

My Decision Not to Seek Re-election to the PAUSD School Board

I have decided not to seek a second term on the PAUSD school board. I joined the board in 2007, leaving my teaching job in order to become a board member. Having worked across the district in a number of PAUSD schools, I was inspired by the dedication of volunteers and teachers at each of those school sites and by the potential of our schools to serve our students even better than they do. As a board member, my primary goal was to support our teachers and staff by encouraging an open-minded spirit of innovation and improvement, and to help bring about a way for us to make the most of our best educational practices by sharing them more efficiently and equitably throughout the district. I believed that my experience in the classroom and in professional development would be helpful in achieving those goals. While I have enjoyed working with our outstanding PAUSD staff and my exceptionally dedicated fellow board members, and I believe the work of the school board is important and provides great value, I have concluded that my opportunities to do what I had hoped to do on the board are limited.

During my tenure, the board and superintendent have taken on a number of formidable tasks - creating the 2008 multi-year Strategic Plan, balancing the budget under challenging economic conditions, co-founding Project Safety Net and otherwise supporting a community rocked by a suicide contagion, financing and creating the Strong Schools bond construction program that addresses our growing student enrollment. This, all, was in addition to the usual panoply of responsibilities for managing our facilities, our employees and our relationship with partners like the Palo Alto PTA, Partners in Education (PiE), Stanford and the City of Palo Alto. I am proud of the board's accomplishments on all of these fronts. For me as an educator, however, the area of strongest interest is pedagogy, and in these matters, the board carefully circumscribes its role. In this district, with its strong culture of site-based decision-making and concomitant deference to the superintendent, key pedagogical and programmatic decisions are developed, refined and evaluated primarily within our schools, and the board, as a reflection of our community's values, has adapted its role to fit that culture.

I have come to understand the role that the board has chosen for itself and I recognize its merits; many wonderful things have been happening in our classrooms and in our schools. There is, however, a mismatch between the role of the school board in our community and my professional interests, skill set, and hopes of what I could accomplish as a board member. I would like to return to my roots in education and work with fellow educators to improve the lives and prospects of students. I have tremendous appreciation and respect for my fellow board members, for the superintendent, for all of our administrators,

teachers, counselors and support staff, and for the remarkable parents and community members who support our schools. I am grateful for all that they have taught me in the last five years and look forward to new ways to promote high quality education and to serve the community.