

Redlands Unified Superintendent Lori Rhodes announces retirement

By Kristina Hernandez, Redlands Daily Facts

Posted: Friday, April 28, 2017 12:40 p.m. PDT

(REDLANDS) Longtime school district Superintendent Lori Rhodes announced her retirement Friday in a letter addressed to her Redlands Family.

“Perhaps there is no perfect time to retire, but my family and I believe this is time,” [Rhodes said in the letter](#). “I have loved this job, and I have loved this work. But after graduations are over in June, I will be moving over to the sidelines to enthusiastically cheer you on.”

Rhodes, 55, is retiring after nearly three decades in public education and almost 10 years as Redlands Unified School District’s superintendent. Her last day is June 9.

[The district named Rhodes superintendent in January 2008](#). She is the first woman to serve as the district’s superintendent.

The Board of Education plans to meet May 9 to discuss the search for a new superintendent. Board President Donna West said the process will not be rushed “so we will likely name an interim superintendent to manage the district during our search.”

Rhodes began her career in public education in Fontana in 1988 as an elementary schoolteacher before moving on to administrative roles for the district. In 2002, Rhodes came to Redlands Unified as its assistant superintendent of educational services and was later promoted to deputy superintendent in 2007.

Her work in education was recognized several times. She is a past Teacher of the Year recipient, an honor Rhodes earned in 1994, and she received a top management award in 2000. In 2015, Rhodes was named the Association of California School Administrator’s Region 12 Superintendent of the Year.

She earned both her bachelor’s and masters degrees at the University of Redlands.

Rhodes’ work as superintendent included navigating the district through an economic crisis, which brought millions in cuts, and the implementation of several programs dedicated to moving students forward in their career and education goals.

“As a district, we have successfully put into place new math and language arts curriculum ... and are making a real difference for kids, and we have a plan to address rising pension costs for the next few years,” Rhodes said in her letter. “It’s time for me to give this very special school district to another leader that can continue taking the students and our community to the next level of excellence.”

Rhodes received an outpouring of support after her announcement.

“Your visionary leadership has made all the difference for every one of our students. #differencemaker,” wrote Miki Inbody, RUSD’s assistant superintendent of educational services, on Twitter.

“I’m very disappointed to see Lori retire as she has been an outstanding champion and educator for all students in the Redlands Unified School District,” Neal Waner, a former school board member, said by phone. “I hope the positive landscape that she has created will continue to benefit students for years to come.”

In a news release, West said Rhodes implemented programs that touch every student in the district.

“She has always focused on student success,” West said. “We are so grateful for her leadership, devotion, energy, organizational skills and her unswerving commitment to excellence.

“She will be deeply missed,” West added, “but she certainly has earned her retirement.”

Rhodes has lived in Redlands 30 years with her husband, Mike, and three children who attended RUSD schools.