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Lafayette School District names new superintendent

Submitted by Dawn Lynn Lanier



Dr. Brent Stephens Photo provided

The Lafayette School District Governing Board has appointed Dr. Brent Stephens as its next superintendent, effective July 1. For the past three years, Stephens has been the superintendent of Berkeley Unified School District, successfully leading that district through the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on equity and access, and prior to that, serving as the chief academic officer for San Francisco Unified School District, where he oversaw curriculum, coaching, and professional development.

The process of selecting the next superintendent for Lafayette was a community effort, and the Governing Board is grateful to everyone who shared ideas, opinions, and priorities for the district and its leadership during the search process. "The appointment process underscored that Lafayette is unquestionably a destination district, as it produced many worthy applicants," Board President Rob Sturm said. "One

candidate, however, clearly stood out in all respects - we have great confidence that Dr. Stephens will be a tremendous addition, continuing our district's long-standing tradition of inspiring superintendent leadership."

Stephens began his teaching career as a Spanish bilingual teacher in Oakland, and later in Boston, supporting immigrant students and their families. While working as a teacher in Boston, Stephens achieved National Board certification, the country's highest professional distinction. Stephens' experience as a school principal in both elementary and middle school settings has helped build on his knowledge of standards-based teaching, scaffolding and differentiation, and the positive role that students' own backgrounds and cultures should play in classrooms. During his tenure as the Chief Academic Officer in San Francisco, Stephens led the creation and implementation of innovative curriculum in all subject areas, and worked closely on Special Education issues, including more equitable redistribution of Special Day Classes around the district and research-based approaches to reading instruction.

Most recently, as superintendent of the Berkeley Unified School District, Stephens spearheaded Investments in educational equity, including early literacy, special education, and mental health supports, as well as partnerships and programs to support the district's African American, LatinX, and AAPI students and families.

"I'm excited to join the Lafayette community," said Stephens, "and begin to get to know the students, families, and staff who make the Lafayette School District such a well-regarded district."

Stephens holds a doctorate from Harvard University and his work on school reform has been published by Harvard Education Press. When he is not working, he loves to spend time with family, hike the East Bay hills, and make art and music.

Superintendent Richard Whitmore looks forward to working with Stephens to ensure a smooth transition.

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