

**Minutes of  
Regular Meeting of the Governing Board  
For Tracy Unified School District  
Held on Tuesday, February 23, 2021**

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. The intent is not to limit public participation, but rather to protect public health by following the Governor's Stay at Home executive order. (Public Comments were available by online submission).

**5:30 PM:** 1-3. President Kaur called the meeting to order and adjourned to closed session.

**Roll Call:** 4. Board: S. Abercrombie, A. Alexander, A. Blanco, N. Erskine, Z. Hoffert, S. Kaur, L. Souza  
Staff: B. Stephens, R. Pecot, T. Jalique, J. Stocking, B. Etcheverry

**7:00 PM** 5. President Kaur 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 Reinstatements: AR#20-21/#10,  
3.2.1 AR#20-21/#11  
**Action:** **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0. \_\_\_\_

6b Report Out of Action Taken on PE Exemptions: WHS#10345138  
3.2.2  
**Action:** **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.

6c Report Out of Action Taken on Consider Unpaid Leave of Absence  
3.3.1 for Classified Employee #UCL-396, Pursuant to Article XXIII  
**Action:** **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.

6d Report Out of Action Taken on Approve the Non-Reelection of  
3.3.2 Probationary Certificated Employees: #UC-1228, #UC-1229, #UC-1230, #UC-1231, #UC-1232, #UC-1233, #UC-1234, #UC-1235, #UC-1236, #UC-1237, #UC-1239, and #UC-1240. Pursuant to Education Code Section 44929.21(b)  
**Action:** As amended. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-1(Hoffert)

6e Report Out of Action Taken on Approve Resolution 20-14,  
3.3.3 Authorizing the Release of Temporary Certificated Employees for the 2021-2022 School Year Pursuant to the Terms of the Individual Temporary Contracts as Supported by Education Code Sections 44920 and 44954  
**Action:** Erskine, Souza. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-1(Hoffert)

**Minutes:** 7. **Approve Regular Minutes of February 9, 2021.**  
**Action:** Abercrombie, Erskine. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.

**Visitors:** None. Meeting was live streamed via Microsoft Teams.

**Student Rep  
Reports:**

8. None.

**Recognition &  
Presentations:**

**9.1 Hirsch Elementary School Presentation**

A video was submitted by principal of Hirsch, Catey Nasello. Reviewed accomplishments this past year. This year focus was on attendance and participating to engage all students in Distance Learning. They continued with rigorous instruction and STEM implementation. Materials distribution has been essential. Professional development has been different this year as they have been adapting to this new form of learning. STEM implementation is going well, and she showed their notebooks and pictures of projects they are working on in various grad levels. She showed videos of students explaining their STEM projects.

**9.2 Tracy High School Presentation**

A video was submitted by principal of Tracy High School, Jason Noll. This Bulldog TV video included Mr. Noll commenting that even though they have been on Distance Learning, students have done some amazing things. Various pictures of students and staffs were shown including distance learning classes and videos of Ms. Crowley and Ms. Corona talking about what subjects they are teaching and how they are using Microsoft Teams. They are looking forward to having students back in the classroom. They also showed a student panel on Team discussing various issues that students are faced with. There are a variety of mental and emotional support available. Clips of fun student activities were shown including extracurricular activities, counselor's virtual wellness check-in, virtual spirit days, scavenger hunt and a virtual rally with The Incredibles! A video of a baton twirler and a message to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer. It also showed clips of past activities before COVID. Cheer practice Sports are opening 5 start class competition to vote for senior... club rush... feast.... Drama club virtual performance....

**Information &  
Discussion Items:**

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

**10.2 Educational Services:**

**10.2.1** Receive Report on San Joaquin County COVID19

Associate Superintendent of Educational Services, Julianna Stocking, presented a report on the current COVID update. We have been making substantial progress as a state. Our county is still in the purple tier but we are at 15.2 cases per 100,000 with a 4.2 positivity rate, which shows a significant decline in cases.

**Hearing of  
Delegations**

**11. The following comments were submitted online and read:**

**Jennifer Hernandez:** School is the most essential business and as a whole, our country has dropped the ball on the education of our future. It is time to reopen all TUSD schools. Younger students are missing out on important social skills. Upper graders are missing out on a proper education and many if not most have

developed some form of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem over the last year. Our kids have missed out on a full year of in person learning. They have not seen their peers, teachers, or counselors in person. My high school students sit in front of their computers from 7:50am until almost 1am each day. They barely have time to enjoy a snack or meal. Much less time to relax. I understand they carry heavy academic work loads but I'm afraid virtual learning has facilitated a disconnect from teacher to students. Teachers can not see how stressed or hard students are working. Students do not feel they can go to the teachers for help. Teachers are missing recognizing warning signs that a child may be having a rough time because they do not actually "see" them. Schools need to open. I'm angered that there is a tier system that won't allow an immediate opening of schools; even though several schools within our city and county are currently open. Parents who choose not to send their students in person will still have the virtual learning and will not be impacted by this reopening. I am asking the board to open schools as soon as possible, allowing those students who need to be in school in person to attend.

**Danielle Grover:** Good evening school board members, My name is Daniel Grover. I am a junior at West High School, and I am writing this email to address the current situation from a student's perspective. A couple weeks from now will mark a year since TUSD closed its schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, we as a student body have had to deal with navigating an entirely new learning environment, new technology, and a whole host of other issues, challenges, and obstacles that come with distance learning. Nearly four school quarters later, we're still logging onto video calls every day in order to continue to try to receive an education. This long period of uninterrupted online learning has had serious negative side effects for both teachers and students alike.

We need to go back to some semblance of in-person learning as soon as possible. I urge you as a board to take the steps necessary to get us back in school as soon as possible. I understand that many of the requirements and rules that need to be met and followed are out of your hands, as they are set by the county and the state, but I implore you to do what you can. For the sake of students across the district, we need to get back to in-person learning. It's hard to communicate the feelings that many students are feeling right now about distance learning. Deprived of the social interaction, extracurricular activities, and other elements of the traditional high school experience, students are left with what many see as the least enjoyable part of going to school - the work. Our days are largely consumed by classes, homework, tests, studying, and other tasks relating solely to the educational parts of school. School days are becoming very rote very quickly - they became rote for many only a few weeks in. Without seeing friends, really interacting with teachers, getting better breaks, and being able to look forward to sports practices, club meetings, school events, and just the potential every day has to be unique, all of the appeal has been sucked out of school. Getting up just to sit at a desk every day without being able to see or talk to my friends has become very difficult. I'm not alone, either - many of my friends feel the same way. Many students are not understanding class content, drowning in assignments that they cannot keep up with, and dealing with the constant feeling that they're missing out on some of the most important and fun years of their lives. The reasons that many of us get up in

the morning have been taken from us.

I understand that we cannot just ignore the pandemic when considering a return to school. Proper precautions will need to be taken in order for us to return to and remain in at-school learning. Our county's COVID cases are decreasing, but they can easily go up again if we're not careful. We would need to start with a hybrid schedule, require students to wear masks, enforce social distancing, and reduce the number of students on campus at a time. A hybrid schedule would also require infrastructure for teachers to teach both in-class and at home, so the technology they've used for distance learning would need to be used still. Making a solid and safe plan for a return to in-person school is daunting, but it is critical to the mental health of thousands of students in Tracy.

Distance learning is also widening the gap between the higher and lower socio-economic classes in Tracy. Families like my own that have reliable WiFi, devices for every student, and dedicated space for every student to work have managed distance learning rather well, from a technical standpoint at least. Rarely have we needed to share devices, deal with faulty Internet connections, or be failed by our technology. However, this is not the case for many families in Tracy. Many students have WiFi unable to adequately connect to a video call, if they have it at all, and many families do not have a parent at home to help oversee distance learning or enforce attendance. These students have no other choice than to essentially just check out of education. This would not have been a huge deal had the pandemic only lasted for a few months, but we're at nearly a year now - a year of missed education only serves to widen the education gap between these families.

I hope you take this into consideration when making your vote to return to school. For the sake of the entire district, I hope you do everything you can as a board to get us back on campus as soon as possible. Thank you for your time,

**Carrie Grover:** Dear School Board Members:

If you vote for option 3 you are essentially declaring that you know better than the CDC, the county, and the state. If you vote to keep us in distance learning, you are opting to keep low-achieving students from having an opportunity to succeed. You are jeopardizing children's mental health and potentially increasing unreported cases of child abuse. You are siding with a political group over the needs of children. If you are okay with that then you do not belong on a school board. If you care about students and their well-being, you will vote to get them back in school. It is totally reasonable to follow the state and county guidelines. You do not know better than them and should not place further roadblocks to opening schools than have already been put up by the state. Please vote to reopen as soon as legally allowed and no later.

Last November we missed the opportunity to open because of one person's changed vote. Now we are suffering the consequences and we are limited in our ability to open.

Any parent who does not want to send their child has that choice. Let the parents who do want to send their child have a choice too.

As a school board, you should represent the children and the parents - not the teachers and the union. The teachers have the union to advocate for them; the parents and students need you to advocate for us! Otherwise we have no voice and no advocate. Please do not let us down! Open our schools!

**Rosalie Enget:** Children are missing out on critical emotional and social experiences. There is more to school than academics. They are not meant to be in front of a screen 10 hours a day. This method of learning is not conducive for most children. We are witnessing our children shut down and become disengaged. Distance learning was not meant to be a long term solution.

We need to get back to in person learning asap. It is essential for them to be around their teachers and peers. We cannot continue to deprive them of this much needed human interaction and contact. School needs to be fun and creative, and IN PERSON. Please open our schools.

**Tarly Coffee:** Please open schools. We should be following what can be scientifically supported. The CDC say kids can be safely back to school with all the precautions schools have already taken and that schools aren't significant sources of community spread- so, we should be open. Even our governor and president support opening. Surrounding districts have not had significant troubles with Covid cases. We deserve to give our kids a chance too! We can open now with less than 7.1 cases per 1k! This is as of a text I got at 5:09 from San Joaquin Ready. Please vote to open and let our kids have a chance to learn in a more traditional and enriching environment.

Kids whose families still aren't comfortable should be able to stay on distance for the remainder of the year and those who want to return should be able to return. Please do not suggest, as the board did last time that kids who need or want to stay home should have to disenroll from their schools and lose their clubs, programs and extracurriculars. This is why I opposed to opening under those conditions last year.. We can have them stay at home and that will help keep our numbers low inside the classroom which is great.

Teachers and the general public are also getting vaccinated which is just another indicator that we are ready to return although according to CDC isn't a requirement.

Please do not delay a return to school because of it being in the middle of a term. Kids want to return as soon as possible, being in the middle of a term would not change their mind about wanting to return. Even just a week or two would be valuable for my daughter in high school. Please do what is legally allowed and suggested by the CDC now- OPEN SCHOOLS.

**Jane Martinez:** As a parent and teacher of TUSD, I would like to address the Board Members on the reopening of school. I strongly urge the Board to reopen the school on 4/12/2021, the week following Spring Break. The reason for this recommendation is for TUSD teachers to complete their 2nd vaccination given by SJCOE. If we return on 3/15, that is the week where most teachers are scheduled to receive their 2nd Pfizer Vaccination which would mean the teacher would need to obtain a substitute for their students attending in person learning. I'm unsure that the district has enough trained substitutes to handle in person Hybrid Concurrent

Teaching. This later date would also allow families to have more time to plan for their child's return 2 days a week. I definitely want the students back in the classroom, they need to return and I want them to return. Let's have them return in the most sensible way, with most teachers completely vaccinated and plenty of time for families to plan. Thank you.

**Tammy Coombs:** By law, Tracy school should open when it hits the red tier no matter what.

**Lorena Sanchez:** I have a student who is in eighth grade, and she like many other kids wants to go back to school and be with her friends. However even at 13 she understands that the risk of getting COVID-19 is not worth returning to an environment which may not be safe. As a parent I would prefer that we stay a distance learning for the rest of the year and return next year when it is safe and when our children have had a chance to be vaccinated. Teachers and students' safety should be the top priority.

**Amber Garcia:** Have you considered the impact it is taking on the kids by not being in school. Several news article have stated that the virus is not being spread in a classroom environment. If all the other states are being successful in their back to school efforts why will our district not attempt to try. Have you considered letting just the Seniors attend high school if we are not able to have all high school grades attend? Or possible having only a few grades attend that are being the most impacted like Kindergarten, these kids have no idea what being in school is like and next year will have hard time adjusting. 5th grade as these kids move onto Jr high next year are should be preparing the changes that will occur in Jr High next year. 8th grade, these kids should be preparing to move on to high school and should be thinking about what they want to do and any programs or academies they would like to explore. and last the Senior kids. these kids have missed out on almost half of their high school experience and are not learning what they need to learn in order to be prepared for College next year. Most have learned nothing in the last 11 months. If all grades can not go back to school a plan should be made to give the option to these grades so they are prepared for what is to come next year for them.

**Shannon Sauers:** Why are we not following the science to make the decision to open the schools? We are one of the few remaining states that are staying locked down. Plenty of data available (even in Ca) that kids are not major spreaders of the virus (a virus with near 99% survival rate) and that schools can safely be opened. Our kids mental and physical health is being sacrificed for politics and unions. Well past time for the districts, unions and the state to put the students at the forefront of concern.

**Lizbeth Orihuela:** Please, it is time to open the school.

**Linda McWilliams:** Why is the voice of the parents who want to have their students return not being heard? The amount of parents exceeds the amount who do not want to return and their voice should be heard. Deciding not to return at all should not be an option. What is the board doing to make a plan to return to school beyond the April 1 date that was talked about in the last meeting? As of April there

is still 8 weeks left of school and I am sure most kids who want to return will be happy with even 4 weeks.

**Terri Goularte:** Ana Blanco, Nathalie Hughes and Zachary Hoffert, I would like to know what your plan is to get our kids back in school? Why is TUSD one of only districts in Tracy not back to in person learning? We, the people of Tracy are the ones that voted for you.... so we expect that you have our children's mental health and well being on the top of your priorities list. I'm assuming that you are getting all of the same messages I am from friends and family regarding the failure rates and depression of our kids? It is extremely sad to see how these kids have fallen behind and are losing social skills. I hope when you vote, you consider two things: 1. Our kids 2. The community that voted you  
We voted because we knew you were going to be there to support and fight for our kids and what is right.

**Sophia Negron:** Hello, my name is Sophia Negron. I am a 5th grader that attends Jacobson Elementary. I am doing well academically on distanced learning, but am struggling emotionally without socializing with my friends and teachers. My cousin attends Manteca Unified and they have been on a Hybrid schedule since the beginning of the year. It's hard for people who have siblings or in my case a daycare, running around all day. Sometimes kids are singing and dancing while others are testing. It's a struggle to try to learn when we are not face to face. It would also be nice to get to be around some peers again. Our curriculum is being shortened. I don't feel like I have learned all I need to learn to get ready for 6th grade. Our teachers are doing their best with what they are given, but let's face it: there is an increase in depression, anxiety, and suicide rates. We are losing money due to families leaving the school district to go to enroll in an already opened district. I personally know of 4 families who have left the district to start hybrid in surrounding cities or Delta Charter. Obviously we would need to wear masks and take extra precaution. It's important we go back to school as soon as possible so we can all get the education we deserve. I hope you consider bringing us back this school year.

**Vicki Headley:** Dear TUSD Board Members, Hello, my name is Vicki Headley and I am a TUSD third grade teacher. I have been teaching in the district for 22 years, 17 of which have been at Art Freiler School. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for Approving Agenda Item 13.2.1 on February 9, 2021. As Chairperson of the Art Freiler School Site Council, I'd like to thank you for voting to approve the Agreement for Special Contract Services with Sow a Seed Community Foundation to provide Group Counseling for our students at Art Freiler School. Based on results from MY SAEBRS, Fastbridge Testing, we found that our students were in need of counseling. Our School Site Council members comprised of Staff, Parents and Community Members understood this need and appropriated funding at our January meeting. Your approval of the Agenda Item has already allowed 46 students to start counseling this week. Thank you for making our students mental health a priority during this unprecedented, unforeseeable pandemic. Thank you for helping to meet the individual needs of our Freiler Stars.

**Public Hearing:**

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

- Consent Items:**
- 13. Board approval of any agenda item requiring insurance is conditioned upon acceptance of appropriate insurance accepted by Tracy Unified.**  
**Action:** On all except amended 13.3.1 and pulled 13.3.3. Abercrombie, Erskine. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.  
**Action:** On Item 13.3.3. Abercrombie, Erskine. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.
  - 13.1 Administrative & Business Services:**
  - 13.1.1** Approve Accounts Payable Warrants (January, 2021) (Separate Cover Item)
  - 13.1.2** Accept and Review the Status of School Connected Organization/Booster Club Applications Submitted for the 2020/21 School Year
  - 13.1.3** Approve Payroll Reports (January, 2021)
  - 13.1.4** Approve Revolving Cash Fund Reports (January, 2021)
  - 13.2 Educational Services:** None.
  - 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 Declaration for a Provisional Internship Permit

- Action Items:**
- 14.1 Administrative & Business Services:**
  - 14.1.1** Approve AB 1200: Public Disclosure of Collective Bargaining Agreement  
**Action:** Abercrombie, Erskine. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.
  - 14.2 Educational Services:** None.
  - 14.2.1** Adopt Updated Board Policy 5111.13 Education for Homeless Children and Youth for the 2020-2021 School Year  
**Action:** Erskine, Blanco. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.
  - 14.2.2** Consider and Approve Options to Reopen Schools  
**Action:** Approve Option #1, return grades K-6 on March 22<sup>nd</sup> with Hybrid Model. Abercrombie, Erskine. **Vote:** Yes-5; No-2(Alexander, Blanco)  
**Action:** Approve the return of grades 7-12 when we move to red tier if prior to end of March. Abercrombie, Souza. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-1(Blanco)

Superintendent, Dr. Brian Stephens, thanked those for their comments. He recognizes the difficulty it has been for students to stay home and the desire for parents to have their students return to school. We have approached this very conservatively. We have put the needs and safety of our students and staff first. We lost one of our teachers to COVID this year. Tried to take a measured approach. These options are slightly different that what we had 2 weeks ago. Things change often. Since then, the CDC has come out hard saying that schools can open safely without a vaccine. Also, 2 weeks ago, we believed that our staff were 8-10 weeks away from getting a vaccine. That has changed 180 degrees. Last week we started getting vaccines through the county office of



education. Last Friday they did the first 900 and were scheduling additional days the following week. Most will have them by this week which is certainly better than anticipated. The second round will start on March 12<sup>th</sup> and by March 19<sup>th</sup> the vast majority will have their 2<sup>nd</sup> round done. He then reviewed each of the 3 options:

Option 1: Assuming our county meets the <25 per 100,000 requirement this week, reopen schools March 22<sup>nd</sup> for PreK-6 grades with a Hybrid/ Distance Learning Concurrent Model and provide the option of TUSD Independent Study Charter School K-12, or Distance Learning for grades Pre K-6 to families that prefer at home learning. We would follow an A/B schedule to meet social distancing requirements with each student on campus two days a week.

Option 2: Reopen all schools Pre K-12 and TYAP when the county is in the red tier. We would follow an A/B schedule to meet social distancing requirements with each student on campus two days a week.

Option 3: Continue Distance Learning through May 28, 2021.

Associate Superintendent of Educational Services, Julianna Stocking, commented that we will not be administering another survey, however, school sites will be confirming with families their preferred option and see if any want to change their mind. Principals will then balance their classes so that we can ensure the 4 feet between student chairs, keeping families on same schedule. Class sizes will vary. An average class could accommodate 23-24 students. With the A/B schedule that amount would be half on each day. Our safety plans are posted on our COVID webpage. Dr. Pecot commented that we have provided each site with masks, gloves and hand sanitizing stations. We have desk shields for students K-6, as well as teachers. We have also ordered charging stations for student computers.

### **14.3 Human Resources:**

**14.3.1** Acknowledge Receipt of Tracy Educators Association's (TEA) Sunshine Proposal for the 2021-2022 School Year

**Action:** Abercrombie, Erskine. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.

**14.3.2** Approve Resolution 20-11, Authorizing Reduction and Elimination of Particular Kinds of Service for the 2021-2022 School Year

**Action** Abercrombie, Erskine. **Vote:** Yes-6; No-1(Hoffert)

**14.3.3** Approve Resolution 20-12, Adopting the Competency Criteria in the Case of Certificated Reduction in Force for the 2021-2022 School Year

**Action** Erskine, Abercrombie. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.

**14.3.4** Approve Resolution 20-13, Adopting the Tie-Breaking Criteria in the Case of Certificated Reduction in Force for the 2021-2022 School Year

**Action:** Alexander, Abercrombie. **Vote:** Yes-7; No-0.

**Board Reports:**

Trustee Alexander passed. Trustee Blanco thanked all teachers and classified for doing exceptional work. She thanked the students for doing a great job and that they are learning video conferencing. Trustee Erskine thanked management, teachers, support staff and the students and families for being very flexible in dealing with the pandemic. She highly supports reopening for the sake of academic, social, emotional and physical health and well-being. She thanked parents for participating in survey last November. She thanked everyone for their comments and input and thanked SJCOE for supporting the vaccine project. That put a lot of weight in supporting the reopening process. Trustee Hoffert thanked all parents, students, teachers and staff for their emails and expressing their concerns and situations. It was very important to consider recommendation of CDC, the lower cases, and the ability for people to get the vaccine. Trustee Souza thanked parents, students, administration, teachers and support staff. It has been a long year. It has been her position all year to return to school. CPS calls have declined by 50 %. Mandated reporters within our school system are important to help our kids, not just academically. Over past few weeks there have been attacks on board members and teachers who want to go back and some who do not want to go back. Whether or not we all agree, most have tried to be respectful of each other. Teachers are struggling too. Jacqui Nott has fought hard and has been instrumental in moving forward. Thank you to TEA. Classified staff have been imperative in all of this as well. She would like to keep moving forward. Trustee Abercrombie thanked the Tracy community for their input. Some DARE students are organizing a clean up day to beautify the City of Tracy. It will be held on Saturday, March 6th. If you want to help or need more information, please contact him at [officerabs@yahoo.com](mailto:officerabs@yahoo.com). Trustee Kaur would like to announce that beginning with the March 9<sup>th</sup> board meeting, trustees will be meeting in person in board room with COVID restrictions. They will still be closed to the public. They have received countless emails from parents and teachers on the reopening of schools. They appreciate all messages received and considered them in making this decision. She previously voted to not open in November, because she didn't feel it was safe at that time. She took into consideration everything that was presented, the CDC and administration came out strong to open schools. The research done has shown that students 12 and under are not able to transmit COVID with the same efficiency as an adult. At the same time, we have opened to small cohorts and there have been no large outbreaks. Being able to provide vaccines is a big factor. She appreciates all involved. It is important to balance the risk with mental health. We have had Distance Learning for a full year and it's time to move forward. She thanked everyone for their presentations.

**Superintendent Report:**

Dr. Stephens agrees that all students, parents, and staff have done a good job. He recognized the efforts of the San Joaquin County Office of Education for their efficiency in organizing the vaccines for staff. They did a great job. He is excited to get students back in school.

**Adjourn: 9:02 p.m.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date