



AMADOR COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent, Amy L. Slavensky, Ph.D.

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PRESS RELEASE:

DR. SLAVENSKY ANNOUNCES HER RETIREMENT

January 5, 2021

Dear Amador County Public Schools Staff, Families and Community,

After many months of reflection, discussions with my husband Mike, and some mixed feelings, today it is with a sense of peace and clarity that I announce my retirement from the Amador County Unified School District and California public school education.

I became a first year teacher in 1982 in a small private school in North San Diego County while still in college and finishing the work to earn my teaching credential. In 1985, I started my public school teaching career in Baldwin Park USD, as a young first grade teacher in a building with no air conditioning, no computers, no telephone, no carpet, no copy machines, no email, and instructional technology that consisted only of Dukane filmstrips and 16 mm films. Most importantly, I was blessed that year with 35 beautiful 5 and 6 year old students, 2/3 of whom were fluent Spanish speakers and English learners. After 10 years teaching in that school district, I went on to have a variety of educational leadership experiences in several Southern and Northern California school districts.

During this time, from 1989 to the late 2000s, I also gave birth to and raised two beautiful children Sarah and David, earned two advanced degrees, served as principal for 14 years at four different schools, elementary and middle, and supported our beautiful family as the primary bread winner with no extended family nearby for support. It is all of these experiences together that have inspired me and kept the fire burning in support of all students and their families.

Now, after 36 years in public school education, and nearly five of those years spent in dedicated service to the wonderful students, families and staff of Amador County Unified School District, my retirement will be effective June 30, 2021.

I've seen a lot of change for sure. What has remained consistent though is the strength, creativity, resilience and dedication of so many teachers, staff members and school leaders, committed to taking care of other people's children while taking care of their own families. I'm honored to have been a part of so many school families and teams where an equitable educational experience for all students has been the focus of our work together.

Staying true to my lifelong commitment to support students and families, I welcome the next chapter of my life journey and am looking forward to spending more time with my family, writing about my experiences, and seeking new ways to serve the greater good for all students.

During our time working together in Amador County, I'm proud of what we've accomplished. Together, we built and delivered multi-tiered systems of support with a strong emphasis on social emotional learning. Together, we learned about and implemented preschool through 12th grade standards aligned curriculum and instruction, one-to-one technology with devices for every student at the secondary level, and we expanded career technology education and adult education.

After a short time on the job, we uncovered financial truths and worked hard with our governance team, labor partners and leaders to right-size staffing and spending, and we rebuilt our required financial reserve fund levels to meet and exceed the state requirement in just 18 short months. The experts said it would take at least three years. We've also implemented some great school facilities improvements with architectural plans in development for more improvements, with coming soon attention to one of our oldest facilities located at Ione Elementary School.

Together, we also led the Board's charge to effectively transfer the mild-moderate special education services and staff from the County Office to the District. And together, we are in the process of successfully navigating the unprecedented COVID19 pandemic, distance learning, and the safe reopening of our schools for in-person learning in a hybrid model.

During my time here, I've worked with 11 school board members including Wally Upper, Mary Walser, Rosie Oneto, Bob Laurent, Kandi Thompson, Susan Ross, Janet White, Deborah Pulskamp, James Marzano, Jim Whitaker and Julia Burns. It has been a good learning and leadership experience, challenging me to keep a growth mindset at all times – just as we expect of our students – demonstrating gratitude, grit, creativity, collaboration and perseverance at every turn.

Surrounded by a mighty team of educational leaders, I'm proud of our work and will always remember Amador County Public Schools students, teachers, leaders, staff and families as a community fiercely dedicated to its youth and its schools.

All of that said, our work is not done yet. We have a lot more to do together in the next six months. This includes relentlessly striving for health and safety for all staff and students, and making our intervention supports for students even stronger during this pandemic – doing everything we can to minimize learning loss and to foster learning gain. I remain very committed to this work.

The next six months also includes planning for the next school year. January always signals this. Preparing for the school district's next chief executive officer is part of this planning. By announcing my retirement well in advance, I'm hoping to provide the Board of Trustees plenty of time to work with a premier search firm to conduct a thoughtful, thorough process that includes input from teachers, leaders, staff, students, families and the community.

As we move through the next six months together, please know how very grateful I am for each of you and my experiences serving the youth, families and staff of Amador County Public Schools. Thank you for your continued dedication and support.

Sincerely,



Dr. Amy Slavensky