Public Comment period (*i.e.*, another individual may not take the place of someone who has signed up to speak, unless the Board has asked that a group appoint a spokesperson as stated above).

During special board meetings, Board members will hear public comments from citizens on agenda items only. At regular meetings, the Board shall hear persons who desire to make comments, voice concerns, or make complaints to the Board. The Public Comment period is not intended for the presentation of allegations of employee misconduct; requests for employee discipline; lodging personal attacks; shaming; or demeaning specific named PISD employees; or unnecessarily disclosing private information about PISD employees or students. Any issues pertaining to specific PISD employees or students may necessitate a closed session of the PISD Board to be held at the end of the general meeting. Personal attacks are defined as comments impugning an individual's integrity, honesty, character, immutable characteristics or like personal qualities of an identified person, accusations of criminal conduct, name calling, threats, fighting words, ridicule, mocking, or shaming.

Board members may respond to comments on an agenda item when the agenda item is considered. The Board will not deliberate or decide any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting. The presiding officer or designee shall determine whether a person addressing the Board has attempted to solve a matter administratively through the grievance process established by Board policy. If not, the person shall be referred to the appropriate forum at which time the person may be heard and seek a resolution in that forum or the Board may put that topic on a future agenda. The Board will only consider personnel or student complaints that remain unresolved after they have been addressed through the grievance process and when they have been placed on the Board agenda for hearing or action. See PISD Board policies DGBA (employee), FNG (students/families), and GF (public).

Speakers during Public Comment are responsible for the words they speak during public comment and will be solely liable for any damages if it is later determined that the words spoken injures a person's reputation, exposes the person to public hatred, contempt, ridicule, or causes financial injury. Under Texas law, PISD is immune from any claims for defamation.

The Superintendent or designee may follow up with persons who have commented before the Board.

The Board may not prohibit public criticism of the board, including any criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program or service. This does not apply to public criticism that is otherwise prohibited by law. (Gov't Code 551.007)

The Texas Open Meetings Act permits the Board to deliberate and act only as a corporate body at a properly called meeting. The Board may not deliberate or act through any correspondence (e.g., calls, text, email or any other written format). Board members will limit their responses to public comments or inquiries on items that are not on the agenda to statements of specific factual information, recitations of existing policy or if the comment or inquiry is a complaint, the Board member will direct the individual to the Superintendent or other appropriate administrator who will proceed according to the applicable complaint policy. If the concern or complaint directly pertains to the Board's own actions or policy for which there is no administrative remedy, Trustees may request that the issue be placed on the agenda of a future meeting. To avoid any perception of a violation of the Open Meetings Act, emails or correspondence from individual Board members in response to public comments or inquiries will not be sent or copied to the remaining Board members.

4. **Meeting Procedures and Information**

The Board shall observe *Robert's Rules of Order* parliamentary procedures. The Board President will preside at all meetings and recognize each Board member prior to any questions or discussion on agenda topics.

In the case of a tie vote, the motion fails. Once a vote is taken, all Board members are expected to support the majority decision.

No Board member has authority outside of a Board meeting. The Board's authority is as a "Body Corporate."

5. **Communications**

The Superintendent will communicate with all Board members weekly or more often, as the need arises. Should the Superintendent or designee need to present information to the Board members, and a Board member is unable to attend such informational presentation after the Superintendent or designee's attempt to schedule a mutually agreeable time to meet with the Board member, that Board member should contact the Board President to obtain the information presented.

Board members will be advised of any urgent or crisis situations within 24 hours.

Board members should keep the Board President apprised of issues they have referred to the Superintendent.

The Board President and Superintendent are the official spokespersons on behalf of the Board.

Board members will abide by the Board's Code of Ethics in Board Policy BBF(LOCAL) and the expectations for civility and conduct, as stated herein.

When communicating on social media, Board members shall keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Exhibiting caution when publicly commenting on a pending matter that may come before the Board in a Level Three hearing so as to avoid the perception of bias or prejudgment on such issue, unless the Board member plans to recuse himself or herself in such hearing;
- Ensuring it is clear when posting or speaking about District business that the Board member is speaking as an individual Board member and not as a spokesperson of the Board (unless acting with the Board President's authorization as a spokesperson);
- Maintaining compliance with the standards in Texas Penal Code § 39.06 and Texas Government Code § 552.352 regarding the use of official and/or confidential information obtained by the nature of the Board member's role as a trustee;
- Displaying respect for the majority decision as the decision of the Board;
- Accurately representing District policies, programs, priorities, and progress.

6. **Decorum**

The Board shall maintain an appropriate meeting decorum for the purposes of conducting the District's business and maintaining a safe and welcoming environment. Decorum protocols shall be posted on the Board's webpage and shall be available for attendees of the meeting along with the online sign-up form for requesting to speak during the Public Comment period.

7. **Procedures for Patron or Employee Request or Complaint to an Individual Board Member**

The Board member shall hear the patron or employee's request or complaint for a full understanding of the persons involved, date and place. Then the Board member shall:

1. Describe the chain of command to the patron or employee**.**
2. Refer the patron or employee to the appropriate person or to the Superintendent.
3. Remind the patron or employee of appropriate policy and that the Board member must remain impartial in case the Board later considers the situation.
4. Inform the Superintendent of any serious complaints.

8. **Board Member Compliance with Policy and Procedures**

Board members shall abide by these Guidelines and relevant District policy. As trustees of the District, Board members are fiduciaries of the District, meaning Board members have an obligation not to act in a manner averse to the District's interests. In the event that a Board member fails to abide by the Guidelines and/or District policy or fails to properly act as a fiduciary of the District, the following actions may be taken:

- Private conversation between the Board President and the Board member;
- Confidential conversation between the Board member and the Board's attorney;
- Closed session discussion between the Board member and the remainder of the Board;
- Written communication from the Board's attorney to the Board member;
- Appropriate and lawful verbal censure of the Board member; and/or
- Other appropriate and legal actions.

9. **General Information**

Individual Board members may request, through the Superintendent and/or the Board President, any legally available information or reports concerning the District, students or personnel. The Superintendent shall disseminate the requested information to all Board members. Board members

shall take care to avoid any action that may constitute a misuse of official and/or confidential information, as set forth in Texas Penal Code § 39.06 and Texas Government Code § 552.352.

The Board President will inform the Board of all speaking engagements when the Board is not present.

When visiting a campus as a trustee, Board members shall notify the building principal and/or superintendent of their visit. On an annual basis, trustees must complete a background check.

Board members may address appropriate administrative staff with general questions.

However, Board members shall not issue directives to staff.

Board members shall not make derogatory comments about personnel or fellow Board members.

Board member requests for information shall be consistent with Policy BBE(LOCAL).

Staff will acknowledge requests in a timely manner.

Formal information provided in response to a Board member's question will be provided to all Board members.

Board members shall have final approval on recommended actions brought forward by selected committees.

If a Board member's request exceeds authority in Policy BBE(LOCAL), the staff member or Superintendent will notify the Board member(s) and the Superintendent.

Board members will evaluate the Superintendent during closed session each year in February. The agenda will reflect the Evaluation of the Superintendent. An interim evaluation of the Superintendent is conducted in September.

Board member elections are held in November of each even year. Board members run at-large and serve for a four-year term. Elections will be held biennially. The terms are staggered with 4 members being elected in one election cycle followed by 3 members the next election cycle.

Board officers are elected at the *first* meeting following the final canvasing of votes after the election.

10. **Board Travel**

Board members will not receive reimbursement for overnight stays for conferences or meetings in the Mills and adjoining Counties area.

Travel other than TASA or TASB sponsored events must be approved by the executive committee prior to attending. The executive committee is comprised of the President, Vice President and Secretary. Reimbursement for mileage, parking, registrations and non-event sponsored meals are allowed. Out-of-state travel must be approved by the executive committee prior to attending.

11. **Review of Good Governance Guidelines**

The Board of Trustees will annually review and update the Board's Good Governance Guidelines at an August Board meeting. Compliance with these guidelines will be reviewed and discussed by the Board during an annual self-evaluation in January.

Priddy ISD Board of Trustees
Expectations for Civility and Conduct

It is the intent of the School Board to promote mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among district employees, parents, and the public. It is not the intent of the Board to deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression. The intent of these expectations are to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, harassment-free workplace for teachers, students, administrators, other staff, and parents and other members of the community.

In the interest of presenting teachers and other employees as positive role models, the Board encourages positive communication and discourages disruptive, volatile, hostile, or aggressive communications or actions.

Expected Level of Behavior

Trustees and District personnel will treat parents and other members of the public with courtesy and respect.

Parents and other visitors to schools and District facilities will treat teachers, school administrators, Trustees, other school staff and volunteers, and all District employees with courtesy and respect.

Unacceptable Behavior

Disruptive behavior which is inappropriate for a school setting includes, but is not necessarily limited to the following:

1. Behavior which interferes with or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office or office area, areas of a school or facility open to parents/guardians and the general public and areas of a school or facility which are not open to parents/guardians and the general public;
2. Using loud and/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language, or display of temper;
3. Threatening the health or safety, including threatening bodily or physical harm, of a teacher, school administrator, school employee, or student regardless of whether or not the behavior constitutes or may constitute a criminal violation;
4. Damaging or destroying District property or property of others lawfully on District premises;
5. Any other behavior which disrupts the orderly operation of a school, a school classroom, or any other District property;
6. Abusive, threatening, or obscene e-mail or voice mail messages; bullying behavior which includes multiple emails or phone calls demanding answers to questions already provided;
7. Continuous threats to an employee's job and/or employment status; and/or
8. Excessive behavior demanding goods or services that cannot be equitably provided by the District to all students.

Authority of School Personnel

Any individual who displays disruptive behavior deemed to be inappropriate for a school setting may be directed to leave District property in accordance with the appropriate Board policy and legal authorities. *See* Board Policies GKA(LEGAL) and GKA(LOCAL).

If any member of the public uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, loud, insulting, and/or demeaning manner, the employee to whom the remarks are directed shall calmly and politely warn the speaker to communicate civilly.

If the verbal abuse continues, the employee to whom the remarks are directed may, after giving appropriate notice to the speaker, terminate the meeting, conference, or telephone conversation. If the meeting or conference is on District property, any employee may request that an authorized District official direct the

speaker to leave District property in accordance with the appropriate Board policy and legal authorities. *See* Board Policies GKA(LEGAL) and GKA(LOCAL).

If any District employee receives an email or voice mail message which is abusive, threatening, or obscene, the employee is not obligated to respond to the email or return the telephone call. The employee may save the message and contact the District Director of Emergency Management and School Security. If the message threatens personal harm, the employee may contact law enforcement.