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ACHIEVEMENT GAP:

TUSD shows low achievement levels in many important areas. Where do you believe this comes from?

I can and will honestly say this stems from public school leaders in the past not addressing, being cognizant, or not being fully accommodating to the diverse needs of TUSD's culturally rich and diverse student population. Because of the failings of past school leaders who were tasked and responsible for analyzing what equitable needs benefit students from historically underrepresented and ethnic marginalized backgrounds in order to be successful, students are not able to confidently stride nor achieve high enough marks in order to be successful within academic performance, especially if they're constantly tested and evaluated on which does not accurately measure their aptitude or ability to achieve academic success in their educational journeys. It stems from not acknowledging the systemic and oppressive barriers that keep all of our students from achieving the best they can in school and beyond the classrooms. These are the failings, once again, in part of past School administrators and public school leaders who failed to acknowledge the needs of the students in order for them to be successful. Such acts such as the No Child Left Behind Act back in the early 2000s and onward really exposed and highlighted the racial / ethnic disparities between children of color and white children when evaluating and measuring their academic performance, that were seen from many assessments done, were greatly pronounced. The impetus of the No Child Left Behind Act was institutional accountability, in which case what TUSD was sorely lacking and some of those same leaders did not take full accountability to acknowledge such disparities that existed within a particular segment of the student population within TUSD. Factors were hyper-examined and pointed out such as poverty, race, class, color, language barriers (English speakers versus non-English speakers) socio-economic statuses and of the family breakdown contributed to how and why students from such backgrounds were not striving and achieving such similar heights in academic achievement like that of their white counterparts. This was problematic and it is ongoing and needs to be properly addressed and further examined to understand this ongoing problem has and will continue to affect our student populations in the district.

How would you, as a board member, try to both improve overall achievement and reduce the imbalance between the highest and the lowest achievers?

I would want to try to improve the overall achievement gap our students are facing, as well as reduce the imbalance between our highest and lowest achievers by considering and even incorporating instruction reform and student academic performance outcomes as a top priority. I would like this consideration to be front and center when deciding and going over the budget in order to approve instructional reform that is research-based and outcome driven. This way, administration can properly assess, evaluate, and conduct an

inward examination of the existing systemic barriers that are present in our schools and classrooms that have, in the past, greatly failed to support academic success for students along with the necessary proposed research-based solutions that can take immediate effect and be employed by the district. I truly believe that instructional leadership is vital and critical to the success of any school, especially when it can be applied in the district.

As a part of this issue, do you believe that all seniors who graduate are academically ready when they graduate? Please explain.

Seniors who will be ready to graduate should be academically ready prior to concluding their secondary education, however, if they are not then I would propose setting up an exit exam to assess and evaluate if our graduating seniors will be ready once they graduate. In this way, we can catch any inconsistencies early on and determine how to prepare the student not just to satisfy graduation requirements in order to graduate, but to also have them prepared for the workforce or collegiate careers and have them equipped with the confidence, knowledge and academic skill sets needed in order to be successful in any profession they enter. This will send a clear message to either local trade specific training schools or even higher education institutions that they are academically prepared and equipped to satisfactorily meet the requirements needed in order to further their studies and/or training. This will also send a clear message that all entities involved, including the governing board and other administrators involved, were extremely invested and successful and have ensured that students were well equipped and have prepared their futures with best practices and recommendations given in order to help prepare our students for success and to successfully graduate.

DESEGREGATION:

What comments do you have in response to the 7/20/22 Court order which finds that TUSD has substantially removed all vestiges of segregation/discrimination?

Also, please tell us your ideas to institute community oversight over the Post Unitary Status Reporting and Accountability Plan (PUSRAP). Finally, what role should the Board serve in oversight of the Plan, including the use of desegregation funds?

It is tremendously abhorrent that TUSD has removed all vestiges of segregation/ discrimination, purporting that all issues around discrimination against black and brown students, plus others from historically ethnic marginalized and disenfranchised backgrounds have been eliminated, which has not been the case. There must be accountability and transparency with the communities involved in the district. What has been recorded and documented in court records by TUSD does not accurately reflect or amount to the reality of what is occurring in schools across the district such as academic achievement, transportation, culturally relevant pedagogy, integration, discipline, student conduct and behavior and other critical elements that is noted in the desegregation court order.

I stand firmly in the belief that the Board must create a process that will allow neutral oversight of its ongoing desegregation efforts, for the established post unitary status plan in the district. A leading example of this

could result in the form of a community committee composed of invested individuals within TUSD who will have the authority to request / obtain the information and other critical data needed to conduct analyses to prepare reports and report their findings directly to the Governing Board. This will also include how the district could appropriately use the desegregation funds if it plans to continue the desegregation efforts through its post-unitary status plan. This would be the type of oversight that is needed, as well as articulated in the post unitary plan, which would require a public hearing to address TUSD's budget of over \$64 million dollars, each year. This is my stance and what would be recommended, as well as a firm actionable item, for the board to consider, moving forward.

SUBS:

What do you know about TUSD's history with subs, and do you believe they are treated fairly?

If you are elected, what do you think you as a board member could or should do to improve TUSD's relationship with subs?

Although my time in the district has been short, I have seen a lot that has been going on, especially with our subs in the district.

It should go without mentioning that our substitute teachers deserve better. They need to be prioritized and treated a lot better than the district should have. When elected, I will ensure our existing substitute teachers are heard, supported, get the proper care, attention, protection as well as the necessities needed to sustain themselves in their line of work. From the last few board meetings I have attended, I have seen and listened to numerous substitute teachers expressing and articulating their grievances to the governing board about their concerns with their current work relationship with the district and how to make it better than it was before, specifically, how the district should compensate them more equitably, in comparison to the other substitute teachers in other districts. Most recently, for example, a concerned substitute teacher presented and pointed to the board from the call to the audience in the 9/20/2022 meeting that changing the Arizona State Retirement System compensation availability should have been voted on by the board and needed their buy-in (not from the superintendent) which was not done, therefore, the status of the ASRS for substitute teachers within TUSD is not looking too promising or rather questionable. We must work more closely with our existing substitute teachers if we are to ever retain them in the district for the substitution needs of the teachers that are away outside of the classrooms, especially for extended periods of time.

Though there has been progress made, it has been slow and more progress is needed now more than ever. Speaking to the existing teacher vacancies that are present within the district, long-term substitute teachers are needed now more than ever while the district is strategically planning and finding solutions needed to seek out and hire qualified teachers to fill these vacancies. In the meantime, we need to work more closely with our substitute teachers as they are the ones currently feeling the slots until teachers are hired in the district to fill them. Substitute teachers have been and are TUSD employees, employed by the district working in TUSD schools. I fully support the model that identified our substitute teachers as TUSD employees and it was

indeed a positive one. Many changes took place since then and as I understand it now there will be a lot more details needed to return to such a model, I believe much more effort needs to be made if we are to ever resolve the existing issues that our substitute teachers are experiencing, which is preventing them from doing the work we need them to do in the classrooms until the “teacher shortage” situation is sorted out.

SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP:

If you become a school board member, what will your relationship with the Superintendent be? With the staff, teachers and community?

When elected as a School Board member for TUSD, my relationship with (any) sitting superintendent now and in the future will be the same for the staff, teachers/educators, and our school community members: held with respect in the utmost regard, as well as cordial and professional, especially as a governing policy maker and supervisor to the superintendent, representing the board. The major difference between my relationship with the superintendent and the school communities across TUSD is that I intend to hold the superintendent accountable for the actions and decisions made, especially without the Governing Board weighing in on such vital decisions made (a prime, real life example of this was the decision made about the DCAP program in one of the governing board meetings made this past June). I have no remote interest in becoming friends or even a political ally to the sitting superintendent, in which past governing board members have done. Additionally, I want to be accessible to all our school community members and answer their inquiries, as well as their concerns, issues and other grievances that they may have or want to express. Just like with any public servant, I think it is essential for any governing board member to be accessible to those they serve on *and* off the board.

DISTRICT ISSUES:

It is easy to be a cheerleader for TUSD, harder to shine a light on the problems. How are you personally committed to focusing on the areas that need addressing and making TUSD a better district? How will you handle and balance both of these roles?

It is vital, as well as it is crucial, to keep in mind what the main role of an elected school governing board member is. They are innovative, forward thinking individuals with the power to make meaningful and impactful change that will have a direct impact on the district’s constituency, which are the teachers/educators, staff, families, and ultimately, the students. They will be fully entrusted by the voters to ensure that they prioritize the values, beliefs, and needs of the community within the Tucson Unified School District. I am personally committed to ensuring that teachers and students across the district are heard and have what they need in order to strive and achieve their goals to become utmost successful within their academic journeys and throughout life, beyond graduation. This personal commitment ultimately stems from me working in TUSD as a former school library

assistant. I have witnessed such deficiencies in the library's collection, let alone in the district itself from previous conversations had with my former educator colleagues, in addition to witnessing the lack of support my former school administrators were receiving has greatly prompted me in having to expose, highlight and address the pressing issues in areas that need dire and immediate attention, at the district level. At the same time, being a cheerleader who can be proud and prideful of the efforts made, triumphs accomplished and successes achieved in TUSD for our communities from working hard to emphasizing and exposing those same deficiencies is a huge privilege and something I will not take lightly nor for granted. Being both a critic and a cheerleader *is* possible, however, also leading with grace, diplomacy as a professional will be maintained and at the helm of my tenure as an elected school Governing Board member proudly serving TUSD.

HR AUDIT:

As a member of the Governing Board, you will be responsible for hiring and /or approving the hiring of district administration? How will you overcome some of the deficiencies exposed by the HR audit in order to hire qualified staff and reduce the turnover rate?

As a board member, in order for me to overcome some of the deficiencies exposed by the HR audit in order to hire qualified staff and reduce turnover rate is to acknowledge what exactly are those deficiencies and explore them in-depth in order to hire qualified staff.

There are multiple valid reasons why such audits like HR audits, specifically, are done in the first place. It is to expose and highlight issues that exist. They are used to highlight the very deficiencies that prevent the district from hiring qualified leaders as well as attempt to tackle the salary shortage prominent in the district, amongst other underlying issues presented to the governing board in the past. Such deficiencies, specifically, stem from HR itself which would be the first thing I would examine once I'm elected as governing board member is to understand why these deficiencies exist in the first place. It must adhere to the professional, legal, and ethical hiring and employment practices, which has not been practiced from learning about the few last HR directors that have occupied the position within the district. In order for such a position to be filled long-term, the district must acknowledge that those hired in such an executive position will need to come in with the experience and expertise in order to do the job. It is a huge disservice to TUSD to continue to hire individuals without the expertise, knowledge AND experience necessary to be one of the successful leaders needed in TUSD.

ACCESSIBILITY:

How do you propose to increase/ensure board accessibility and accountability to all stakeholders including parents, students and employees?

To increase trust with the board, as well as accessibility and accountability to all stakeholders to the rest of our school communities in TUSD, I will make myself available to the greatest extent possible, however, I will go and guard against any micromanagement effort made or imposed, in respect to one's boundaries. I will also encourage my governing board peers to conduct more forums in order to obtain critical, but helpful feedback from our school community constituents.

Would you consider Call to the Audience (which is where members of the community can address the board at meetings) to be one of the valuable methods?

Having a call to the audience at the board meetings are effective and invaluable tools in order for the public to make their voices present and heard, loud and very clear when expressing their grievances to the board.

DISCIPLINE/TARDINESS:

There are no consequences for students who are repeatedly tardy. Do you believe that there should or should not be? Are you aware of the effects that tardiness has, and will have on other behaviors?

Despite a student's consistent tardiness to school and there are no set consequences for this, I would still argue that it is better that the student and/or parents still made an effort to get them to school and to class late than never, however, it still poses a problem. Problematic in the sense that it is not good behavior that is modeled nor demonstrated to their teachers, classmates and to the rest of their school community members. I would propose if there were a number of students facing this problem within the schools now across the district (concurrently or have in the past), the school can take immediate action by investigating and learning to understand the reasons why students are consistently arriving to school late (if issues are tied to family matters, circumstances beyond the family's control). There can be preventive barriers in place to keep students from missing part of their day in school and could affect their overall performance, which would ultimately lead to them failing in their studies. Board members, as well as the rest of the school constituency, must be made fully aware and have an understanding how the effects of tardiness will have on the rest of the students (lack of respect to their teachers, instruction, their academic performance in school, their peers and to themselves) and must take action. I don't believe there should be any consequences for students arriving late to class, however, it would not also make it permissible for them nor excuse their late arrival to school. If the school community is fully invested in our students' success, we must attempt to do everything we can to prevent them from failing. We have to be aware of how this type of behavior is affecting not only the students themselves but also their surrounding community, and by working with teachers and

staff on issues that affect the students AND teachers, we can easily prevent current and future students from being habitually late to school and to their class(es). Intermediary (even holistic) measures can be instituted, via check-ins on students (done other than teachers) who are consistently late to school. Resolving these issues will prevent the students from having to face such consequences or disciplinary actions for their lateness. The solutions can be expanded upon if teachers have already exhausted options to remedy and/or reconcile this issue. We must remember that it truly does take a village when it comes to our students.