

Principal changes for Moraga

By Sora O'Doherty



Brian Sullivan with family

Photo provided

Joaquin Moraga Assistant Principal Brian Sullivan has been hired to replace retiring Elaine Frank as principal of Donald Rheem Elementary School for the 2017-18 school year. The Moraga School Board also hired Stephanie Richards as principal of Los Perales Elementary School. Both new principals started their positions in July.

Elaine Frank served at Rheem for 20 years, 30 years total in the Moraga School District. Superintendent Bruce K. Burns commented on Frank's time in Moraga: "Frank's leadership established a very special Rheem School community. For more than 20 years, Principal Frank has dedicated herself to ensuring Rheem students not only received a high quality academic education, but also one where there was concentrated focus on each and every student's

social and emotional well-being. How Principal Frank dedicated herself to Rheem School has been her trademark, one that created an exceptional learning environment."

In honor of her service, the multipurpose room at the school has been renamed the Elaine Frank Roadrunner Hall. It will be graced with Frank's gift to the school: a seven-by-seven foot quilt she sewed from her collection of 20 years of Rheem spirit wear. The campus has also been beautified by a mosaic commissioned by the PTA from tile artist Mark Panelli, who is the uncle of two Rheem students. The mosaic is installed on the outside wall of the office, with a plaque dedicating it to Frank, with one of her oft-repeated phrases: "I love this school!" The mosaic features a butterfly theme to echo the kindergarten Butterfly Parade. Kim Habas, president of the PTA,

said they love that theme because it symbolizes kindergartners going from chrysalis to flying out into the world. And, she added, that is like Frank, who is launching herself into a new life.

Frank is enthusiastic about the arrival of new Principal Sullivan. "I am often proud of the positive spirit of Rheem students, but I had a unique opportunity to be especially impressed by their caring and enthusiasm," Frank said. "Rheem's next principal, Mr. Brian Sullivan, stopped by to tour the campus with me and also to meet the students during their lunch time. The kids were wide-eyed and curious as they saw me escort the tall, tie-clad man onto the Multi-Use Room stage. Then, I told them that this person was someone very special ... 'the next principal of Rheem school ... Mr. Sullivan!' With that announcement, the room immediately erupted into rousing cheers and hearty applause. In that one spontaneous moment, without skipping a beat, the students welcomed Mr. Sullivan with a big-hearted, 'Rheem Team' outpouring of trust and enthusiasm.

"During lunch recess, I received a call on the walkie-talkie from a yard supervisor, 'Who is that man out on the field?' So, I explained. The response: 'OK, just wanted to make sure! The kids are just swarming him!' I had to smile."

Sullivan served as vice principal at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School for one year. Before that he was at Saint Agnes School in Concord for 10 years as both teacher and vice principal. Born in San Francisco, Sullivan grew up in Concord with his brother and sister. He now lives in Moraga with his wife, Kelly, and their three children who attend Camino Pablo Elementary School.

Sullivan loves the real team spirit at Rheem, shared not just by the staff, not just by the students, but by everyone. Sullivan is a team guy, having played college basketball Eastern Washington University and coached high school basketball



Elaine Frank

Photo Sora O'Doherty

for 23 years.

After Eastern Washington, Sullivan attended Saint Mary's College for his administrative certificate and master's degree before teaching at Northgate High School for seven years and De La Salle High School for 17 years. Highlights of his career include being part of three state champion teams. Sullivan loves connecting with kids and seeing them years later, whether it be one, two, or 20 years.

Richards had a long career in Oakland schools before coming to Moraga, and she couldn't be happier with the warm welcome she has received thus far. Even on her second interview, Richards was impressed when the Superintendent of Schools phoned her to warn her of the Canyon Bridge problem.

Richards graduated from Antioch College in Ohio and began teaching in Oakland in 1998, first substitute teaching, then teaching at Acorn Woodland Elementary School. She was chosen for the Bay Area New Leaders to receive

a full scholarship under which she received her administrative credentials in two years. She then worked as co-principal at Education for Change Public Schools in the Fruitvale area of Oakland and was Assistant Principal of Achieve Academy.

Richards, who lives in Oakland, is excited to share what she has learned in Oakland, but also thinks that the new job will be an amazing learning opportunity. She looks forward to getting to know the students, the families and the community. Impressed with teaching she has observed at Los Perales, Richards says the new job feels right. She added that she doesn't want to go beyond being a principal because for her the connection to the classroom is very important. She has met with the PTA, and she is continually impressed.

"I feel very blessed that I get to wake up every day with a smile, Richards concluded, "so blessed to be able to do the work I am so passionate about."

Lamorinda bids a fond farewell to local retiring teachers and staff

The following is a list of additional retirees from the Acalanes Union High School District, the Moraga School District, and the Orinda Union School District. The Lafayette School District would not release the entire list of names of retirees without their consent, but we included one retiree's submission.

AUHSD Retirees

Acalanes High School

Robert Barter came to Acalanes High School in 2003 where he has taught Social Science for the last 14 years and has been active with the BTSAs program, an advisor to the Model UN Team and participated in teacher committees to review and recommend new textbooks. Students benefited from outside guest speakers from areas such as economics, law and public policy.

Bear Begelman came to Acalanes in 2005 after teaching woodshop at Foothill Middle School in Walnut Creek. Mr. Begelman joined the Acalanes Union High School District with 25 years' experience in woodworking and teaching. He has worked with the department to setup, equip, design and modernize the fabrication lab.

Bruce Downing served the students at Acalanes High School for the last 18 years. Mr. Downing has been very active in extracurricular activities by coaching volleyball, and an advisor for Academic Decathlon, a teacher advisor for the Acalanes Science Bowl for 15 years. In addition, notably, the Acalanes Science Bowl competed in the National Science Bowl Championship in Washington, D.C.

Susan Lane was assigned to Acalanes High School in 1999 to teach digital design. Susan also taught at the Acalanes Adult Education Center. Susan furthered her knowledge of technology by earning a Designated Subjects Vocation Credential in Technical Illustration, Computer Applications & Office Occupations by attend-

ing Diablo Valley College, Contra Costa County of Education, Mac World Expo, UC Berkeley, and various online courses.

LeeAnn Martini started with the district in 2007 as the Testing Technician at Campolindo High School. In 2010, LeeAnn was promoted to school administrative assistant at Acalanes High School, working with three principals during her tenure.

Campolindo High School

Vicki Erlan has been a fixture in the Campolindo High School community for the past 31 years and supported students as the study hall instructional assistant since September 1986.

Anne Hebert taught English and social science. Ms. Hebert's dedication to Campolindo went beyond the classroom as she actively participated in Sunshine and Staff Development. She attended workshops and conferences for professional development and participated on the leadership team and advisory board for the California History-Social Science Project.

Patricia Purvis-Thielman began her career with the district in February 2002 as a transition assistant in the Workability program. She quickly found a place to apply her technical knowledge within the technology department. In October 2002, Patty was promoted to district technician. She then became the district's web development and technology support specialist, better known as the "HELP desk."

Las Lomas High School

Ellen Smith was hired in September 1994 as the school improvement secretary at Las Lomas High School and in October 1995, she was promoted to career center coordinator, now known as college and career center advisor.

Mallorie Wilkerson joined the Las Lomas High School teaching staff in 2000

with 26 years' experience teaching Spanish in the Bay Area, and incorporated personal experiences from her studies abroad and props to capture her students' interest and enhance lessons.

Miramonte High School

Vince Dell'Aquila came to the Acalanes Union High School District in 1997 to teach physical education at Miramonte High School and has been very involved as a P.E. teacher, department chair, athletic director and head baseball coach.

Barbara Denny joined the Miramonte High School faculty in 2001 where she taught for the last 16 years, and attended workshops and took advantage of extra training in the biotech area for the benefit of her students. She modified the biotechnology labs to fit into the 50-minute periods, and was instrumental in the development of the AP Environmental Science course.

Aileen Gell taught drafting at Skyline High School for 12 years before joining Miramonte High School staff to complete her 35-year career in education. She served as department chair for Vocational Education, a WISE Mentor, and attended a multitude of workshops and conferences to improve technology in the classroom.

Deborah Hovey-LaCour joined the Acalanes Union High School District in 2001 and hired as a permanent teacher in 2002. For the past six years, Ms. Hovey-LaCour taught all levels of art and digital photography at Miramonte.

Patricia Richards finished her 14 years with the Acalanes Union High School District teaching French at Miramonte High School. She has been engaged in professional growth and development by attending workshops with focus on the French language and culture, and by traveling to French-speaking countries.

Maria Valente was promoted to Caf-

eteria Manager in 1999 and has served Miramonte students, staff, and AUHSD for a total of 32 years.

OUSD retirees

- Rebecca Bertacchi**, District Office Account Clerk
- Bronwen Horton**, OIS Core Teacher
- Kathy Marshall**, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- Hillery Paterson**, District Art Teacher
- Sally Thompson**, OIS Core Teacher

MSD retirees

Joan Caraska (Rheem) Third Grade Teacher

Don Read (Joaquin Moraga) French Teacher (Teacher of the Year - 2015)

Jeanie Wieden (Los Perales) First Grade Teacher (Teacher of the Year - 2004)

Mary Bruzzone (Camino Pablo) Classroom Aide

Lorie Forshay (Los Perales) Assistant Secretary

Nancy Magdoff (Rheem) Classroom Aide

Lynn Middlebrook (Rheem) Instructional Assistant, Intensive

Cheryl Moore (Los Perales) Instructional Assistant, Learning Center

Linda Wu (Rheem) Assistant Secretary

LafSD retirees

(listed is the one submission Lamorinda Weekly received)

Susan Comber concluded 25 years of teaching music at Lafayette Elementary School last June, completing a 42-year Music Teaching career. She began teaching Graduate Music Theory classes at Holy Names University and, she says, "have been working my way down ever since." - information compiled by John T. Miller