Candidate Background

1. Please attach a copy of your resume.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oc9Hesv3YPLkowyD4HsXSAjKBl7sk-Ym/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104877988118469982075&rtpof=true&sd=true

2. Have you previously held any public or elected/appointed offices? If so please list them with the title and time served.

- Chair, Santa Cruz County Democratic Party 2020-2025; Delegate, California Democratic Party; Delegate to NEA convention and AFL-CIO conventions

3. PVFT represents teachers, librarians, psychologists, counselors, SELPA, and other certificated non- management education workers. What is your experience working with these groups?

- I've worked in public education for 37 years and worked with all these professional categories on a daily basis during that period. I'm a big believer in a team approach to teaching and learning.

4. Have you ever been a union member? If yes, please name the union. Are you or have you ever been an officer in a union?

- I've been a union member anytime my job allowed it. My wife (RIP) and I met on a picket line!
- Teamsters Union Member during grad school
- Organized my CTA chapter, Spring Grove School
- PVFT member, 1996-2005
- FEA/NEA member, 2008-2025; delegate to RA, 2023-2024
- Worked for SEIU organizing janitors, 1983-1984
- Worked for Santa Clara County Central Labor Council, 1980-1981

5. Please list if you are involved in any community groups and what roles you have played.

- Chair, Santa Clara County Democratic Party
- Board member and chair of advocacy and audit committees, Santa Cruz Community Health
- Board Member and campaign lead for measure C, Housing Santa Cruz County
- Board member, Community Bridges
- Member, national Commission on Social Action, Religious Action Center
- COPA leader
- Member, advisory council, FORT

Why Are You Running?

1. Why do you want to serve as a trustee for the Pajaro Valley School Board?

- I've lived in PVUSD for 35 years, worked here for 10 years, and put my two kids through PVUSD schools. I believe that great schools help build great community. It hurts me as a citizen and neighbor that the current low trust, lack of transparency, and disrespectful treatment among adults is hurting efforts to make systematic improvement. In my career in education I've led school and district improvement efforts by building trusting relationships. I can help here.

2. What qualifications and strengths will you bring to the School Board?

- My political organizing is about "listen more, talk less, get sh*it done". I'm a natural collaborator and practice relational organizing as developed by Fred Ross and others.
- I know how to read and interpret a complex school budget, I know great teaching when I see it, I know how to build coalitions and move towards consensus, and I know that the educational process starts with the relationship between the teacher and student. When people talk about a great school or school system, they talk about outstanding faculty. I also can distinguish between process goals and outcome goals and have created meaningful dashboards related to student achievement. That's what I want to prioritize.

3. What are some things you think the district does well?

- Stresses cultural relevance, equity, fairness and inclusion
- Celebrates success
- Teachers and staff truly care about kids

4. What are three areas that you would target for improvement in the District and what new ideas do you have for improvement?

- Code of conduct for board members
- Repairing and rebuilding trust and effective communication through power sharing
- Transparency and inclusion in budgets and decision making
- Relentless focus on student achievement
- Opportunities for multidisciplinary work and supporting a meaning centered curriculum
- Ongoing focus on mental health and academic support

5. How will you engage with your constituents and the stakeholders in our school communities such as parents, students, staff, and voters?

- Active and effective listening is the most important thing. Being out in the community. Going to site councils and other affiliated groups. Holding regular listening sessions out in the community, coffee shops. Getting into classrooms. Respecting people. Bringing best practices into the conversation. Building a bigger table for power sharing.

Labor

1. Describe your views on the collective bargaining process and the role of unions in today's society.

- I'm pro union all the way. Unions are one of the key core civic institutions that can bind communities. Collective bargaining works best when there is more trust and respect among parties, and unions need and deserve a legitimate seat at the table when decisions are made. Running a great school means finding common ground where possible and standing your ground when necessary.

2. What do you think are the biggest misconceptions about the PVFT or teachers' unions in general?

- Unions can be perceived as special interest groups and don't always communicate the connection to the common good.
- PVFT, while being fierce defenders of compensation and working conditions, can be seen as resistant to school reform and change.
- Teachers unions in general can be seen as covering or defending bad teaching where it exists and not linking efforts to high standards and teaching quality.

3. How will you seek-out information from PVFT members and representatives to gather more information about situations and board agenda items that you hear about from management?

- Regular proactive communication/ meetings and phone calls with union leadership. My cell # is 831-588-8262
- Getting out to meetings, schools, and classrooms to see life on the ground and valuing teaching
- Respecting and normalizing the importance of union voice in decision making.
- The default position should be that PVFT gets a seat at the table in any discussions or decisions

4. How will you ensure that communication is open between district management and the union?

- The default position should be that PVFT gets a seat at the table in any discussions or decisions. I would rely on weekly (or more often as necessary) calls or 1:1 meetings with union leaders.
- I will regularly ask management in private and in public how the union has been involved or consulted in any meaningful decisions. In setting performance goals for a superintendent or any executive position, I would lead with "teachers and their union as partners"

5. How will you oppose efforts to contract out certificated and classified jobs?

- Internal positions have the opportunity for durable relationship building that it is much harder to achieve from outsourcing. I can help by being an expert on the budget, by clearly understanding options and consequences, and by always putting students first. That almost always will lead to internalizing positions rather than outsourcing. We also need to be honest and transparent about the budget implications.

Budget and Funding

1. What is your understanding of the different funding sources our district receives and how it is allocated?

- PVUSD has a complex budget with a high level of grant and other soft $$. ADA funding, Title 1 funding, ending of COVID funding, bonds and parcel taxes. A 10% reserve plus newly created extra reserves.
- The key in a complex budget environment is to provide clarity and transparency to people don't think there's a shell game with financing. The district I retired from (FUHSD) was a similar size and did benefit from a high level of open records and common information about the budget.

2. What are your funding priorities for the district budget? If or when the district is faced with extreme financial hardship, what difficult decisions would you be prepared to make?

- Keep cuts away from kids as much as possible.
- Total compensation for teachers and classified staff (union can prioritize within this bucket)
- Support for academic and personal support for students
- Needed infrastructure improvements through bond$$
- A district of 14,000 compared to 20,000 a decade ago simply cannot maintain staffing at the same level. Some layoffs are necessary. It looks like school closures will be necessary. This is painful but also the reality.
- One of the hardest issues in the budget cycle is the need to build a budget before the May revise. We are fortunate to have the chair of the Senate Budget committee and the Assembly Speaker representing PVUSD. I would rely on contacts and info through their offices to try to get the best peek at budgets.

3. What is your current understanding of our rate of turnover in PVUSD? How can we recruit and retain experienced, competent staff given the high cost of living and the historically low wages educators receive?

- The rate of turnover is way too high.. High turnover prevents coherent articulation and team planning, and erodes trusting relationships with kids (we used to call it the “Mom’s new boyfriend” problem). A stable workforce benefits kids.
- I think it might help to consider the total cost of compensation. I hear from many PVFT members that they stay around for the health benefits. (this was my experience here from 1995-2005 because of family circumstances). I would track compensation in neighboring districts, and find ways to search out cost savings while maintaining the same level of benefits.
- We experienced a period of high turnover at Santa Cruz Community Health where I serve on the board. We simply could not pay as much as Sutter PAMF. We addressed this by focusing on a mission driven organization, stressing internal growth opportunities, having regular patient and staff satisfaction surveys where we followed up to change key parameters, and emphasizing the importance of strong teams working together for patients. It helped.
- I’ve also worked on teacher housing opportunities as a retention strategy.

Early Childhood/Adult Education

1. Do you support early childhood educators earning a living wage that reflects the importance of their profession, training, and responsibilities to prepare our youngest students for school?

- Yes. Wilma Gold, one of the founders of the ECE program at Cabrillo, is a strong supporter of mine and we agree on the importance of an early start

2. How would you promote collaboration between Adult Education and other departments within PVUSD?

Three issues come to mind:

- One is needs-based planning as workforce needs change. MBEP and the trades are good examples of how that can work.
- Second is GED and language development strength and how that can benefit people and the district by improving the graduation rate
- Third is cost sharing and management to make sure $$ is moving towards the people who need it most.

SELPA

1. PVUSD currently runs its own SELPA department. How will you ensure that student and staff needs are being met within the programs offered?

- There is no magic answer to this difficult challenge, especially with federal funding cuts (although the state is currently working to supplement). When something is important (and legally required), you have to pay attention to it all the time. The key is collaboration between the SPED staff and gen ed staff on behalf of students. When trust is there, then teamwork improves.
- UDL may be more than a fad, it may have real insights and opportunities for education.
- Nancy Sullivan, SPED director at PVUSD, is a strong supporter of my candidacy and can testify to my efforts around inclusion and collaboration.

2. What is your experience working with this special population and your understanding of the legal rights of these students?

- As a young teacher decades ago, I discovered that the best teachers at my school were the special ed staff. I learned about differentiation, authentic assessment, meaning based curriculum, and accommodations early and often!
- As a teacher and administrator, I've participated on thousands of IEP and 504 meetings and follow through efforts. I know the paperwork, vocabulary, and need for teamwork to properly serve kids. And I know the legal framework, including the difference between accommodation and modification, the conditions where push in vs. pull out programs are preferable
- We always tracked data to consider progress and student achievement among this subset of students.

3. How will you ensure we are staffed at levels that support our students and families, for nurses, psychologists, counselors, and teachers to maintain recommended caseloads and class sizes?

- By working backwards from caseloads, modeling the importance of SPED and support staff in working with gen ed staff, and emphasizing family partnerships.

K-12 Education Issues

1. What specific ideas do you have on improving the teaching and learning environments?

- Give teachers time for effective collaboration and clear out items that distract from their teaching

- Work worth doing–a meaning centered classroom, including civic engagement embedded in the curriculum
- Opportunities for multidisciplinary and project based learning
- Authentic assessment
- Showcases for cool student work
- Teachers practicing this: “this work is important, I believe you can do it, and I am here to help you succeed”
- More frequent formative feedback and redemption/revision/resubmission paths for students. In what world does someone only get one shot at succeeding?

2. Some PVUSD schools have the resources to offer more electives, programs, field-trips, etc. than other schools. How would you help ensure that all students in the district receive an equal educational experience?

- By stressing building programs and opportunities rather than cutting or denying them.
- By consolidating around one bell schedule, then opportunities can become more district wide

3.What is your understanding of charter schools and the different types of charters?

- I ran an independent charter school for three years and worked for the California Charter School Association, so I know that playing field pretty well.
- Given the large menu of things a comprehensive school must provide, the aspirational opportunity for charters is to build lab schools that offer distinct programming, typically at a smaller scale, and thus result in a greater sense of ownership by parents and students.
- The inevitable tension of charters is that their existence is a reflection of things the district is not doing well. And in some cases, they are a negative organizing tool designed to disempower and break up districts.
- Dependent rather than independent charters are one aspect to consider–the former has greater opportunities for cross collaboration and learning.
- I think the authorizing agencies (PVUSD or County) need to step up in making sure that we can achieve the best case with charters and promote collaboration.

4. What do you see as the role of board members, district staff, teachers, and parents in assisting English language learners?

- Is translation available at board meetings? That’s a start. And making sure that languages other than English are used regularly rather than an x-to English environment.
- I’ve seen districts where the structures for support are all in place except for tracking data. While at AHS we looked at the EL progress rate separated into students who had been here for 5 years or more vs. those here 3 years or less.

- There are organizations that are really good at training parents as partners. COPA is one example

5. Do you believe textbooks should support cultural diversity, including for LGBTQ youth and gender non-conforming students?

- Yes, including modelling diversity in professional roles.

6. How do you see yourself advocating for the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and staff?

- You can't learn well if you're not feeling safe and welcome. I support trained, collaborative SROs as well as comprehensive student support and counseling. (costs for SROs need renegotiating)
- Assets model of safety and resilience. Safety can start with the question, "if you were in a jam, who could you count on–sibling? classmate? Teacher? Coach? Adult relative? Faith leader?
- Strong relationship building training and skills among staff.
- Wellness centers need clear goals and boundaries to succeed.

7. What is your understanding of the role that alternative education programs play in supporting students, and how would you advocate for these programs?

- We need strong alternative pathways. Kids learn differently and their life conditions change so this is a healthy part of educational programming. I know the COE programs a little better right now so need to ramp up my knowledge in this area for the sake of maintaining district enrollment.

Campaign Assessment

Please attach a list of endorsements, including elected officials, community leaders, business or labor organizations, etc.

- https://www.andrew4pvusd.com/

Do you seek the support of the PVFT? If yes, what form of support do you desire?

- Yes, would gladly welcome PVFT support via endorsement, connection to people, assisting with mail, and financial support.
- You have a non negotiable commitment from me to honesty, transparency, listening, and working collaboratively and respectfully in partnership.