

Last week, I found myself in one of our elementary school offices, where a small boy sat in a chair, seemingly weighed down by the upcoming consequences of his actions. With his legs pulled up and head buried, he appeared to be shrinking into himself, awaiting his impending meeting with the principal. When the principal emerged from her office, she noticed him, and in a heartwarming display of empathy, she knelt, enveloping him in a warm hug. Her words of encouragement were quiet enough they were private, and finally, he stood up to return to class. Before he left, the principal offered a final boost: "Hey, go do your best... you can still make this so much better!" Lifted by her support, he walked out of the office with renewed spirits, ready to give it another try. It was just what he needed.

That same spirit of compassion, patience, and discernment has been consistently evident as I have attended TCA Board meetings. Much like her, our directors navigate issues with empathy, caution, and wisdom, upholding the core values of TCA as they proceed. Observing their commitment and interactions, I've developed an aspiration to be elected to join them in this crucial role, aligning my professional background and a genuine eagerness to contribute to our school and community.

My professional journey spans over two decades in the Air Force, where I served as an engineer and a physicist. Early in my career, I was honored to be appointed Executive Officer to the Commander, working closely with our organization's Chief Executive. This experience provided me with a practical Master Class in executive leadership, exposing me to various facets such as boardroom dynamics, disciplinary actions, strategic planning, and financial accountability. During that time, our team achieved the highest possible rating during a comprehensive inspection. The invaluable lessons learned in that assignment greatly shaped my understanding of effective board-focused leadership.

As an engineer and physicist, my experiences in the Air Force focused on solving complex problems, which will serve our community well as a board member. As the Senior Health Physicist for the Air Force Radiation Assessment Team, I overhauled 32 courses in a curriculum that trained 50 physicists and technicians to respond globally to nuclear or radiological disasters. As a senior scientist at the Air Force Research Laboratory, I led a research portfolio team that achieved a \$20M cost savings for the Air Force in the development of next-generation radiation detection capabilities.

Following my retirement from the Air Force, I turned my efforts towards completing a Ph.D. With a busy yet flexible schedule, I've become as involved as possible in TCA events, parent meetings, and classroom activities. I've been especially impressed by the commitment of our parent community as I've volunteered at PTO events and in my daughter's classroom.

Our TCA board consistently tackles complex and challenging issues while upholding the tradition of classical education and remaining steadfast in our TCA Core Values. Our school, administration, teachers, and staff are genuinely exceptional. I aspire to see this excellence perpetuated as our enduring TCA legacy. Eager to contribute, I look forward to bringing my professional background to the TCA Board, contributing to an environment where challenges are met with resilience and fostering an unwavering belief that, together, we can sustain the remarkable trajectory that defines our school and community.

[Dave Oertli – Why I want to be a TCA Board Member](#)