

“The ability to read, write and analyze, the confidence to stand up and demand justice and equality; the qualifications and connections to get your foot in the door and take your seat at the table—all of that start with education.” Michelle Obama

I am announcing today that I will not be seeking reelection for the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education District 6. This decision is not one I take lightly, but I must weigh the needs of family and my own career and balance it with the type of board member I want to be and the citizens of my district deserve.

I have always believed that education opens doors to a world of possibilities. As an educator who has just completed my 34th year in the Los Angeles Unified School District, I thought I well knew many of the challenges facing schools. However, I can now say that being on the board at Pasadena Unified has opened my eyes to a world of constant pressures in pursuit of excellence in educating the children of our community. The fight is one worth having as a community as we attempt to navigate the difficult work of providing a quality education for each student.

I am quite proud of the accomplishments and progress we have made as a district during my time on the board. We have had some very difficult conversations at the board level on a whole host of issues. While we have not always agreed with each other, the discussions were meaningful and thoughtful. One of the wonderful aspects of our current board is that, although we come from different places, every person on the board is dedicated to the wellbeing of children. For that, I couldn't be more grateful.

I also want to take a moment to publicly thank Superintendent Dr. Brian McDonald. I truly believe his educational philosophy is often at the heart of the work we do and together the Board and Superintendent make quite a formidable team. I think our district is stronger because of his leadership. One need only look at the “distance learning” program which the district implemented on March 13 following the school closures because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Unlike many districts, Pasadena Unified really did not miss a beat. We literally changed our entire model of teaching over a weekend. This is a tremendous accomplishment that could only have been done with all people moving in the same direction. And that starts with leadership at the top of the organization.

I also want to thank our teachers and staff. I have walked onto many campuses in my time as a board member and am so thankful and appreciative of our employees. The dedication all of you have to the mission of educating children is heartening to me. In all honesty, I never had a doubt about the change from face-to-face learning to an on-line educational program we experienced because I know the quality of the work force that is PUSD!

I would also like to thank the community for their support of our schools. Before assuming office, I had thought that many were ambivalent to K-12 education. I could not have been more wrong. From the mayors, city councils, town councils and the many non-profits organization that partner with us to citizens who want to volunteer in their community, please know our schools are better places for your efforts.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Carole, and my children, Camille and Emilie, for their support. Being a board member meant missing birthdays and performances. They were always willing to work around my schedule which in turn allowed me to do this important work.

Again, thank you for your confidence in me. It truly means everything.

Lawrence Torres
Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education
District 6