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Springhill Principal Retires

Cathy Dausman



Photo Cathy Dausman

enrollment of some seven hundred students. He was principal for three years in the Sierra Foothills town of Marysville at its smallest elementary school-- a school with five teachers and 150 students. Wodhams did a brief stint as a high school assistant principal, but found he missed the elementary school environment. In 1987, Wodhams relocated to the East Bay, accepting the job at Springhill. He's been there ever since.

Wodhams recalls fellow principals at Happy Valley and Burton Valley working over twenty years at their respective jobs, so longevity in the position is "kind of the expectation." After all these years, the work sometimes makes him "tired, but never bored."

Wodhams has many admirers. Jean Follmer is Springhill Elementary Parent Faculty Club President. Follmer says Wodhams "has made a significant impact on our community. He's been incredibly supportive of our special education program and was instrumental in the solar panel installations and All Things Green in our district. He sings and plays the guitar with our children ("that's my therapy," says Wodhams), is an avid supporter of Scouts and piloted the Character Counts program for the district."

David Gerson is a Springhill parent and member of the Governing Board of Lafayette School District. Gerson says Wodhams has been "as concerned about what happens on the playground as he is about what happens in the classroom. He has focused not only on the district's academic curriculum but also on teaching lessons about life...tolerance, compassion, respect, fairness and empathy."

Brill echoes that thought, calling Wodhams "a dedicated educator who has transformed the culture of Springhill School...and models what it means to be a life-long learner."

Wodhams' last official day in district is June 30; Duncan expects to get started in July. Wodhams travels to Norway (yes, Stavanger) after school lets out. His advice to Duncan is "Enjoy the kids. That's what it's all about." Eventually Wodhams hopes to return as a Springhill volunteer, "When the new principal is comfortable having me here." But for now it seems he will be taking David Gerson's last bit of advice to heart:

"Relax and have some fun!"

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