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# Meet Dr. Fred Brill, Lafayette's New Superintendent

*By Jean Follmer*

Dr Fred Brill Photo Jean Follmer

Dr. Fred Brill officially became the new Superintendent for the Lafayette School District on September 1. A native Chicagoan, Dr. Brill received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and moved to the Bay Area in 1985. He was a Special Education teacher at the Seneca Center before teaching high school English. Dr. Brill was previously with the Lafayette School District for 12 years; three as the Assistant Principal at Stanley Middle School and 9 as Stanley's Principal. In 2005, Dr. Brill went to work at the Oakland Unified School District and served as a Network Executive. During that time, Dr. Brill also finished his doctorate at UC Berkeley. After three years in Oakland, Dr. Brill has returned to the Lafayette School District as its Superintendent. Dr. Brill is pleased to be back in Lafayette. He said it "has been so heartening to see so many familiar faces". With four superintendents in the past five years, Dr. Brill said "I hope to bring stability and continuity and set my roots here." When asked what his initial goals for the district are, Dr. Brill said "My initial charge here is to listen and to learn and to find out how I can help." He wants to "go deeper on the (district) strategic plan.getting off the paper and into the classroom." He also hopes to encourage and support the positive work currently going on in the district. Dr. Brill said "One of the strands of work I'm excited about is thinking strategies.the "what" and "how". He said "that strand of work is being overseen by (Director of Curriculum and Instruction) Rachel Zinn." Dr. Brill said the "what" relates to "science standards and is very content based." Essentially, it's the answers to questions like who, what, where, when and

why. He said Zinn's department seeks to discover "how the teachers are getting children to engage with the material." Dr. Brill said one goal is to get students thinking in a higher order to determine the "how." This is accomplished through analysis of the data that's generated by answering the "what" questions. He said, "Teachers are coming together collaboratively and looking at each others practices to create a culture of improvement" in the inquiry process. Another segment Dr. Brill seeks to support and encourage is that of Character Education. He said that while academic development is important, "so is social, emotional and ethical development of our kids. We can all agree we want our kids to be nice to each other. We're not just myopic in our view (of education). We also care about our kids' global awareness." Dr. Brill said former Burton Valley Principal Ben Shaw introduced him to his wife, Mimi, 8 years and 5 months ago. They are celebrating their fifth month of marriage and have four children between them. It would be an understatement to say that Dr. Brill is a busy man. When he's not superintending in Lafayette, he said "I'm a runner, so I run 4-5 days a week and I do my big run on Saturday." He's been running with the same partner since 1985 and has completed 9 marathons. Dr. Brill also enjoys backpacking, cycling and writing. In fact, his first book is due out in October. Titled "Leading and Learning", he said "it's targeted to prospective and new school leaders." He said he's done "a lot of work on leadership development.it's a passion of mine. I really look forward to working with the leaders (within the district) and helping them reach their respective goals."

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