

Dear CARE, thank you for the opportunity to answer your questions. Below are my answers.

Thank you,

Pilar Acosta Ruiz

1. How best can the district compete with charter and private schools? What are parents looking for in those schools that they don't find in TUSD?

A few of the most important things TUSD can do to compete with charter and private schools is to increase academic proficiency, balance the budget by getting rid of waste and putting more money into the classroom and out of administration, ensure student and staff safety and leave politics out of teaching. Parents are seeking education for their children outside of TUSD because they want them to receive a safe and quality education.

2. What is the status of the desegregation case and how does the desegregation money paid by all TUSD property taxpayers help to desegregate the district?

TUSD has been relieved from court oversight in the desegregation case, however is still receiving 63 million paid for by TUSD resident property taxes. The money is supposed to ensure that equal access for minority students are funded in the form of programs, transportation and student support. The district has not done a good job in the last few years of being transparent in the spending of the money.

3. Do you see a need for another round of school closures? Why or why not? What is the ideal procedure for school closures?

Unfortunately due to the continued loss of enrollment and continued cost to run the schools, I do believe it is necessary. The process should have started along time ago with community engagement and input. Another important process that did not happen was interventions with schools with low enrollment, marketing could have been done, principals and site staff should have been consulted in seeking solutions to boost enrollment also.

4. What is the school board's ideal relationship to the Superintendent and to the school community (staff, parents, students, tax payers and community members).

The Superintendent reports to the Board and the Board needs to do more directing and overseeing not just rubber stamping. The Board's relationship to the school community

should be one of representation, all voices in the community need to be heard and respected, the Board serves the people. Even when unfavorable decisions must be made the Board should always be open to other's opinions and ideas and hear them with respect.

5. What would you do about high rates of absenteeism in our schools? What sources have you found to consult on this issue?

There are a lot of success stories at Attendance Works. I would suggest having a team approach with teachers, counselors and office staff reaching out to families letting them know we want them in school. Teachers often have insight into the possible barriers to attendance such as academic performance. Maybe a student does not want to be in class if they are not succeeding, then we would know what would help that student. Basically making being in school and learning fun and attractive to students again would make a big difference.

6. What is your view of the Director of Finance responsibility for providing a comprehensive budget book in a timely fashion? Should board members have the completed budget before voting on it?

The Director of Finance should absolutely be responsible for a very comprehensive budget book and it should be delivered in a timely fashion with plenty of time to be studied prior to a new fiscal year. The Board should never vote on budgets before actually seeing them.