



SaveGirdValley.com
CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE
September 5, 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 confirm receipt and return to SaveGirdValley@gmail.com by 5 PM September 14, 2018.
Thank you!

Candidates Questionnaire

Please tell us about yourself:

Do you live within Bonsall Unified School District (BUSD)? Since what year? Yes. I live in Bonsall, on the hill above the historic Bonsall bridge. I moved here 11 ½ years ago.

Have you ever run for public office? What was the result? I have never run for public office prior to this.

Are you and your family active in community organizations? Which ones? Yes. Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Club, PTA's, Bonsall Education Foundation, Zion Childrens School and a few little leagues/pop warner kids sports teams.

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

Some Board Members sometimes show up to meetings unprepared. Do you commit to being prepared for meetings? Very accurate statement. Yes, I will be prepared.

Have you prepared yourself by attending school meetings, workshops, reading budgets and audits? Yes, you would be hard pressed to find a committee or a meeting that I am not on or in attendance for. I download and read every agenda item attachment already, have been for years now.

How many Bonsall School Board meetings have you attended in the last year? Did you stay for the entire meeting(s)? I have been attending school board meetings for almost 4 years now. Over that time frame I have only missed 2 meetings, and that includes all the emergency/special meetings called last minute. I stay from start to finish of the open session.

What motivated you to run this year? I have had a desire to be on the board for some time now as I have seen many inappropriate things taking place and feel that some members have been asleep at the wheel, see the financial situation. My decision to run was made the night Dr. English announced her retirement from the board. I have never run previously out of respect for Dr. English and Dr. Tucker, they were on alternating election cycles and I did not want to run against either of them.

Tell us about your financial acumen:

Are you comfortable reading financial statements and budgets, creating conservative fiscal projections? Yes. This is one of my strengths.

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 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? Three percent is the legal limit in California for reserves, while six percent is the immediate desire of the district it is

a far cry from where we were prior to the last Superintendent and a couple incumbents joined the district and depleted it. The reserves were just over 30 million prior to the change in both unification and administration. Although all 5 Board members approved the short-term loan, Dr. Tucker, Dick Olson and Lou Riddle all expressed that it is unacceptable that they “need” to do this and something needs to be done to rectify the situation as it costs us taxpayers just over 15K in interest.

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? The first thing I feel needs to be looked at is administrator salaries. The last Superintendent was so grossly overpaid that he had to overinflate the salaries of the people surrounding him in an effort to justify it. I would be in favor of limiting Board Member medical benefits, it is a public service after all, you shouldn't need an incentive to do it. While I am not anti-growth, like the majority of this community I too voted no on Lilac Hills Ranch.

What do you think about the financial challenges related to the high percentage of disabled students attending BUSD, substantially higher than the national average? It is a tough situation and a very fine line that needs to be walked. Over the years of attending Board meetings, I used to watch as they had to hand out settlements left and right from lawsuits due to denying services to special education students. The number is high right now because the district had to undergo many changes to provide the services that should have been there, but weren't, in an effort to prevent future lawsuits. It isn't something that is going to be fixed overnight and I do not have the magic wand to make it all better, but I am willing to dig into the situation and see what needs to be done to improve this area.

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 held 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 do not mind administrators attending these types of conferences if it is something that is needed for them to improve the quality of our schools for the behalf of the children. I do think that carpooling or the use of public transportation is a much more cost effective plan for this type of trip. Hotel room sharing is also something that should be done so long as the pairings are appropriate. BUSD should provide a reasonable per diem for meals but a bar tab is ridiculous. Every company paid for trip I have ever taken as an employee

did not cover alcoholic beverages. Asking him for proof is impossible, while he can make that projection there is no way to prove a theoretical projection such as that, I would definitely have had more questions than what were asked at the meeting prior to any decision being made.

Since transportation is the second largest school expense, after payroll/benefits, do you believe the sharing economy can deliver cost reductions? Other thoughts? My involvement with the district combined with the committees that I am on provides me with information that is at this time not yet made public. That being said I am aware of the plan to rectify this situation that is about to happen and I do support the plan as a short term solution while we work towards a more viable long term solution. Please understand that I can not at this time give a more detailed answer than that.

Any thoughts on online learning and its current and future impact on brick and mortar learning centers such as BUSD? Online learning is great for some kids not for others. My oldest would love it and do really well, my youngest needs supervision, encouragement and direct teacher interaction. For some families it comes down to, for lack of a better term, babysitting. If they have a kid that isn't self motivated and all parents in the house work, that kid needs a brick and mortar school to not only educate him/her but to keep them out of trouble while the parents make money to provide a living.

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-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?

Large scale no, but we do have a need to separate the shared campus that currently houses both a middle school and a high school. We do not have a need for a massive 1500 student high school and I will probably be dead prior to that need. However, something small like Mission Vista High School would be appropriate.

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

What are your thoughts on deferred maintenance of BUSD facilities? When in tight situations if it won't wind up costing you more sometimes you need to mildly juggle certain tasks. It is a very slippery slope though as you have to be careful not to overextend the money nor do you want to defer for too long as things will just add up over time and ultimately blow up in your face if you let it get too backlogged. Procrastination should always be a last resort and if needed better have a good reason with a deadline and a plan for completion.

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? I do support Measure EE, I am on the committee. I did oppose the last bond Measure DD but feel this one is much more fiscally responsible and the size is much more appropriate for the size of

school that I feel this district needs at this time. Ultimately I do not care where we build the high school, as long as it is a separate campus from that of the middle school and has appropriate evacuation routes. Regardless of where we choose to build there will inevitably be opposition from the people in the direct vicinity of the campus. It is natural and expected. I hold no ill feelings towards anyone that opposes for whatever reason.

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? I am aware that Measure EE is for Phase I only. It needing 2 more bonds and ever getting to be the size of a 1500 student campus is to be determined. There are other funding sources such as state matching funds and developer fees that could be used to pay for Phase II. Phase III, it is my feeling that will not be needed for a very long time if ever.

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? The district is already financially strained, although the new administration is doing a good job working towards correcting it, there is still work to be done. I am prepared and eager to dig in and help develop a strategy to turn the district finances around and rebuild the reserve to an appropriate level.

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

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? I was on the Superintendents Advisory Committee that did the research. I joined that committee hoping to find a better site. It is my feeling that the Gird Road site is the best available site to the district at this time and the need for a separate campus is immediate. As I stated previously, there will be opposition from the surrounding area of the campus regardless of where we try to build.

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? We have too many students at the current location and something would need to be done. All options would need to be discussed.

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? I would attempt to build a new high school. As stated above the location does not matter to me so long as it is separate from the middle school campus and has appropriate evacuation routes.

What are your qualifications to make decisions on new construction including a new high school in the District? Prior to becoming a business owner, I have worked in the building industry for over 10 years.

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? No. The evacuation routes are not appropriate on Lilac Road and there is too large of a concern for many in the community having inexperienced drivers using that road daily.

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? Of course, safety is my top priority.

Transparency:

Do you support transparency? Yes, the current board struggles with this.

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? Yes, we have several members of the community that can not or do not attend the meetings like I do and I feel that if they choose to listen or watch from the comfort of their homes, the technology is there, we should.

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? Yes.

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, everything I do for this district is done on a volunteer basis.

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? I have family that works for the district.

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? The evacuation routes are much more appropriate for the Gird Road location and separating the 2 student bodies into 2 different locations makes both campuses safer.

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? I believe this question was written prior to the recent changes. There will now be 2 points of entry. There will also be a signal as many including myself have concerns about people turning left to get out of the campus. I am and have been the safety dad for the district for some time and my concerns in this area have been addressed.

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? Yes.

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 personally find the resistance to aligning them to be silly.

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? They are in the process of transitioning this currently.

Do you have any other ideas you'd like to share about how to improve student/teacher safety or efficiency? Every campus needs speed bumps, cameras and appropriate door locks for lockdown measures. Fencing, due to safety concerns I can not elaborate publicly. I'm going to stop here as I am on the safety committee for the district and I don't want to put anyone at risk nor do I want to cause mass hysteria. I have many concerns and we are working together on them. Safety is a top priority for the new administration.

And finally:

What do you offer District residents? Why should we vote for you? Anything else you'd like to add? I believe that our district needs change at this time. The financial situation we are in was created by the current board and I do not feel that enough is being done to turn that around. I would like to see more done to keep our schools safer. I believe in community interaction and being open and honest with the community. Transparency. I thank you for your time and consideration. If anyone has any questions feel free to reach out to me at brian.olson1977@gmail.com or you can meet me in person at any of the board meetings.

Thank you for your time!

The Volunteers at SaveGirdValley.com