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## Moraga School Board Candidates

*Three residents will vie for two seats in the November General Election*

*By Sophie Braccini*

The Moraga School District will tackle multiple challenges over the next couple of years. In addition to stepping up efforts to keep students safe and coping with the ongoing funding problems all districts are facing, Moraga will also begin implementing the California Common Core State Standards, which are designed to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn in order to be fully prepared for the future.

Overseeing all this activity is the School District's all-volunteer Governing Board. Two seats are up for election on the five-member Board this November. Incumbent Dexter Louie is seeking re-election, while his Board colleague Dennis Kelleher has decided not to run again. Also throwing their hats in the ring are Shari Simon and Parker Colvin. We caught up with all of them last week and introduce them here in alphabetical order:

Parker Colvin and his family moved to Moraga from San Francisco last year. His oldest child just started first grade at Los Perales Elementary School. Colvin works with Stifel Financial and is a municipal bond underwriter. "I have worked with about 100 schools all over the state," said Colvin. "I know how school finances have been deteriorating and I want to bring my financial experience to the Board."

Colvin says that he and his wife have been very pleased with the school and the District over the last year and that he wants to get more involved. "Knowing my background, some parents have encouraged me to run," said Colvin. "The State's finances are deteriorating with an impact on schools that is not always fully understood by the community."

Colvin believes that Moragans strongly support their school district, even though a recent parcel tax measure failed. "Depending on whether the governor's plan passes or not, we might have to face an even greater deficit of funding," he said. "We will need new and greater forms of support from the community."

Colvin says that his expertise with long term financial planning and his ability to communicate with, and respond to, taxpayers will make him a very effective Board member. He can be reached at parks2c@gmail.com, or by visiting [www.parkercolvin.com](http://www.parkercolvin.com).

Incumbent Dexter Louie has served on the Moraga School Board for 14 years. He is a medical doctor with a private practice in otolaryngology. He believes that even if new blood is needed on the Board, it is also important to maintain stability and retain experience in policy and process.

"The Moraga School District brings to our students what they need to succeed in the 21st century," said Louie. "We provide the electives, the technology, the excellence that has served the community well. Our goal will be to sustain this quality education in spite of the financial situation we face." Louie is concerned that, as the financial situation of the District deteriorates further, the great system and the strong team that serves it might have to be dismantled; once broken, it would be very hard to rebuild. "The system I've had the privilege to work for has served our community well, there is no more room for cuts," he said. "People need to understand what the situation is."

Louie acknowledges that the community's support has been great over the past year. "The parcel tax failed by only 100 votes," he noted. "We need a clear goal and clear message to get everyone on board." Louie can be reached at [dlouiemd@gmail.com](mailto:dlouiemd@gmail.com).

Shari Simon has been involved with the District since 2005 and has served in many capacities, including President of the Moraga Education Foundation. She was a Senior Vice President at Oracle Corporation. Her youngest child just entered fourth grade. "I believe in our schools," said Simon, "and want to continue to help make our schools as terrific as they can be. My involvement with MEF, PTA and our site councils has given me the opportunity to really understand how school funding works. Reduced state funding creates difficulty, but we have talented teachers, a great population of kids and parents, and we can do a lot to augment what the State provides."

Simon agrees that a local parcel tax will go a long way toward maintaining the quality of education that Moragans have come to expect from their schools, especially if the Governor's tax plan isn't approved. "Reasonable class size, technology, and enrichment programs are things that need funding," she said.

Simon believes that her experience in the private sector, coupled with the years she's spent fundraising for the schools, will make her a great addition to the Board. "I'm a community builder; I will work to bring people together-across our whole community-to make our district successful." Simon can be reached at [sharisimon@yahoo.com](mailto:sharisimon@yahoo.com).



Parker Colvin



Incumbent Dexter Louie



Shari Simon

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