

Published May 13th, 2009

Principal Neil Jennings Will Be Missed

By Sophie Braccini



Neil Jennings surrounded by CP staff Photo Sophie Braccini

Talking to Neil Jennings about his retirement brings a big smile to his face. Obviously, the Camino Pablo Elementary (CP) Principal is ready to pass the baton. From parents to staff to Superintendent, however, the only comment heard is one of regrets: Neil Jennings will be missed.

"When I think of Neil, I think of good guidance, and great foresight," says Marcia Holbrook, who has been a parent at CP since 2002 and PTA President in 2003/2004. "Before my first daughter entered kindergarten, I went to talk to Neil about retaining her. His advice made such good sense and he was so confident that I felt she was going to be in very good hands." As PTA President, Holbrook appreciated the very cooperative and open-minded spirit Jennings brought to the school; he would come to each meeting and really listening to what everyone had to say.

Jennings was principal at CP for 21 years of his 40 year career in education. "I am proud of the level of achievement CP has consistently achieved," Jennings says. "This could not have been done without the exceptional dedication of the staff."

During his career he has seen education moving toward greater accountability, with the use of standardized testing. But he warns that all aspects of a successful education cannot be tested. "We are teaching the whole child," he says. "We want to see them grow as participating citizens, critical thinkers, and young people with self-esteem."

His experience will be missed throughout the District. "Neil Jennings is the consummate professional," notes Moraga School District Superintendent Rick Schafer. "He consistently and passionately works for what is best for students. He loves every one of his 'children' and makes them his highest priority. Because of that, his advice and opinions are sought by fellow administrators, the Board and me."

Schafer appreciated Jennings' ability to generate creative solutions to apparently insurmountable problems while keeping common sense in the solution.

School secretary Mary Thomas, who's been at CP for 12 years, is happy for Jennings. "He's looking forward to [his retirement]," she says, then adds, "but I think it's a terrible idea!" Thomas says she will miss their great working relationship, Jennings' open-door policy for staff, parents and children, his hard work and honesty - and his end-of-the-week caffeine tradition. "I will miss our Friday morning coffee."

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA