

Santa Maria-Bonita School District Selects New Superintendent

Dr. Darren McDuffie



The Santa Maria-Bonita School District Board of Education is pleased to announce that Dr. Darren McDuffie has been selected as the new superintendent of schools. The Board voted unanimously to approve Dr. McDuffie's appointment at the March 23 Board Meeting. He is scheduled to begin his position on July 1, 2022.

Dr. McDuffie comes to SMBSD from the Rialto Unified School District, where he has been the Deputy Superintendent/Lead Strategic Agent for Strategics, Congruence and Social Justice since 2018. In that role, he supports approximately 25,500 preschool through 12th grade students and more than 2,700 employees at 29 schools. During his time with Rialto USD, Dr. McDuffie has led that district's implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan, initiated equity and social justice framework and training, and managed district operations.

Dr. McDuffie has more than 28 years of experience in K12 public schools. Prior to his position with Rialto USD, he served as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources/Personnel for the Alvord Unified School District in Riverside, Chief Human Resources Officer for the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and Executive Director of Personnel for the Capistrano Unified School District.

During nearly three decades in education, Dr. McDuffie has excelled in his work at the school site level as a middle school principal, elementary school principal, middle school teacher, and 4th and 5th grade teacher. He also served eight years in the United States Army, including serving in Operation Desert Storm. He achieved the rank of Sergeant, E-5 before he was honorably discharged.

Dr. McDuffie's extensive educational background includes a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Southern California, a Master's in Instruction from Central Michigan University, and a Bachelor's in Elementary Education from Augsburg College in Minneapolis.

Dr. McDuffie says he is humbled and honored by his selection. "I am excited about the opportunity to lead the Santa Maria-Bonita School District. Together, we can make the aspirations and dreams of Santa Maria students become a reality," he said. "With the strong vision of the Board of Education, our district will thrive in academic and social emotional growth - and do what is in the best interest of students."

Dr. McDuffie enjoys spending time with friends and family. He is a sports fan - the Lakers, Rams and USC Trojans are his favorite teams. He was involved in performing arts and music as a high school student and has an innate passion for Fine Arts.

The SMBSD Board selected Dr. McDuffie after a four-month nationwide search process.

Dr. McDuffie succeeds Superintendent Luke Ontiveros, who retired from SMBSD in December of 2021. Deputy Superintendent Matt Beecher will continue as acting superintendent until Dr. McDuffie begins his new position.

The school district will schedule meet and greet opportunities for students, families, staff and the community this summer.