

Tom Carlson

Marana Unified School District No. 6



I have a strong desire to continue to serve the community, having served the nation as an officer in the United States Army Reserve for 30 years and on the MUSD Board for 11 years. I am a graduate of the University of Arizona and am an engineer with Raytheon. My military and civilian work experience has given me a unique perspective on the skills and qualities that children need to succeed. When I moved my family back to Tucson, I chose Marana because of its high-quality schools. My daughter graduated from Mountain View High School and my grandson now attends a district school; I am vested in this district and I want to continue to help improve it.

Over the last eleven years, MUSD has improved. Our fiscal position is strong because we take a very conservative approach to our finances. We are blessed to benefit from a very high level of support from the community, as evidenced by the bonds and overrides the community chooses to fund. We have used that money to build new schools, improve existing schools, and purchase needed security equipment, technology, and infrastructure. All of our campuses have solar, which has reduced electricity costs by more than \$500,000 annually. We spend almost 71% of our budget in the classroom, with less than 10% going to administration; both of those critical metrics exceed the state average. Unlike many districts in Pima County, and across the state, we were able to give an across-the-board raise of 10% to all staff this year, putting the average teacher salary above \$55,000.

I believe standardized test scores and school letter grades are not the best way to measure a school district's performance, although they are important. Graduation rates, attendance rates, community support, and feedback from universities and employers provide a more accurate picture of how well we are serving our students. On all accounts, we are performing strong. But work remains to be done. Our graduation rate, at 86%, can be improved. Our literacy rates need to improve. Our attendance rate, at 94%, must be improved because if kids are not in the classroom, then they are not learning. Working with our new superintendent, we have strategies and plans to address those deficiencies and they are being implemented now.

The Marana Unified School District has excellent teachers, staff, and administrators. We have focused on recruiting and retaining the best and brightest, and those who do not share the forward-thinking vision of the Board and administration have been asked to move on.

The Governing Board is YOUR voice in the Marana Unified School District. I am a strong advocate for accountability and I hold myself to a very high standard. This is the standard that I, as a parent, taxpayer, and concerned member of the community, expect of any elected official. Please help me to continue to work towards making the Marana Unified School District a national model of educational excellence.