

**Minutes of
Special Meeting of the Governing Board
For Tracy Unified School District
Held on Wednesday, March 22, 2023**

5:45 PM: 1. President Abercrombie called the meeting to order and adjourned to closed session.

Roll Call: 2. Board: S. Abercrombie, O. Alexander, R. Fagin, L. Hawkins, J. Silcox
Absent: Z. Hoffert
Staff: R. Pecot, T. Jalique, S. Smith

6:00 PM President Abercrombie called the Tracy Unified School District Board of Education to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Closed Session: 3. No action taken.
4. Adjourn to Open Session
5. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Audience: Walter Gouveia, Mercedes Silveira, Miyoka Masuda, Bobbie Etcheverry, Jacqui Nott, Ashley Fisher, Zach Boswell, Chris Munger

Hearing of Delegations 6. None.

Action Items: 7.1 **Administrative & Business Services:**
7.1.1 Conduct Interviews and Approve Provisional Appointment of Board Member for Unexpired Term

Each member was asked the following three questions and given up to three minutes to respond to each.

Question 1: Please introduce yourself and explain why you are interested in this position.

Question 2: Please describe your work experience or background that has prepared you to serve as a board member for Tracy Unified.

Question 3: What are two of the most important issues the district is facing that are unique to our district? What recommendation would you make to address it?

Candidate Carrie Grover

1. Ms. Grover is a Director for Tracy Interfaith Ministries and a parent of four children; two at WMS, one at WHS, and two that have graduated from WHS and KHS. She is applying to be on the school

board because she has a vested interest in making sure TUSD continues to be a great, safe place for our children. As a school board, we are responsible to make good decisions to help our students and spend our funds appropriately.

2. Her work experience includes running a nonprofit, and a lot of experience working with community members and sitting on a board. She currently sits on the Tracy Interfaith board, the Stockton Salvation Army board, and the Redbridge HOA board. She has a lot of experience working with children, in terms of volunteering in the schools, and experience working with people who have different ideas. She listens to the different sides, viewing budgets, and ensuring funds are spent well to serve the people.
3. She feels the one thing all schools are facing, coming out of the pandemic, is mental health challenges. TUSD can be a forerunner in making sure we are taking care of our kids and our teachers that are having a hard time. We need to be proactive and make sure the mental health challenges are addressed. As a board we can be proactive to make sure professionals are in the schools, proactively dealing with and supporting kids, providing counseling opportunities, giving academic resources, and identifying what resources they need. Recently Student Services reached out about a family that had truant kids due to lack of transportation. She got Tracy Interfaith involved; they donated bikes to assist them to get to school. They came up with solutions to assist them.
We need to make sure our district is retaining and attracting great teachers and that teachers want to come to work, stay in the district, and feel appreciated.

Candidate Navjot Kahlon

1. Ms. Kahlon is proud to stand before the board as a 1st generation American and first in her family to go to college. She attended North Elementary, MVMS, and WHS. Because of the guidance she received, she is living the American dream. She is a Senior Release Train Engineer for a bank, managing fraud technology. She believes every child in this city deserves a high-quality education and that her unique experiences and skills can help to bring success to TUSD.
2. She has over 10 years in pharma and banking as a technology professional. Today she works with over 20 teams; her job is to ensure they are meeting their goals and staying on track, making progress to meet their values. She believes collaboration is necessary for success. She has worked with many cultures, from different backgrounds, has a love for community service and is passionate about giving back to the community. This has helped her to become a well-rounded individual.
3. An issue we are facing is mental health. In 2021, the CDC looked at the number of children feeling anxiety and depression, the percentage had jumped tremendously from 2019. She was recently at WHS for an alumni event where she spoke to students about the importance of a

STEM line career. She could tell it was difficult for the students to engage face to face from what they faced during the pandemic. We need to proactively address mental health, working with local organizations, having workshops, and helping students to be successful.

Another concern is closing the achievement gap through interactions. She has received feedback from families and the challenges they have faced and has firsthand experience from being in Tracy schools with what the challenges and opportunities are. We need to provide more opportunities in curriculum and need to open up opportunities for students that do not want to pursue a higher education.

Candidate Shyam Nath

1. Mr. Nath has lived in Tracy since 2014. He is interested in being on the board because his wife is high school teacher, and he has two kids; one in middle school and one in high school. He has seen different aspects of student life in Tracy and feels he is in a position to give back to the community because his kids have been in TUSD. He has learned enough about the system that he can contribute effectively to the board.
2. He has 30 years of industry experience, working for companies such as Oracle, IBM, and General Electric. His volunteering roles started with leadership in college. He's worked on a board in a technology group and has been president of the Tracy Toast Masters, which provides education and communication skills. The combination of public sector and nonprofit organization have given him the experience to be valuable in this role.
3. Tracy has a high diverse population, with 42% Hispanic, with SWP offering dual language to support English learners. Teacher retention is a problem in recent years. He has brainstormed with his wife of how to retain or attract teachers. One way is to give teachers room to professionally grow in unusual ways, such as being able to work in an elective if they have the background. There are ways beyond salary that may help to attract quality teachers and he can come up with other recommendations. The City has housing programs, we can do loan forgiveness, create awareness amongst teachers, and offer them things that, are not the top of the list, but are important for a teacher to grow professionally and alleviate some of the problems that we are having attracting teachers.

Candidate Vincent Obiajulu

1. Mr. Obiajulu is a parent of four children that have all gone through TUSD, one of which still attends. He has worked with young people for over a decade in a more confined environment, juvenile detention. The reason he is interested in being a part of the school board is based

on his experience watching his kids go through school, monitoring them, and working in a juvenile facility. Some of the most gifted young people stray and end up in the facility. He has ideas to bring to the table, most specifically being actively involved, there are things he can help enhance what TUSD already has. TUSD has great leadership with some areas to tweak, such as, communication and enhancing programs that have to be tested to make sure they are evidenced based and age appropriate. Another area is to look at the curriculum and do more to help prepare students, even if they do not want to go to college, so they will have enough training to become productive members.

2. His work experience is working with young people and teachers. As a juvenile counselor he taught programs within the facility to help with drug and alcohol problems, which a lot of young people suffer from. He has collaborated with teachers, parents, and business leaders, There is a saying that says it takes a village to raise a child. Everyone needs to get involved because you have to ask yourself if, when we sit back, we feel we are comfortable in our homes. Do you want a neighbor that gets up every morning and goes to work or do you want to live near someone that has nowhere to go, selling drugs or hanging out with gang members? This is why we all have to get involved, because every child is important and has a gift, they have something to contribute to society. We need to help them to be successful and achieve skills that provide a decent living to be the best that they can be.
3. Communication is the number one issue. As a parent, he has found the communication is not transmitted effectively or is not worded properly. It is not reaching the parents. Sometimes he receives an email from the district but there is nothing there that catches his attention to know what it is all about.
He feels involvement is another issue. School board members need to be present in our communities and the students' activities, such as by showing up during the half time of a sport game, spend time telling the kids to have a great game, be seen and visible to the parents to eliminate the fear of the unknown. If you can match a face to that name, it helps the district.

Candidate Brian MacDonald

1. Mr. MacDonald is a lifelong Tracy resident; he was a student in TUSD and now has children in the school district. He has been a youth coach for 20 years and has dealt with hundreds of kids in the district. In the daytime, he is a Director for Parks and Recreation for the City of Tracy. He is looking forward to serving his community; his goal is to leave this community better off and give youth the opportunity to be

better. TUSD has a good administration, he knows a lot of teachers and administrators personally and professionally. He is looking forward to an opportunity to make change and utilize his skills in public outreach, youth development, and putting children first.

2. He has been a youth coach and coached at THS 20 years ago, since then it has been a passion to work in this community. He worked in the district as a teacher, has a master's in public administration, and has worked with the City of Tracy for ten years. As the Parks and Recreation Director, his goal is to celebrate our past and present, and prepare for the future. It is important to set up our kids, teachers, and administration for success. A concern is the physical situation of the school district. He brings over 20 years in public budget experience. He's worked for City of Modesto, San Joaquin County, and as a Department Director in a public agency. He knows what it takes to work with an elected body. Our board members are policy makers that represent the goals and values of the community. His experience helped him prepare to be a board member, as well as having two kids of his own.
3. Safety is his first priority; it is a national issue. Working in his line of work, and with the Tracy Police Department, he believes campus safety is a current and future issue. The Police Department can be more involved and can help train parents and staff on safety protocols. He would highly encourage this as a board member, to continue working with the Tracy PD, and they are 100% behind this. We need to consider what other resources our administrators need to help with security, such as cameras and other ways to secure the campus physically that can be implemented.
Another concern is retaining qualified staff and what to do about declining enrollment and the reduction in our budget, and how to make the decisions to attract new staff that aren't from Tracy. One way would be to look at ways to offer housing assistance, or down payment programs, and look at other ways to retain those qualified educators. We cannot stop declining enrollment, but we can prioritize the programs knowing some may need to be eliminated.

Candidate Susan Murphy

1. Ms. Murphy has a daughter in first grade at Bohn School. She would like to give a different perspective as someone that has a kid in TUSD. She is interested in giving different ideas and sees a lot of things that can be worked on and would like to give a fresh perspective. She has worked in the PTO at Bohn and is involved in school site council. She would like to see the internal workings at the district and offer her perspective.

2. She used to work at Stanford in medical research and learned a lot. It was great to see what education can do and see what the world has to offer and to work with different cultures. This would help her on the board. She went to public and private schools and has experience in different types of education. Just being a people person can help her, she speaks with a lot of parents at Bohn, people like to speak with her to talk about what is going on. She likes to go to the school board meetings and know what is going on.
3. Academics is the biggest concern; we need to work on curriculum and help kids with reading and math. A lot of students struggle with reading. The teachers need more help, too many kids are in each class, teachers cannot not focus on them all. It is hard for English learners; they need more help and they often hold back other students. They aren't getting the resources they need to learn English. We need to find a better way to help them, such as, more paras, more help after school, or a class where they can focus on a test, for example. It isn't fair to them as students, or to the others being held back.

Candidate Kevin Baptista

1. Mr. Baptista wants to join this board because he sees a lot of positive things happening at the schools. He has four kids in TUSD, in middle school, elementary, and high school. He sees a lot of great things and would like to be a part of expanding on this and growing what is already a great district. On the board, if he had a voice, he could have a positive impact.
2. He is currently employed at an insurance company as a manger and has worked there for 20 years. He has managed up to 100 employees, primarily his role is interpreting and enforcing contractual obligations. Over the years he has gotten great at looking at the potential gray areas and making sure everyone is doing what they are supposed to. He understands policy and has a degree in physical science which gives him an understanding of how the boards operate.
3. Staffing is something that all companies are going through; teacher shortages and the impact it has on the students and administration. We need to make sure the students are served the way they need to be. This is a complicated process because everyone is competing against each other to take the same group of talent. You have to make yourself attractive, that is important.
Another huge issue is parent engagement. It's great to have students there but the parent engagement is a huge piece of this. Engagement is lacking at TUSD and other districts. One thing important to him is making sure that parents are engaged and present for whatever he is doing. This is incredibly important for the district.

Candidate Scott Secker

1. Mr. Secker is here because he wants to make a difference, he values education and is retired now. He used to be a teacher and has been living in Tracy for over 30 years. His kids have matriculated through Tracy schools. His wife was a teacher for 25 years at Poet. Quality education is more than instruction; it takes a lot of people with different skill sets, working with teamwork and communication. This is a skill set he can bring to Tracy Unified. He has been a coach, did academic decathlon, was an Advanced Placement teacher, worked in ESL, was a mentor for new teachers, and worked with administration on the SIP committee and WASC. He was a core leader and has a lot of education goals that have been met. Prior to that, he was in business with companies, providing team building, management, and public communication. Now that he is retired, he has the time, energy, and background to make a difference in our schools and community.
2. Being a former teacher, he thinks that he can be a bridge for the board, teachers, and administrators. The experience he's had in education is very important, setting goals and being able to be transparent so everyone can understand what the goal is on is important. You must ensure that you always keep site of the goals and objectives and ensure all processes you are doing are there to achieve those goals.
3. Getting back to normalcy after Covid is important. This is nationwide, public schools are under attack so to speak. I think clearly defining the goals and listening to the voices and communicating what needs to be done, and how, is important to do. As a board member, I would need to research and understand what is going on, look at the recommendations provided and ensure we are working towards the same goals and fulfilling the same objectives.

Action: Trustee Fagin indicated his first choice as MacDonald, second Grover. Trustee Alexander's first choice was Khalon, second Obiajulu. Trustee Hawkin's first choice was MacDonald, second Khalon. Trustee Silcox chose Grover as his first choice, second MacDonald. Trustee Abercrombie chose MacDonald as his first choice, second Khalon. Silcox switched his first choice to MacDonald. Fagin motioned to appoint MacDonald, with a second from Hawkins.

Action: Fagin, Hawkins.

Vote: Yes-4; No-1 (Alexander). Absent-1 (Hoffert)

Superintendent, Dr. Pecot, administered the oath to Brian MacDonald.

Adjourn: 7:01 pm

Clerk

Date