

Michael Gaddis, J.D.



SaveGirdValley.com
CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE
September 4, 2018

**Questions for Candidates for the Bonsall Unified School District's
2018 November Election**

Good Day, Candidate!

Thank you for choosing to run for office. We appreciate your commitment and would like to know more about you!

We are seeking candidates with the following qualities:

- “The ability to work well with a team and support group decisions, along with an understanding that the board sets a climate for the entire district;
- A desire to work toward a stronger relationship between the district and the public it serves;
- A keen eye toward serving the needs of all students, regardless of abilities or backgrounds;
- A professional, poised demeanor and respectful behavior;
- Respect for diverse points of view;
- Commitment to the time and energy required each week for meetings, phone calls, conversations, visits to schools, and professional development seminars and workshops;
- Knowledge about district policies, guidelines, needs, challenges and strengths.

“At the heart of it all, members of a district’s board of education must believe, unequivocally, in the value of public education. They must be dedicated to serving and teaching all children. They must believe in the democratic process and understand that their role is to act strategically, in line with the interests of the entire school community.”

[Source: www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/school-board-candidates/]

Please take the time to complete this Candidates Questionnaire. You have unlimited space, can add documents, refer us to your website or URLs. Answer them all or skip questions.

Please return to SaveGirdValley@gmail.com by 5 PM September 14, 2018. Thank you!

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Candidates Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself:

Do you live within Bonsall Unified School District (BUSD)? Since what year?

Yes, I have lived in Bonsall since 2009.

Have you ever run for public office? What was the result?

No, I have never run for public office.

Are you and your family active in community organizations? Which ones?

Do you have the time to devote to school Board work, estimated to be at least 10 hours a week and often more?

Yes, I am self-employed, so I can take as much time as I need to work on School Board work.

Some Board Members sometimes show up to meetings unprepared. Do you commit to being prepared for meetings?

Yes, as a self-employed person I have to be prepared for everything that I do.

Have you prepared yourself by attending school meetings, workshops, reading budgets and audits?

Yes.

How many Bonsall School Board meetings have you attended in the last year? Did you stay for the entire meeting(s)?

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What motivated you to run this year?

I am a huge proponent of quality education. Education has helped me in my life and I want to give back.

Tell us about your financial acumen:

Are you comfortable reading financial statements and budgets, creating conservative fiscal projections?

Yes

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BUSD has been deficit spending for over seven years. Its reserves are hovering around the legal limit and it has to borrow millions of dollars short term each fall just to cover operating expenses and payroll. What is meant by “legal limit”? What were BUSD’s reserves before unification? How much did BUSD’s Board approve as a short-term loan in the Fall of 2018?

The District is financially challenged. How do you plan to set BUSD on the correct fiscal course? Please be specific. For example, to bring more students into the District, do you support high density development like Lilac Hills Ranch? Do you support limiting Board Member medical benefits? Was it excessive for BUSD to pay its Superintendent more than the Governor of California received in 2016?

What do you think about the financial challenges related to the high percentage of disabled students attending BUSD, substantially higher than the national average?

In August, BUSD’s Board approved 11 of its administrators attending a \$16k two-day, three-night cutting edge teaching conference in Long Beach. The conference is to be hold on school days in September, just a few weeks after the new school year begins. The administrators will teach the teachers how to cover their administrative duties including how to address emergency situations (wildfire and other threats). The Superintendent promises to teach the teachers what he learned at the teaching conference, delivering a 10% improvement in student scores in two years. Included in the cost is \$2,000 for mileage and parking for 11 cars, one for each attendee. What is your position on having administrators, who do not teach, attending teaching conferences? Do you support hotel room sharing and carpooling to such events? Do you support/oppose BUSD paying for bar bills at such conferences? As a Board Member, would you have asked for proof to substantiate the claim that a two-day conference will deliver a 10% improvement in student scores?

I believe in fiscal responsibility. I do not believe in frivolous spending. I cannot comment on the value of this particular conference because I am not privy to the particulars of what the conference offers. If there are reasonable ways to minimize costs I would definitely be in support of them. For example, I would encourage carpooling to an event such as this.

Since transportation is the second largest school expense, after payroll/benefits, do you believe the sharing economy can deliver cost reductions? Other thoughts?

Any thoughts on online learning and its current and future impact on brick and mortar learning centers such as BUSD?

I do not believe that online learning is a reasonable alternative to brick and mortar learning centers such as schools. I think online learning might have some value as a supplement to brick and mortar schools, but not as an alternative.

Tell us about your thoughts on maintaining assets and expansion:

According to state projections, student enrollment “will rise until 2021, when declining birth rates and lower in-migration rates will send school enrollment on a continuous decline..”
[www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/sd-me-enrollment-changes-20180822-

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story.html] BUSD is facing declining enrollment in the near future along with competition from dozens of private and public schools plus online learning options. With a 2018 graduating class of just 57 students, do you believe BUSD should invest in large scale brick and mortar expansion?

Keep in mind that the 2018 graduation numbers are skewed because many would-be high school students moved or transferred to other schools, such as Mission Vista. Many parents are not happy with the current state of the high school campus being on a middle school campus as well as the lack of traditional amenities and athletic programs. Thus, the numbers are not indicative of true enrollment trends should a new high school be built. I firmly believe that once BUSD has a new high school, the desirability of homes within the BUSD to prospective home buyers with children will grow and the enrollment numbers will increase significantly. Plus, it is my understanding that the current high school is at capacity. There is no room for growth.

BUSD has no Master Plan. Do you support creating one?

What are your thoughts on deferred maintenance of BUSD facilities?

Bonds to build a high school in Fallbrook's Gird Valley have failed five times, back to 1978 and as recently as 2016 (\$58M Measure DD). Do you support passage of Measure EE, Attempt #6?

Yes, I support EE. However, keep in mind that EE is not tied to building a school on Gird Road. The purpose of EE is to obtain the funds necessary to build a new school once a final location has been determined. I sincerely feel that EE is important for all residents and homeowners in the BUSD.

Are you aware that Measure EE is for Phase I of III and will be the first of three bonds needed to build a 1,500-student high school?

If building a new high school increases the financial strain on the already financially challenged District, are you comfortable with overseeing cutbacks and staff/teacher layoffs?

Are you aware that San Diego County Office of Education can take over Districts unable to meet financial obligations?

During unification, State/County reports recommended BUSD sell the Gird Road property (in Fallbrook, just 1.1 miles from the northern edge of the District) and build in the 13.5 sq. mile Bonsall core area. Members of the Fallbrook Community Planning Group have also criticized the Gird Road site as being too far north, not a centralized location, inconvenient for most District residents. What are your thoughts?

While I am certainly an advocate for building a new high school, the jury is still out on exactly where this new high school should be built. While the Gird Road is the frontrunner, I would have to wait and review the final Environmental Impact Report

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before commenting on whether Gird Road is the best location for the new high school. As an attorney I am trained to listen to both sides of an argument before formulating an opinion. At this time, without the new Environmental Impact Report, there is not enough information available to finalize my opinion.

Should Measure EE fail, will you see this as a mandate for BUSD to divest itself of the Gird Road property, to rethink the situation, possibly build out slowly in the core of Bonsall? Or will you work on Attempt #7, another bond attempting to build in Fallbrook's Gird Valley?

It is important to note that EE is not tied to a specific location. EE is about obtaining the funds necessary to build a school once a location is finalized. If EE fails I think it is important to determine the primary reason for the failure. Did the failure occur due to voters tying the proposed location of building the new school on Gird Road to acquiring funds via EE or was it due to an overall lack of interest in passing the bond. Either way, the BUSD desperately needs a new high school. If the primary reason for EE's failure is that voters do not want the new high school built on Gird Road, then I think the Board would have to think long and hard about keeping Gird Road as a potential location. However, the pursuit to acquire funds to build a new high school should continue.

Should Measure EE pass this November, will you attempt to build a new high school on Gird Road in Fallbrook or in the Bonsall core?

If EE passes this November, the board will have to look at all viable options, including Gird Road, to determine which location is the most logical choice. Right now, although Gird Road is the frontrunner, it is difficult to say whether or not Gird Road is a viable option because the Environmental Impact Report has not been reissued yet.

What are your qualifications to make decisions on new construction including a new high school in the District?

BUSD has predicted that 30% of its new students would come from the homes to be developed on the Ocean Breeze property and the owner of this 1,400-acre property publicly committed to helping BUSD with building as needed. Do you think building out on this property, located adjacent to Bonsall Elementary School and Sullivan Campus, makes sense?

If Ocean Breeze becomes the site for any necessary BUSD future expansion, would you work with the County to create good access roads combined with walking/bike/horse trails to/from the residences to the elementary, middle and high schools?

Transparency:

Do you support transparency?

Yes.

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Do you support an online archive of key school documents such as EIR/CEQA reports, audits, budgets? Do you support an online archive of recording/videos of meetings and workshops going back at least five years?

BUSD is consistently late in uploading payroll data to TransparentCalifornia.com. As of August 30, 2018, 2017's data is still not available. Will you work to change this?

Have you, your family, or any entities owned by you or your family, ever received payment or financial benefit from the campaign committees for Measure BB, DD or EE, Lilac Hills Ranch or other large developers, Erickson-Hall Construction, any of their subsidiaries or affiliates or other entities that have funded BUSD-related Measures?

No.

Are you or your family affiliated with or work at BUSD, any of the teachers' unions or receive funding, payment or any form of benefits from the unions, BUSD, union or BUSD employees?

No.

Share your thoughts on student/teacher safety, efficiencies:

The Sullivan Campus in Bonsall is located in a Moderate Wildfire Zone while Fallbrook's Gird Valley is in a Very High Wildfire Hazard Zone. Do you think moving the students from a Moderate to a Very High Wildfire Hazard Zone makes sense as far as safety is concerned?

BUSD's proposed high school designs include only one entrance/exit. Do you support having one entrance/exit for any school located in a Moderate to Very High Wildfire Zone? What are your thoughts on wildfire and evacuation plans or other safety-related issues?

Traffic generated by schools is a key concern to District residents. During the Draft Environmental Impact Report process (ongoing) required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), it was estimated that a 1,500-student high school would generate a 73% increase in traffic. Do you support a reduction in traffic, accidents, parking and greenhouse gases (GHGs), District-wide, via the use of carpooling apps?

I would support any logical and reasonable means of mitigating traffic congestion.

The Fallbrook and Bonsall School Districts do not have aligning school years. This puts hardships on Bonsall District single parents and dual income parents without adequate vacation time. If elected, would you support, aligning the Bonsall School year with Fallbrook?

I would be open to hearing the pros and cons of aligning the Fallbrook and Bonsall School District calendars. I cannot make an affirmative statement at this time because I do not have all the facts.

At the present time, school paperwork for parents is done via hard copy. Do you commit to supporting an option to have school paperwork submitted electronically?

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In theory I am an advocate for the electronic submission of paperwork, however, I am not 100% sure that every household is capable of complying. I do not want to require something that would cause an undue hardship on families. However, I think electronic submission should be encouraged as much as possible.

Do you have any other ideas you'd like to share about how to improve student/teacher safety or efficiency?

One idea is to install a fence at Sullivan Middle School that creates a single point of entry. Right now, the Middle School campus (and High School) is wide open.

And finally:

What do you offer District residents? Why should we vote for you? Anything else you'd like to add?

I believe that I have a lot to offer District residents. First, my legal background would provide the board with someone adept at reading, drafting and interpreting complicated documents. Second, I am not closed minded. I am used to listening to opposing viewpoints with an open mind. I only make decisions after thoroughly analyzing both sides of an argument. Third, I believe in fiscal responsibility. I am a small business owner, so I know how important it is to budget and plan. Fourth, I am a trained negotiator. I have an extensive amount of experience mitigating opposing points of view. Fifth, I have a lot of experience in the finance industry. Sixth, I also have a lot of experience with real estate transactions. Seventh, I am approachable and willing to listen. Eighth, I am passionate about education. Ninth, I want to improve the BUSD's reputation because I think 1) it will make college admissions offices look closer at our students; and 2) as BUSD's scholastic reputation improves it should increase the property values of homes within the BUSD. Finally, I want to give back to an educational system that was so good to me. Although I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri ("The Show Me State") public schools were vital to my development as a person. It is time to give back!

Thank you for your time!

The Volunteers at SaveGirdValley.com