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Questions for website:

ACHIEVEMENT GAP:

TUSD shows low achievement levels in many important areas. Where do you believe this comes from? How would you, as a board member, try to both improve overall achievement and reduce the imbalance between the highest and the lowest achievers? As a part of this issue, do you believe that all seniors who graduate are academically ready when they graduate? Please explain.

The low achievement levels are partly due to the ongoing and increased attacks and purposeful under-resourcing of public education that is now worse due to the impact of the pandemic. It is not unique to TUSD and something that we are facing across public education and one of the reasons that people choose to opt out of public school. This has been a longtime struggle and the gap has grown most profoundly in our most marginalized populations.

I think supporting our teachers to do the work they are hired to do is a great place to start? that benefits everyone. Students get the opportunity to learn in ways that might engage them better and therefore interest them to become engaged and inspired learners. Resourcing schools in ways that are equitable and not based on distribution of resources that are the same for everyone would help to support students, teachers and staff in ways that would actually benefit them. The learning loss can't be addressed by everyone getting the same school supplies and it can be made different if people start from a place of having their basic needs met.

Minimizing the number of standardized tests and time spent on them could be another way to better serve our learners. Increasing pedagogical options for families and students to choose from could also be helpful in better serving our community. Learning has become a one size fits all in a lot of our schools and that doesn't set anyone up for success, not teachers and certainly not learners.

As a person who works with undergrads at the college level I do find that critical thinking skills along with longtime learning experiences that aren't inspiring have done a disservice to our youth. I do think this is one thing that our high school graduates are struggling with because they aren't always given the opportunity to develop those skills.

Addressing loss and gaps will take time. We need to begin to address it in ways that actually serve our community.

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?

Given the closure of the Unitary Status plan I think that the board and district need to take on this work as part of the overall framework of the district. The closing of the case does not mean that the work is complete or necessarily addressed because it is not an end point. The work to always engage in ways to make public schools and the district more equitable across the board is endless work and should always be how we lead; from hiring practices, distribution of resources to the curriculum that we choose.

It is the responsibility of the Board to always do this work and constantly learn/change so that the district is serving the community and addressing inequity within the district. This includes input from all stakeholders and utilized to inform policy and budget, especially in the case of desegregation funds. I do think it is important although the court is no longer involved to also build in ways to have outside audits for accountability, transparency and measures that are not always guided by internal decision makers.

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 think you as a board member could or should do to improve TUSD's relationship with subs?

I know that subs like teachers have not been paid a livable wage nor have they been supported in their roles and given the tools, information and resources to show up in the best way for the work that they do. Given the impact of the pandemic, subs are necessary more than ever to be in the classrooms and should be supported in their roles just like contracted teachers. I would like to see subs have the opportunity to be paid fairly for their labor and be given access to professional development that supports their work in the classrooms. I do think that the board's work is to repair and evolve with the needs of all teachers in the district and that includes subs.

SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP:

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

It is the responsibility of school board members to have a solid working relationship with everyone who is part of the school district and the larger community. In regards to the Superintendent and being a board member, I do think it's important to be able to communicate clearly and effectively so that we can collaborate on advocating and addressing the things that serve TUSD. That doesn't always mean we will agree and that can be done in ways that are constructive.

Board member's relationships with staff, teachers and the larger community is different in that we want to be able to listen and support what serves them. School board works to represent the best interest of the community and that administration understands that and has the support to do that work and uphold it.

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?

I work closely with districts and teachers and often hear the critique of many of the struggles and issues that everyone is facing/interacting with. Part of the reason I want a seat on the governing board is to help engage and address pay, teacher shortage, hiring practices, family experiences just to name a few. Having engaged in some of this work already, I want to expand my role in working more directly with the district. I want TUSD to be a district that families and staff come to first while supporting the ones that are already there with reasons to stay.

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?

An HR audit would be helpful to create easier accessibility by highlighting where the holes and issues are followed by addressing them and doing this routinely and systematically will be helpful in the long haul. We have to be able to be user friendly to the community.

ACCESSIBILITY:

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

Call to audience is an incredibly important and informative practice that helps the board and greater community to hear and learn what people are experiencing and wanting in the district. Historically there have been other practices that supported school and community input through things like site council that have been somewhat diluted so voice, asks and access to administration are not as likely to get heard/considered.

I think increasing the ways that community members get to share their concerns and wants from the district is really important along with a process to not only listen but participate in addressing/repairing the issue. Listening and awareness are important first steps and we have to be able to be responsible and accountable to a process that does more than listen.

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?

TUSD should move to a non-punitive and transformative model when it comes to addressing concerns and behavior within the district. While it is important to have clear guidelines and expectations of students as far as time and responsibility and what the result or consequences when not met are, I do think it is important to be informed as to what is causing the tardiness. We have to be able to understand what the issue is before addressing the outcome.

Tardiness is disruptive to the individual and to the work of the classroom in ways that don't benefit how we are in community. We can have systems in place that address what happens when someone is unable to meet the expectations and support them if there is the need.