

# Livermore school board appoints Van Schaack as next superintendent

Deputy superintendent to take reins starting Aug. 1

by **Cierra Bailey / Pleasanton Weekly**

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Chris Van Schaack has been promoted to superintendent of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District. (Photo courtesy LVJUSD)

The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District named deputy superintendent Chris Van Schaack the new superintendent of schools this week.

The decision comes nearly three weeks after 12-year Superintendent Kelly Bowers [publicly announced](#) her plans to retire at the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

"Chris is more than prepared to take on the role of Superintendent. He understands the needs of our District and has great vision for propelling it forward. He has the full endorsement of our Board and the enthusiastic support of our colleagues to take our District to even greater heights. It is with great pride that I pass the baton to him," Bowers said of her successor and longtime colleague.

Van Schaack has worked alongside Bowers since 2012 and as deputy superintendent since 2017. He is set to officially take on the role of superintendent starting Aug. 1.

"I recognize the level of trust that goes with assigning responsibility for 13,000 students and 1,500 employees, and I commit to our Board and community that not a day will go by when I do not appreciate that in my leadership and decision making," Van Schaack said, following Tuesday night's unanimous vote by the Board of Education to appoint him to the superintendent position.

Van Schaack's appointment also garnered the support of the Livermore Education Association (LEA) which represents LVJUSD's teachers.

"On behalf of LEA members, I want to support the promotion of Chris Van Schaack as the new superintendent of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District. We believe this consistency in leadership will be of benefit to our students," said LEA president Aimee Thompson at Tuesday's school board meeting.

District officials said that succession planning began internally upon Bowers' announcement of her intent to retire. At the time, the board approved a contract with executive search and leadership development firm Leadership Associates to facilitate an accelerated pre-screening and to help guide and assist with the interview, selection and contract negotiation process for a new superintendent.

"It was important for (the Board) to have a thorough, yet efficient process for appointing a new Superintendent to ensure the continuity of leadership going into a new school year. Mr. Van Schaack was appointed Deputy Superintendent several years ago as part of the succession planning process that our Board and Superintendent Bowers put in place," said school board president Craig Bueno.

"Today, we confirm that our Board's priorities and vision for the future are aligned with Mr. Van Schaack's priorities and vision. We have every

confidence he will continue to lead LVJUSD forward into what we plan to be a very promising tomorrow for Livermore students," he added.

Van Schaack began his career with LVJUSD in 1994 as a high school teacher and coach and served as an elementary and high school principal as well as director of student services & special education before becoming assistant superintendent of administrative services in 2011 and deputy superintendent in 2017.

During his tenure with LVJUSD, he has led the district's negotiations team for the past 12 years and played a pivotal role in the district's management of and response to the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two and a half years, among other responsibilities.

Van Schaack lives in Livermore with his wife Leslie and all of their children attended and graduated from Livermore schools. Officials said he will have an opportunity to address district staff and share his vision for the future at LVJUSD's annual kick-off event ahead of the first day of school on Aug. 23.

The district plans to replace the deputy superintendent position with an assistant superintendent of administrative services later this summer.