

Letters to the editor

A moderate's take on what is needed for the Lafayette School Board

To fellow residents who may also be in political limbo: the past two years have been a roller coaster with prior perspectives possibly in flux. That has certainly been my experience and perhaps yours. And it's OK.

So you know, I'm a triple vaccinated registered Democrat; definitely not a "Trumper" nor anti-vaxxer. The fact that I feel the need to state this says a lot about where we are today.

As for our local schools, I believe there have been failed policies and a misalignment of priorities that negatively impact our kids and our community. We all know the Lafayette School Board kept kids in distance learning months longer than required. But even now, it's astounding that in the 2022-2023 District Goals (bit.ly/LAFSD_Goals), there's no mention of working with parents on long-needed after-school care and no mention of nutrition, greatly important especially post-pandemic. Plus, the essentials of "health and safety" are lumped together in one vague bullet point - and this document was reviewed and approved by the Board despite Sandy Hook, Parkland, Uvalde and the death of our own crossing guard Ashley Dias. These omissions are concerning.

The Lafayette School Board's failure to "advocate for children" - a responsibility stated in its Governance Handbook - has greatly contributed to my questioning of institutions that I've vehemently supported. But that's exactly what I want for our kids. While we may not always agree, I want our schools to be teaching students how to respectfully understand multiple viewpoints, use their brains and think critically.

I fear our current school board is not an embodiment of this and it's being reflected in our community. I believe all candidates want EVERY child to succeed and feel included, just as I do. There are just differences on how we get there and the roles in which our schools play. That said, as the school district has put DEIB above Curriculum and Instruction (see lafsd.org, "District" dropdown menu), then we need diverse perspectives.

Electing new voices gives us that. You have three individual votes. Use them. Our children and community will be better for it. Lauren McCabe Herpich Lafayette

Lafayette School Board Elections

Our public schools in Lafayette are among the best in the country. There are so many who contribute to our schools' success, but today I write to show support to our district's elected School Board and to encourage you to vote for incumbents Rob Sturm and Dave Smith this Fall.

The lockdown year was hard. But with no playbook, no roadmap, our Board came together, listened to our community, to state, Federal, and local guidance, and to a chorus of strong voices to find a safe and balanced way forward. As a parent of two young children, I appreciated their efforts to keep our kids learning.

Rob, Dave and the Board are committed to academic excellence, high performing schools, and to teaching our kids a broad perspective on history, culture, family, and what it means to be a kind citizen. Teaching our kids a diverse, "broad perspective" makes some folks uncomfortable. It shouldn't.

The world is diverse. Embracing that fact and working steadily against the tribal tendencies we all have is important if our children are going to be successful in an interconnected, interdependent society. Here in The Bay, we're blessed with the opportunity to engage with people, language, history, and cultures outside our own lived experience. That's a plus. Gaining that diverse, "broad perspective" is an advantage available to our kids. And they will all be better citizens because of it.

Rob Sturm, Dave Smith and our current Board supports lessons that offer a diverse, global view interwoven with traditional reading, math, and history lessons. To continue to build the strength of our schools, to highlight and celebrate all the colors of California, Lafayette deserves School Board leaders who are committed to welcoming diverse perspectives in the classroom.

Rob Sturm and Dave Smith have demonstrated a commitment to our community, to supporting and promoting a diverse and inclusive school, and to an open and transparent district. Please join me in voting for Rob and Dave for Lafayette School Board this Fall. Robert Chevaleau Lafayette

In support of Lind, Larsen for Lafayette School District board

I am writing to ask for your support in voting for Sarah Lind and Neils Larsen in the upcoming election for the Lafayette School Board.

I have a son at Burton Valley Elementary School and a daughter at Stanley Middle School. I am a former teacher in the district and have worked with the youth in our community in many capacities. I currently substitute teach in our Lafayette schools and care deeply about the future of our students.

Like many parents, I had never been to a

school board meeting until our schools were forced to close their doors in March of 2020. At that point I spent many evenings attending board meetings and was disillusioned by the apparent disconnect between the voices of the families and the decisions of the board.

Lind and Larsen have children in our district and are dedicated members of our community. They are focused on partnering with parents and teachers to keep their voices and the student needs at the center of their decision making process. They believe in keeping our students safe, promoting academic excellence, and fiscal responsibility (which includes responding to the enrollment declines our district experienced over the last few years).

Join me in voting for Sarah Lind and Neils Larsen for the Lafayette School Board. Tracy Morrison Lafayette

Conservatives Target School Board Elections Nationwide and in Lamorinda

In 2020, Donald Trump spread the lie that the election was stolen. His supporters illegally accessed voting machines, urged elections officials to overturn the results, and sent false slates of electors to Congress. General Michael Flynn called for Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act, seize voting machines, and have the military rerun the election. On January 6, 2021, Trump supporters and organized militias stormed the Capitol to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power.

In 2022, conservatives have turned their focus to state and local politics. Leaders have promoted conspiracy theories about election fraud and "indoctrination" in public schools. States have banned abortion and passed laws restricting DEI and LGBTQIA education. Libraries have been ordered to pull books from the shelves. Militia members have threatened elections officials, school board members, and the LGBTQIA community. Flynn has endorsed candidates throughout the country for state and local elections, including school boards. He said "We need to take this country back one town at a time, one county at a time, one state at a time, if that's what it takes."

However, this is not just happening in far away places. It is happening right here in Lamorinda. Conservative candidates are running coordinated campaigns for Acalanes Unified High School District (AUHSD) and Lafayette School District (LAFSD). The campaigns' websites call for "transparency" and "critical thinking over ideologies", implying that teachers have a hidden agenda and are trying to "indoctrinate" children.

Some candidates have close ties to nationally prominent political operatives. Contra Costa County's elections website shows contributions from wealthy donors inside and outside Lamorinda, including one of the biggest donors to both Turning Point USA and Project Veritas. One candidate's immediate family members have close relationships with Michael Flynn. Another candidate managed Peter Thiel's investment funds for years, and was tapped by Thiel for Trump's 2016 Treasury transition team.

Educate yourself on this year's candidates, their associations, their language and their goals. Educate your friends and family, donate, put up signs, and get out the vote. This year is different. Chad Curran Orinda

Trump Appointee Running for Lamorinda High Schools board

The Republican party recently began a national campaign to take over local school boards as part of efforts to control state and local elected bodies. We are seeing the effect locally with a slate of three candidates, running as a bloc, for the Acalanes Union High School District board which oversees Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas and Miramonte High Schools.

The Wall Street Journal (Dec. 7, 2016) reported that current Lafayette resident Mark Woolway had been appointed by Trump to his transition team for the Treasury Department. Woolway was an associate of Peter Thiel at Paypal, and The Guardian on Feb. 10, 2017 attributed Woolway's appointment to his close association with Thiel. Woolway is part of a three-person AUHSD slate which includes Renee Nowac and Gabe Ledeen. Ledeen is no lightweight in Libertarian circles either; the Federalist Society, the group responsible for Trump's Supreme Court selections, published a very laudatory report on Ledeen on Nov. 18, 2021.

None of them have children attending any of the Lamorinda high schools. So what is their motivation? These candidates talk about "transparency" and "critical thinking" in our schools, as if they are being impaired. They make no mention of the extraordinary academic standing of the high schools overseen by the board.

We urge you to reject this takeover attempt and to vote for incumbents Nancy Kendierski and Chris Severson and candidate Jennifer Chen for the Acalanes Union High School District board. Jim Landau Orinda

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Election Season SPECIAL POLICY: Letters to the Editor Letters related to a candidate running for office should be a maximum of 200 words so that we will have room to publish as many letters as possible. Letters regarding ballot measures will remain up to 350 words maximum. Deadline is now NOON on Thursday prior to the issue date. Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence - we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate and be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Lamorinda Weekly reserves the right to refuse publishing a letter submission. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, 1480 Moraga Road STE C #202, Moraga, CA 94556

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Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board

- Orinda resident 34 years with wife Kathie; raised three children, all MHS grads
- Teacher MHS, retired; still Coaching MHS football & golf
- Firewise Neighborhood Leader
- Passionate Community Volunteer



- Commitment to:**
- Maintain excellent fire and medical services
 - Focus on fire prevention
 - Use technologies to improve operations
 - Be responsive to community concerns
 - Supports full staffing of an Orinda ambulance

"I endorse Vince Dell'Aquila as the best person to serve on the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board."
Karen Mendonca, Former Moraga Mayor



"Vince Dell'Aquila has served our communities admirably as a professional and a volunteer for decades and he would be a superb Moraga-Orinda Fire District Director."

Amy Worth, Orinda City Council, Former Mayor

*Titles listed for identification only. Paid for by Vince Dell'Aquila for Moraga Orinda Fire District 2022, FPPC pending