

**2024 Saddleback Valley USD Board of Education
Candidate Information Sheet**

Name: Michelle O'Brien

Profession: Retired

Education Background: Former Assistant Controller, Public Relations, Communication Project Manager, Construction Contract Review, 13+ Years of Leading Educational Tours and Hands-On Activities, Leading Water Related Teacher Training, and Garden in Every School Program lead. I've planned and executed events for public agencies including annual two-day Earth Day events where over 3,000 children were bused in the first day. The second day was attended by more than 4,000 members of the public. I have managed multi-million-dollar projects all within budget.

School Committees/Volunteer Positions: Trabuco Hills High School football booster. I raised funds, planned and executed a golf tournament, served up to three meals per week to varsity and junior varsity players, coaches, and staff. As an Elks Lodge member, I volunteered on the "Dictionary Program" committee to distribute books to all second-grade classrooms in both Saddleback Valley Unified and Capistrano Unified schools. As a member of Parents Against School Shootings (P.A.S.S.) we met with local elected officials to discuss increasing the number of school Resource Officer's (RO) within their budgets. The city of Laguna Hills budgeted for and hired an additional RO for Laguna Hills High School.

Government Experience (Elected office, appointed positions, etc.) President of Water Education Water Awareness Committee, Communication Team Member of Water Emergency Response OC, Mission Viejo/Saddleback Valley Elks Lodge Government Relations Chair. I regularly attend and speak at SVUSD board meetings, Mission Viejo, Lake Forest, and Laguna Hills City Council, Orange County Board of Supervisors, and Orange County Board of Education, meetings.

Organizations (please specify if PTA member): I am a past member of the THHS PTA.

Children's ages, how and where they are (were) educated: I have two grown children. Both attended Lake Forest Elementary and Serrano Intermediate. One attended El Toro High School and the other Trabuco Hills High School. I also have one grandchild who attended first through 12th grades in SVUSD schools.

Please answer each of the following in 50 words or less each. We reserve the right to edit to maintain the 50 word limit.

Why are you running for SVUSD School Board? Why are you qualified? All children deserve a quality education in a safe environment. Teachers must be supported by the board, with resources and a proven curriculum. My mom was a teacher. I saw how hard she worked and purchased supplies from her own wallet. I support parental authority and fiscal transparency. I'm a good communicator and problem solver. I have experience in unifying groups.

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing SVUSD right now and what are your plans to address these challenges?

- 1) Learning loss is a very big concern.
- 2) Enrollment decline is a challenge. Quality education and campus safety are their top priorities. When teachers are being assaulted by students, how can they be expected to protect our children?

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- 3) Fiscal responsibility is something we all can work together to achieve. According to the June 23, 2024, board budget presentation, it is projected that SVUSD will have a **\$15,416,529** deficit during the 2024/25 school year.

How will you prioritize the use of finite SVUSD resources?

In making education programs a top priority, we will work together with the same goals in mind. Outside audits will identify where unnecessary spending can be replaced with thoughtful and methodical financial allocations. I'd like to hear from teachers' what tools, training, and resources they need and how they can be better supported. I'd like to know if teachers have learned about successful curriculum that they would like considered for SVUSD.