

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



Epstein to seek third term on Goleta school board

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Susan Epstein, president of the Goleta School District board of trustees, said Wednesday that she plans to run for a third term this November.

Ms. Epstein, who has served eight years on the board, told the News-Press that she is running to build on recent district achievements, such as maintaining class offerings and boosting test scores.

"I'm very proud of our district and its high academic achievement," she said. "Test scores have increased from a district average of 765 when I joined the board to over 860 this year."

Ms. Epstein, an attorney and Stanford University graduate, was the top vote-getter in a five-way race for two open seats when first elected in 2004.

At the time, Ms. Epstein ran on a platform of promoting fiscal responsibility, which she says has helped the board prepare for the fiscal challenges exacerbated by the state budget crisis.

"During our surplus years, I proposed and we now follow a practice of allocating funding for two years out rather than the current year," Ms. Epstein said in an email to the News-Press.

"This allowed us to plan ahead when the economy shifted and avoid sudden program changes for our students."

Ms. Epstein, who ran unopposed for re-election in 2008, taught journalism and government in a public high school and has served as executive director and board chair of nonprofit organizations, according to her website.

Ms. Epstein told the News-Press that Yvonne DeGraw, a technical writing consultant with children in the district, is planning to run for the seat left vacant by Dr. Dean Nevins, who has also served on the board for eight years.

Dr. Nevins, who waged an unsuccessful campaign for a seat on the Santa Barbara Unified School District board of trustees in 2010, will not seek re-election this year, Ms. Epstein said.

In an email to the News-Press, Ms. DeGraw stated that she has been active in PTAs at Kellogg Elementary School, where she has a child in third grade, and Goleta Valley Junior High School, where she has a child in seventh grade.

Ms. DeGraw serves as the co-chair of programs for the Science & Engineering Council of Santa Barbara and, with her husband, has taught after-school science classes at Kellogg Elementary for the past six years.

The board of trustees voted Tuesday to formally order an election to fill the two seats in November. Candidates may obtain and file nomination papers with the county clerk-recorder's office between July 16 and Aug. 10.

In other business, the Goleta school board will hold a special closed session meeting today with representatives of the search firm Leadership Associates to discuss the hiring of a superintendent to replace Dr. Kathleen Boomer.

Candidates were recruited to apply for the position from January to the end of March. The board is now interviewing selected candidates, with finalist interviews scheduled for April 25.

Dr. Boomer announced in January that she will step down in June, marking the end of a 31-year career in public education and seven years as superintendent of Goleta schools.

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