

Board of Trustees – Candidate Application Form
Greenwald, David M.
August 8, 2018

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1. In what school or community committee or activities have you been active? Describe your contributions.

In addition to being an active parent of students in the school district since 2010, I served on the Davis Human Relations Commission (HRC) from 2011 until this year, including my tenure as chair of the commission for two-years. We were heavily involved in a number of issues that related to the school district and I played a role in actively lobbying for consistent district involvement in the HRC, resulting in Kate Snow being appointed as liaison to the commission. In 2012, our event, "Breaking the Silence of Racism," a concept and program I initiated, brought forth several hundred community members to attend the event, with one of the most active complaints being the climate in our local schools – particularly for children of color and mixed race children.

More broadly, my work on the HRC as well as my work with the non-profit, the Davis Vanguard, has focused heavily on underserved populations and seeking to highlight racial disparities in achievement (i.e. the Achievement Gap) as well discipline (suspension rates) and disproportionate contact with law enforcement.

2. Why do you want to be a Board member? What about this district motivates you to apply for the position?

I am seeking to become a Board member, because I believe it is paramount that the school board allows the next election to be a clean choice by the community. By that, I mean that I do not believe the Board should nominate someone who would then seek election. Therefore, I am seeking this appointment, because I offer a unique opportunity of being a fresh voice, one who has been actively engaged for over 12 years, and yet am not seeking to run for office on the board.

Can I make a difference in four months? I will give it my all. While DJUSD is a great district, I believe we are in trouble if we do not figure out a way to solve our funding problems. What we have seen is that the district is disadvantaged through the LCFF. We have to rely on the combination of ADA and parcel tax and even that brings us short of the median school district.

This year we have seen that teachers in this district have been disadvantaged; we are seeking support from the community to upgrade aging infrastructure and facilities, while we need more instructional money.

Given the four month tenure of this position, there is not much a single person can do, so I would like to focus our attention on having a community-based discussion that extends beyond just the schools to the entire community. The community-based discussion would focus on our funding shortfalls, the challenges up ahead with declining enrollment potential, and the need for the community to engage these problems at a more systemic level.

3. There are three goals* expressed in our LCAP focused on Conditions of Learning, Pupil Outcomes, and Engagement. Please review the goals (on the reverse) and describe how would you support each of our LCAP goals and why are they important to our schools and students?

The district lists three goals in its LCAP plan – all students will engage in high quality education, will benefit from that high quality instruction guided by staff focused on closing the achievement gap, and all students will have an equal opportunity to learn in a culturally responsive and inclusive environment.

In addition to my work on the HRC, my two youngest children attend Montgomery Elementary, which has one of the most diverse school populations in the district. Many people do not recognize that DJUSD is no longer the monolithic majority school district that some perceive it to be. There is a vast and rising English-learner population and more Title One children than ever before.

It is difficult to do too much in brief four month tenure, so I will focus on a few key goals.

First of all, I believe that our school districts are behind the times in integrating technology into the classroom. I am often surprised when I go into a classroom these days just how similar it is to when I attended school in the 1980s and early 1990s. Pushing for more technology requires resources and training and so the second biggest thing we need to do is focus on how to fund our schools.

Finally, I have pushed the issue of the achievement gap in the twelve years of work with the Davis Vanguard. To me there are two components of it. One is an educational component – we need to continue the work that has already begun to help educationally close the gap.

But the second problem is social. The complaints we heard in 2012, still hold today. Children of color and in particular mixed race kids feel socially like outsiders. We need to work to gain awareness and continue our movement to train teachers better on how to operate in diverse classroom communities.

4. One issue that Davis faces is a structural deficit - what suggestions do you have to solve it and how would you go about gaining support for those ideas?

As mentioned earlier, I see this as the big challenge facing our schools. Here is what I see. First, we have a teacher compensation gap that has drawn a lot of attention this year. Second, we face the threat of declining enrollment due to fewer families being able to afford to live in Davis, lack of affordable housing and other opportunities. Third, we are disadvantaged by LCFF funding.

The district has primarily attempted to balance its budget over the last decade-plus through a series of parcel taxes. I believe that unfortunately the community is close to being tapped out in this regard. We saw a roads tax defeated when it only received 57 percent of the vote. The school board looked at the parcel tax polling data and was concerned about the possibility of passage and an individual trustee might put a majority vote tax on the ballot next spring.

I do not see this as just a district problem. I see this as a community problem. The community as a whole benefits from top schools. But the community as a whole is struggling. The city lacks money for critical infrastructure needs. The city lacks revenue from retail and other taxes. And so the quality of life in the whole community is threatened when we see things like roads, parks and schools underfunded.

My proposal at this time is that we need a community-wide discussion on the threat our schools face from funding shortfalls. We need to as a community understand that our quality of life is threatened, starting with the schools, which are the engine of our property values and affluence.

In the next four months, I would consider it a success is we could engage the community in these discussions.

5. What attributes do you feel are important for a Board member? Describe your own skills and interests in relation to these attributes.

There are a lot of attributes that are important for board members.

In my four months, here are three (3) things I would like to bring to the board:

1. Outside of the box thinking – We have a great school district. I chose to live in Davis and raise my children here, because of the great school district. I have always been a strong supporter of education. However, I honestly believe that we are in trouble unless we can find creative ways to do things. I consider myself an “ideas person,” but more importantly I am person who can bring ideas to fruition. I believe that many of the same skills that I used in starting up my own non-profit and the influence it has had on the community can be applied to the school district in ways that will make things better.
2. Communication and engagement – We need to start thinking outside of the school district audience and engage the broader community. I have done this for twelve years. I have brought vast and diverse audiences together and brought forth common thinking and common recognition of pervasive problems to impact the community.
3. Compassion – One reason the achievement is so pervasive is that underserved communities have not generally been represented on the board. I believe we need to have compassion and understanding of those challenges and I believe my background and experience serves us well here. I have three mixed-race children in this school district. My children have attended Montgomery elementary where we are keenly aware of the challenges faced by the underserved population. Professionally, I have worked well with underserved populations across the spectrum to highlight issues and address grievances.

6. What in your professional experiences or volunteer activities with schools have you used a team approach to solving problems?

Being successful on the school board is about team building. An individual cannot solve problems. An individual can however raise issues that the board needs to grapple with.

Here are several ways my professional and volunteer activities have prepared me in this respect:

- On the Human Relations Commission we would often work in teams of two and three to put together programs. Our approach was instrumental in bringing forward a list of issues that needed to be addressed whether it is in the schools, the police department or elsewhere.
- There are several times I was very successful in getting coalitions together and compromising in order to get major new initiatives to the council where they were approved. For example, the HRC worked with the police chief on a surveillance ordinance that became the first of its kind in the state. We also worked on a police oversight proposal that ultimately became the framework of the policy adopted by the city council. We did so with no opposition from either the police union or police chief.
- I have experience every day as a communicator to large and diverse audiences and can utilize those skills to help focus the board and community on specific problems.
- I work well with people of diverse viewpoints with large number of readers who are devoted to our site even though we may not see eye to eye on various issues. Most have found that they have been given a voice and a platform to espouse their own beliefs.
- I believe one of the biggest needs of the school board is community-wide engagement. I have been doing that for years now and can help the board better craft messages to the public and conduct outreach.

7. A violation of ethics occurs when a Board member does not clearly separate personal and district interests and govern on behalf of the district. How would you respond when confronted with this conflict yourself?

The incident involving Nancy Peterson - now four years ago - represented a serious breach in trust with the community. It is important to recognize where things went wrong and how it can be avoided.

1. The trustee failed to distinguish between a personal grievance and a professional obligation. The district attempted to prevent that through a better conflict of interest policy, but that might not be enough. As a board member it is important to recognize the difference in your professional, personal, and role as a trustee.
2. The board itself was slow to understand the nature of the conflict between the board member and the coach. They needed to recognize the problem, and step in to make sure that the board handled itself appropriately.
3. The board should probably with fresh eyes review the current policies and walk through the 2013-14 conflict to see if current policies are sufficient.

Finally, as a board member, we should err on the side of recusal any time that a conflict is real or perceived. Trust is paramount. Without trust, there can be no community buy-in.

Issues of conflict will likely arise with my professional life and I plan to handle that in two ways. One I will not report on board policy or meetings during my tenure as an appointed trustee. Two, I will be precluded from divulging confidential and closed session information in any future communications.

DAVID M. GREENWALD

| LINKEDIN | E-MAIL | TELEPHONE |
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I seek to be appointed as a DJUSD Board member, because it is paramount that the school board allows the next election to be a clean choice by the community. The Board should nominate someone who would then seek election. Therefore, I am seeking this appointment, because I offer a unique opportunity of being a fresh voice, one who has been actively engaged for over 12 years, and yet am not seeking to run for office on the board.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- I do not plan to run for office after being appointed
- Experience serving on a public body
- Excellent communicator
- Thorough understanding of key issues addressed by the school board
- Successful experience holding forums and small discussions to engage the parents and community
- Practice engaging and working with diverse groups of people

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2006 - PRESENT FOUNDER & CEO

DAVIS VANGUARD

Manage a 501c3 non-profit with a governing board and editorial board composed of several prominent Davis residents. The Vanguard is independent news and commentary online, reported daily, on issues affecting, Davis, Yolo County and the Sacramento Region. Duties include management of employees, coordination of volunteers, supervision of interns, daily reporting of news, and raising funds.

2008 SEIU LOCAL 1000

CONSULTANT

Successfully ran data management for Fair Share campaign

EDUCATION

2007 UC DAVIS, MASTERS, POLITICAL SCIENCE

DAVIS, CA

1996 CAL POLY, POLITICAL SCIENCE & HISTORY

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA