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## Meet the Newest School Board Member

By Cathy Tyson



Suzy Pak Photo provided

Running for the Lafayette School District Governing Board, which oversees all of Lafayette's elementary schools and Stanley Middle School, was easy for Suzy Pak - with three seats open and only three people interested in the positions, all were appointed and avoided the hassles of running a campaign.

One current board member, Art Kapoor, will step down when his term ends this month, thus opening up a seat. Two existing members - Teresa Gerring, the current board president who has served since 2000, and David Gerson, who is currently serving as clerk of the board and joined in 2010 - chose to continue on the board.

Pak's husband, Mark Gundacker, was very supportive of his wife throwing her hat in the ring for the seat, suggesting that since his wife attends so many school meetings, perhaps she ought to think about running for the board.

A product of California's public schools, Pak has a bachelor's degree in economics from UC

Santa Cruz and an MBA from San Jose State

University. She's been an active community volunteer, serving on a number of boards, including the Springhill Elementary Parent Faculty Club, Lafayette for Education, and Educate our State; she also worked on the parcel tax campaigns of 2011 and 2014.

Clearly an adept multitasker, Pak, the mother of two girls, has been serving the community while working in asset management for more than two decades. She works for ClearBridge Investments in San Francisco as a client service manager.

Despite the busy schedule, Pak and Gundacker are passionate about the power of public education and have made it a family priority to give back to the community.

She's well aware of the relatively recent changes to school funding with the Local Control Funding Formula and cites the importance of the recently passed parcel tax as a "great testament of the value the community places on supporting public schools."

State mandated Common Core requirements, which establish clear, consistent standards for students focusing on critical thinking and analytical skills, is now in its first year of implementation and is the "new normal," says Pak. In her opinion the local roll out has been relatively smooth, due to a substantial amount of professional development for teachers along with a concerted outreach effort to parents.

Pak wants to encourage parents and members of the community to attend the monthly school board meetings, to become even more aware and involved. Meetings are generally held at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Stanley Middle School library, 3455 School Street. Pak will be officially sworn in at the Dec. 10 meeting. The public is welcome to attend the meeting, not only to welcome the newest board member but to also hear about items on the agenda ranging from a technology update to a draft of the 2015-16 calendar and the first interim budget report. For more information and a schedule of board meetings, go to [www.lafsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.lafsd.k12.ca.us).

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