

**Minutes of  
Regular Meeting of the Governing Board  
For Tracy Unified School District  
Held on Tuesday, September 22, 2020**

As per Executive Order N-29-20 from Governor Newsom, the Tracy Unified School District Board of Education meetings moved to a virtual/teleconferencing environment using Microsoft Teams. The Governor's executive order on March 12, 2020, waived the requirement for a majority of board members to physically participate in a public board meeting at the same location. (Public Comments were available by online submission).

- 6:30 PM:** 1-3. President Pekari called the meeting to order and adjourned to closed session.
- Roll Call:** 4. Board: S. Abercrombie, J. Costa, B. Pekari, J. Silcox, L. Souza;  
A. Alexander (arrived late to closed session)  
Absent: S. Kaur  
Staff: B. Stephens, R. Pecot, T. Jalique, J. Stocking, B. Etcheverry
- 7:05 PM** 5. President Pekari called the Tracy Unified School District Board of Education to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Closed Session:** 6a Report Out of Action Taken on Approve Settlement Agreement  
**Action:** No action was taken.  
6b Report Out of Action Taken on Release Probationary Classified Employee #UCL-357 Special Education Para  
**Action:** **Vote:** Yes-5; No-0; Absent-2(Alexander, Kaur)
- Minutes:** 7. **Approve Regular Minutes of September 8, 2020.**  
**Action:** Abercrombie, Souza. **Vote:** Yes-6 ; No-; Absent-1(Kaur)
- Visitors:** None. Meeting was live streamed via Microsoft Teams.
- Student Rep Reports:** 8. These presentations were moved down the agenda to Item 11 during Hearing of Delegations:  
**Tracy High:** Sophia Alejandre appeared by video and reported that March 13, 2020 will be a day to remember when the schools shut down. She commented that this year has been a year to remember and "virtual" is a very familiar word. Said good by to class of 2020 with drive through graduation on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Cars were decked out in green and gold while teachers and admin cheered them on. In addition, admin also held Tracy High's first virtual graduation on August 1<sup>st</sup> and all made the best of it. Leadership Class held a virtual spirit week on Instagram called "Board in the Doghouse" and had students post to their activities and spirit wear to their personal Instagram while tagging their school. They welcomed the incoming Freshman to high school at a virtual orientation on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Link Crew reached out to the new students and parents. There was a virtual tour of the school with information posted on their website. The first event of the school year was the virtual club rush week. Students were given links and watched various

videos from clubs. They also had a virtual back-to-school rally. The theme was “Incredibles” and students shared their personal hero on Instagram. Leadership also announced that the 2020-21 Homecoming theme will be Bulldogs in their natural habitats. Students haven’t skipped a beat and will continue to thrive!

**West High:** Kaitlyn Durant and Gianna Uribe appeared by video and reported that over the summer students worked together to make a video welcoming Freshman and showing them around campus. The tradition of the red carpet was changed from the first day of school to the day when Freshman were picking up their books for the new year. They had students send in videos of them thanking teachers for their extra work. They also made posters and put them up around school weekly. Teachers and staff were provided a treat of root beer floats. Videos were made to promote clubs. They had to say “Goodbye” to ISET’s David Nguyen who took another position, and who is also an alumnus of West High. Suicide awareness is a big issue with this generation, and they continue to share tips and resources for those that need help.

**Kimball High:** Julian Steffens appeared by video. Students began the year with kickoff week and there was a lot of student participation. Staff received donuts as a thank you for all of their hard work in distance learning. Virtual club rush started last week with videos on the clubs to encourage student participation. These can be viewed on their website. They are participating in a community service project with the Tracy Homeless organization. They are putting kits together with essential hygiene & health items for the new shelter in Tracy.

**Alternative Ed Campus:** Elijah McKinney appeared by video. He showed a tour of the campus including the new entrance to Stein High and the DR Community Day School. Students and staff are doing their part to stop the spread of COVID19 including using hand sanitizer, health questionnaires and social distancing. He showed where the programs on campus are located including the Young Adult Program, Home Hospital, Independent Study Program, DR Community Day School and Stein High. If there are any questions, please refer to the website.

**Recognition & Presentations:**

9. None.

**Information & Discussion Items:**

10.1 **Administrative & Business Services:** None.

10.2 **Educational Services:**

10.2.1 Receive Report on 2020-2021 Special Education Updates  
Director of Special Ed, Mr. Sean Brown, gave a report on the Special Education Department. He has been in education for 23 years, 21 year in special education. He has been a teacher, program administrator, TOSA and principal. We have over 2,000 students in special ed./ He reviewed the various staff members in the department. Key this year is positive relationships and communication. He will focus on the lack of continuum of special ed services for students, customer service: being

positive and consistent; and Distance Learning. He is shifting program specialist to specific sites and programs to more readily address concerns and mitigate issues. He has also planned several days of staff trainings throughout the year for various positions in the department. There will be biweekly communication to all SPED staff on policies, IEPs and assessments. He will continually assess and evaluate SPED programs and services; attend recruitment fairs and trainings; establish and maintain strong relationships with local colleges and county officials and establish weekly and/or monthly department meetings with all special education stakeholders to discuss protocols for staff, emergent issues, budget, legal news, hot cases and support to staff and administrations. It will be hard work, but they will do it together with teamwork.

## **Hearing of Delegations**

**11.** Dr. Stephens commented that we board has the opportunity to vote and support the filing of the waiver. Everyone needs to realize that there is a big difference between applying for the waiver and reopening the schools. Just filing the waiver does not mean we are opening the school immediately. We want to put student and staff safety first. When you hear comments made, please be clear that there is no direct relationship with filing the waiver and opening the schools, they are two separate things. We do not have a date to reopen. We have filed this for the maximum amount of flexibility so that the district can be ready to move forward. The state numbers came out for our county and they are moving in the right direction. If those numbers continue to drop, we will move from the purple to red zone in 2 more weeks. Once we are at red, all grades would be allowed to open. The waiver for us would be for the K-5 grades. If we become red, then all grades would be able to re-open and we would most likely open in a hybrid model. By the time we get results from the waiver application, conditions could change, and the outcome of the waiver would no longer be relevant. Things can move quickly. Approving the waiver does not mean the schools are reopening.

**8. Student Rep Reports** (This was moved down the agenda and heard here).

### **Hearing of Delegations comments:**

Karen Carpenter: I have a daughter who attends Tracy High and feel very strongly that she needs to be back in a classroom setting. I am associated with a great many parents of seniors who share my feelings. We believe that it is important not only for educational value, but for their mental health as well. Please re-open TUSD high schools!!

Alexandra Manzo: To whom it may concern, my name is Alexandra, and I am a Tracy High School alumni, graduating class of 2020, and I have lived in Tracy for about eight years. Considering that I came to Tracy a little before fifth grade, I've had a lot of time to acclimate to and grow with the Tracy environment. With this being said, Tracy has grown to be a place of stability and comfort. Unfortunately, as a result of these unprecedented times, that stability and comfort have been in question, personally, for the last six months.

As a former student, I recognize that I no longer attend Tracy High School.

Nonetheless, many of my best friends still attend this school, and it is my intention

to keep all of my friends safe. I am sure that you, whether you be a parent, teacher, child, significant other, or any other tidal, would also agree with me in that you want those closest to you to be free from harm. And, as you all know, COVID-19 has been the thing threatening this safety that we all so wish to maintain.

Now, though some people listening to this may find here my declaration and consider a particular conglomerate of people to be to blame, I would have to agree... us. We are to blame. Not those in which this virus came. We, in Tracy and the US as a whole, have been neglecting our duties to each other's safety. We have been placing our selfish desires to remain normal over the desires of those less fortunate than us, who simply wish to live.

This is what I want all of us to remember. Though some may see social distancing and mask-wearing as unnecessary and, at large, an inconvenience, it is what is necessary to keep everyone safe. It is my hope that you would all agree that, in the grand scheme of things, distancing means so little when life means so much. That is why school needs to remain virtual.

Many of you probably have children. How would you feel if your child left home to go to school and returned with a deadly virus? As harsh, dark, and concerning that sounds, this is our reality. I am not saying that you should live your lives thinking that something is constantly out to get you. But, we need to shift our mindset to this for the time being because, well, there is something... a deadly virus with no scientifically proven cure. And, though I may not have children yet, if I were a parent, my child's safety would be a priority. I would much rather have my child learning without contact from others during a pandemic than to see my child in a hospital bed.

So, it is with my sincere hope that you consider everything to which I have stated. Though I may be a recent graduate, I am not a teen who has no grasp on our reality. I am full equipped with the ability to see that safety, consideration and distance are a priority during these times. Especially for students. With all due respect, it is mine and many others' belief that, virtual learning is what is required for these students to maintain their safety and their families' safety.

Moreover, I am very grateful to have brought forth my opinions to the board.

Thank you very much for allowing me to voice my concerns and I hope you all have an excellent, thought provoking rest of your evening.

Brandi Hoffert: Has TUSD already purchased thermometer's for each school site? How many will each site have? How many staff will be performing the checks in the am?

Sonali Thatte: Hello Board Members,

I would like to ask you all to please make an informed decision about approving the application for a waiver for the reopening of schools K-5. Now, CDC has finally accepted that COVID-19 can also be airborne which also means it is highly contagious.

I don't know if it's due to political pressure or what , TUSD is even thinking of applying for a waiver but our kids are at risk.

No matter whether the kids are in hybrid or full time they are getting exposed and that is worrisome.

I request you all to think about it and then make a decision.

Zoe Mears: Dear TUSD School Board,

I would like to begin this letter by thanking you for making the hard decisions. We live in a time where ideas are polarized on how to approach this world crisis. These times are tough for all involved—parents, students, and teachers. No matter the decision you make there are going to be some upset people. I hope that you will set aside the popularity of your decision making, and keep in mind the well-being of all involved. The purpose of this letter is to share my point of view as a student and child of a teacher within our school district.

My name is Zoe Mears. I am in the 10th grade at Tracy High School and have been surprised by the many changes that have happened in our world over such a short period of time. Although I wish that this would pass, I have found the best way to move forward is to embrace the change and allow our community to heal. Online learning using Teams was intimidating at first, but I have found that it is something that I have learned quickly. Even though it is not ideal, it is our best option right now.

I thank you for giving us the 100% virtual option and I would like to request that you would consider keeping us online 100% through the end of the semester. Tenth grade and the advanced courses were hard to adjust to in this mode of instruction, but I am now getting into the groove. I feel that switching the mode of instruction mid-semester would be a hard transition to us students, not to mention the teachers and parents. I hope that you would consider the impact of the juggling around of our schedules and the impact of these unnecessary changes. As a high school student, a return during the first week of November would place me in the running stretch of my semester and only give me 12 in-person lessons per class before we leave for the Winter Break. Would it not make sense to allow us to at least finish out the semester that we have grown accustomed to without any disruption? I would like for you to decide on this so that students do not have to wonder or worry about it. Please, just allow us to focus on the learning that we have already begun.

In addition to my plea to keep us in the same mode of educational learning each semester, I would like for you to please consider the current climate of COVID-19 in our area. Yes, we are looking better than the months of July and August, but we are also still fighting the good fight to get this pandemic under control. According to San Joaquin County Emergency Alert Notification System (SJREADY), on Monday, September 21st, we showed a 15% increase in COVID positive patients requiring hospitalizations from just Friday, September 18th. At that time, San Joaquin County's percentage of occupied licensed adult ICU beds were at 100%. Today, the SJREADY messaging system sent out a notification stating that 20,019 cases and 421 deaths have now been recorded in San Joaquin County. That is 178 more cases than recorded yesterday, and 6 more deaths. Why would we tempt fate and subject ourselves to the possibility of contracting this virus? Students will not keep their distance and they will not keep their masks on proper throughout their time on campus. I have an autoimmune disorder and I cannot be subjected to picking this virus up; I am not alone in this dilemma. If I contracted this virus and brought it home to my parents or grandparents, how would I feel? How would you feel? Both of my parents and my grandparents are high risk. Could you imagine if they were hospitalized and we could not be with each other? It just seems silly to me to take these types of risks when it is unnecessary. It is so much simpler to just hone this new virtual learning process which we have already begun. I have been taught throughout my life to finish what I have started and not to run when the going gets tough. I am thankfully starting to adapt and feel good about the fact that

I am doing my part to slow the spread of COVID-19. Please, TUSD do your part as well.

In conclusion, I feel that returning us back to school in haste, would be unsafe and premature. This is a possibly life-threatening decision you are making. All it takes is one outbreak – one outbreak and we are back to where we started.

Thank you again for your time and considering my letter of appeal.

**Public Hearing:**

**12.1 Administrative & Business Services:** None.

**12.2 Educational Services:**

**12.2.1** Conduct a Public Hearing to Determine Sufficiency of Textbooks and Instructional Materials for the Students of Tracy Unified School District

Opened public hearing at 7:51 p.m.

No comments were received.

Closed public hearing at 7:52 p.m.

**Consent Items:**

**13. Board approval of any agenda item requiring insurance is conditioned upon acceptance of appropriate insurance accepted by Tracy Unified.**

**Action:** Souza, Costa. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-0; Absent-1(Kaur)

**13.1 Administrative & Business Services:**

**13.1.1** Approve Accounts Payable Warrants (August 2020)  
(Separate Cover Item)

**13.1.2** Accept the Generous Donations from the Various Individuals, Businesses, and School Site Parent Teacher Associations Listed Herein with Thanks and Appreciation from the Staff and Students of the Tracy Unified School District

**13.1.3** Accept and Review the Status of School Connected Organization/Booster Club Applications Submitted for the 2020/21 School Year

**13.1.4** Approve Payroll Reports (August 2020)

**13.1.5** Approve Revolving Cash Fund Reports (August 2020)

**13.1.6** Ratify Routine Agreements, Expenditures and Notice of Completions Which Meet the Criteria for Placement on the Consent Agenda

**13.2 Educational Services:**

**13.2.1** Approve Agreement for Special Contract Services for Valley Community Counseling Services for the 2020 - 2021 School Year

**13.3 Human Resources:**

**13.3.1** Accept the Resignations/Retirements/Leaves of Absence for Certificated, Classified and/or Management Employees

**13.3.2** Approve Classified, Certificated and/or Management Employment

**13.3.3** Approve Agreement with Stanislaus County Office of Education for Administrators Working to Obtain Their Clear Administrative Credential

**Action Items:**

**14.1 Administrative & Business Services:** None.

## **14.2 Educational Services:**

**14.2.1** Approve the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year (Separate Cover Item)

**Action:** Souza, Abercrombie. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-0; Absent-1(Kaur)

**14.2.2** Approve Tracy Independent Study Charter School (TISCS) Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year (Separate Cover Item)

**Action:** Costa, Souza. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-0; Absent-1(Kaur)

**14.2.3** Approve Adoption of Instructional Materials from Edgenuity for Physics and Chemistry at Stein High School

**Action:** Souza, Costa. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-0; Absent-1(Kaur)

**14.2.4** Adopt Resolution Number 20-07: A Declaration that there are Sufficient Textbooks and Instructional Materials for the Students of Tracy Unified School District

**Action:** Alexander, Costa. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-0; Absent-1(Kaur)

**14.2.5** Approve TUSD Elementary Schools Reopening Plan (Separate Cover Item)

**Action:** Costa, Alexander. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-0; Absent-1(Kaur)

## **14.3 Human Resources:**

**14.3.1** Adopt Resolution 20-06, Authorizing the Elimination of Certain Classified Positions Due to Lack of Work or Lack of Funds

**Action:** Souza, Costa. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-0; Absent-1(Kaur)

## **Board Reports:**

Trustee Abercrombie reiterates what Dr. Stephens said. We are taking a conservative approach in reopening and are in no rush. We want to make sure the safety of our students and staff are at the forefront and will do this correctly. Trustee Silcox also agrees. He talks weekly with district leadership. Since last March we have been following the county health department and will continue to do so. Distance learning has been going well. It is not the most ideal, but much better than what we thought it would be. Moving forward, he is confident with whatever decision is made in the next few months, everyone will be doing their best to make it work. As a parent, it is working for his children. They want to go back to school too. We are confident that those making the decisions are doing the right thing with all of the facts. Trustee Souza thanked the high school reps for their reports. She was excited to hear them again. She also thanked Sean Brown for his report. She is excited to see the changes we have going on. She works with a lot of SPED kids and it is hard right now. We need to get them back to school. The waiver is just for us to have that opportunity. We are moving in the right direction. Once we are in red it is our responsibility to open back up. We are following the science. Mental health for our students is important. In public, she sees more kids following directions than adults. She knows that our superintendent and cabinet will not jump the gun on this. We will do this slowly and responsibly. Trustee Costa agrees with what has been said. She also thanked the administrators and especially Julie Stocking for what she wrote and put together. It took a lot of time and thought she and her team did an amazing job. If parents have read that, hopefully it will give them some comfort in knowing that we do give the time and thought to keep all safe. She encourages the parents of our students to take advantage of our free lunches. The lunch ladies spend a lot of time putting those together and you can pick up food from 1130-12:30 p.m. Trustee Alexander

commented on the passing of Justice Ruth Ginsburg and that he will miss her on the Supreme Court. Trustee Pekari commented that safety is imperative to all of us. The waiver gives us this option and we will not move quickly. There is so much behind the scenes that is going into this. He has enjoyed hearing from the students and our sites.

**Superintendent  
Report:**

Dr. Stephens expressed his appreciation for the hard work that our teachers, classified and admin are doing. They have exceeded his expectations. It is a difficult task and wanted to be sure to thank them publicly.

**Adjourn: 8:05 pm**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date