

NEWS

Former Hermosa Beach superintendent rehired as interim chief

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A familiar face is returning to the superintendent's office in the Hermosa Beach City School District.

Alan Rasmussen, who served as the district's chief from 1996 to 1999, was hired this week to serve as interim superintendent. He takes over in January.

"I'm very excited about the opportunity (and) I'm looking forward to it," Rasmussen said. "It's like coming back home again."

Rasmussen replaces Bruce Newlin, who is retiring as superintendent after three years. The district is hoping to hire a permanent superintendent in June, but needed someone with leadership qualities to keep its two public schools afloat during the transition.

Earlier this year, the retired Rasmussen, 65, finished serving as superintendent for the Ocean View School District after three years. Previously, he spent time as chief executive officer with the Education Support System Services, was interim executive director with City Heights Education, was an adjunct professor at the University of La Verne and was superintendent for the Merced City School District from 2000 to 2005.

Rasmussen had left Hermosa Beach for the Merced job, saying he wanted to try his hand at leading a large district, but said he loved overseeing Hermosa View and Valley schools.

"It's the best private/public schools in the state," he said, implying the campuses are so strong in academics and parental support that they feel like private schools. "It still feels the same to me ... it's a very successful organization."

Rasmussen, who lives in Huntington Beach, was approved for the interim position on a 5-0 board vote. Board President Jack Burns said that of the three candidates who were interviewed, Rasmussen was the perfect fit because of his experience and familiarity in Hermosa Beach.

"He'd worked in the district before and has a tremendous amount of experience and can make an impact," Burns said.

The board will lean on Rasmussen's leadership the next few months as it continues to weigh its long-term options. The board is in the midst of considering the creation of a parcel tax or sales tax to help support school programs. It is also considering transforming the district into a charter school system or reorganizing the administration as possible solutions to the district's budget woes.

Burns said Rasmussen also will be asked to report on whether the district needs a full-time superintendent, should hire one on a part-time basis or not have one at all.

"We need to leave no stone unturned," Burns said. "I think this is really exciting, and we're very fortunate to have (Rasmussen)."

The district set aside \$140,000 for a 12-month interim superintendent position, which is about \$30,000 less than Newlin was being paid. Rasmussen signed a six-month contract, but will not work full time. Instead, he'll work when it's necessary and be paid on a daily rate.

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