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## New School Board Hits the Ground Running

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Bruce Burns, Jim Obsitnik, Parker Colvin, Shari Simon, Jon Nickens, Heather O'Donnell Photo Andy Scheck



Heather O'Donnell



Jon Nickens



Jim Obsitnik Photos S. Braccini

A new school board took its place on the Moraga School District dais for the first time Dec. 9. Three of the five board members are brand new to the job – Heather O'Donnell, Jon Nickens and Jim Obsitnik; the other two, board president Shari Simon and vice president Parker Colvin, have been on the board for only two years. The previous board had members who served for many terms; most of their children had long since left Moraga schools. All of those on the new board have children currently enrolled in the district, some still in elementary school. The newcomers share an interest in bringing more technology to the classroom; but like their predecessors, they value and respect the school district.

Their first agenda was not light. The three new members dove into the thick of things with a budget presentation, including a two-year projection that includes the rising cost of pensions; a summary of the dis-

trict's goals and policies; and the anticipation of the coming bargaining process with the unions. The new members asked pointed questions, showing that the matters at hand were not foreign to them.

They all have significant experience in the district. O'Donnell, whose third child is in seventh grade at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, has been a PTA president and very active in the schools for the past 10 years; Nickens was on the board of the Moraga Education Foundation, the Rheem Elementary School Site Council, and has volunteered in classrooms. Obsitnik served on the Moraga Planning Commission for several years; he, too, volunteered at Rheem Elementary. He and his wife, Anna, were very involved with the school district in the aftermath of the Kristen Cunnane case, as they worked with the superintendent to make sure that the safety of students is at the forefront of the district's priorities.

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