

Leading our unique district a responsibility I hold dear

By Eimear O'Brien, Ed.D.
Superintendent

AS I write this column for *CUSD Today*, news that I plan to retire from my role as Superintendent at the end of June, and which I shared publicly in late January is spreading. This decision did not come easily, because serving this community, our students, and employees of this incredible school district has been the greatest privilege of my life.



Eimear O'Brien,
Ed.D.

Twenty-six years ago, I found my home away from home in Clovis Unified because of its people and the transformative purpose in which, together, we are engaged on behalf of our students. This special community will always hold an unmatched place in my heart, but my role as a daughter to my mother in Ireland is calling to me as well and I recognize that it is time for me, like so many of you, to play a larger role in caring for my aging parent. While that does not mean I am moving to Ireland, it will allow me to spend prolonged periods of time present for my mom's care... time that we cannot get back once it is gone.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity allowed me by the seven individuals serving on our Governing Board to lead the Clovis Unified School District. Through challenging times, our Governing Board has worked with me to keep the best interests of our students and the well-being of the people who serve them as our first priority.

Keeping this priority in mind, over the past six years, our teamwork has been recognized at the

state and national level with (among others):

- 3 National Blue Ribbon Awards
- 13 California Distinguished School Awards
- 1 Model Continuation School Award
- 5 National Schools to Watch Awards

■ 28 California Pivotal Practice Awards in 2022

- 14 Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Educator of the Year Award finalists and six award winners
- 54 Honor Roll School Recognitions
- 43 Bonner Character Awards
- 51 Positive Behavior Inter-

ventions & Support Awards

- 41 Statewide Civic Learning Awards

I will be fully present in our schools and community until my final day in Clovis Unified, which is currently planned for late June of this year, well after the conclusion of our current school year. Members of our Governing Board will

now begin a search process to ensure that the next person to assume the responsibility of leading Clovis Unified is an excellent match for the unique needs of our community.

In the coming weeks, you will be kept informed of this search and provided opportunities to share your voice in plans for our District's future. It is their intent to complete this process well before the conclusion of my tenure, allowing time for me to transition smoothly with the next Superintendent before my departure in June.

While there is never a perfect time to retire from a responsibility you hold dear, I believe we are well-positioned for this change in leadership because of the strong footing on which our district schools stand, benchmark assessments are showing students are back on track to recover from learning loss experienced during the worldwide tumult of the COVID pandemic, and future planning is well underway to serve the community's residential growth with new elementary and secondary schools.

After 26 years in our district, I have never felt more strongly that Clovis Unified is not about any single leader or individual, instead it is about the collective achievement that can be accomplished by a group of people working together, holding high standards, and keeping students at the center of every decision.

I believe in this educational team and its mission for students. I believe in Clovis Unified. I believe in the ability of this team to be a beacon of excellence for our students, our community and our nation now and into the future. How wonderful to have had the privilege to work in an organization worthy of such belief.

I will always remain humbly grateful for my "home away from home."

LESSONS

Inspirations by, for and from our CUSD students



Special to *CUSD Today*

Lincoln Elementary boys basketball players celebrate upon winning first place in the District Championships in January! Fugman Elementary captured the title for the girls basketball team. In the District Elementary Wrestling Championships, Dry Creek earned the top spot with a team total of 210 points. Congratulations to all athletes on your effort and teamwork during winter sports!

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

HELEN KELLER