



February 26, 2013

Board of Education
4100 Normal Street
San Diego, California 92103

Re: Letter of Retirement Notification

Trustees,

This correspondence is my formal notification that I will retire effective June 30, 2013. It is after much reflection and consultation with my family and with great mixed emotions that I make this decision. I have served in this district over the past seven school years. The retirement date coincides with the completion of my three-year employment contract as the Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). I want to thank you for the honor and privilege of leading this outstanding large urban, educational institution since my appointment as the Interim Superintendent in September 2009.

This tenure has been earmarked by both great resource challenge and solid academic achievement. At center stage, the Board, staff, and community have had to deal with incessant draconian cuts to the state and district budgets triggered by the single deepest and most prolonged economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Year after year, we have had to make the most difficult decisions impacting all stakeholder groups. Great collaboration and sacrifice by all have enabled us to accommodate the budget deficits. That said, we must relentlessly address the future year fiscal challenges with balanced, long-term budget solutions.

Concurrently, we have been able to maintain a laser focus on academic excellence and not allow the budget woes to distract from our core educational mission. The results speak for themselves. There have been very positive trends in attendance, standardized testing outcomes, graduation rates, and drop-out figures. San Diego Unified is consistently at the top of the list of California's large urban school districts relative to educational indicators. This is testimony to one of the hardest working and most dedicated teams that I have ever been associated with in my adult life. Our central office and campus staffs, certificated and classified personnel alike, are passionately committed to serving the children of San Diego. Their singular contributions coupled with the remarkable drive to excel of our students, and the steadfast support of our parents has made a positive, value-added difference.

I leave with much having been accomplished by our team and much to do in the years ahead. We have passed two construction bonds, Prop S and Prop Z that will overhaul our facilities in the decades ahead. We have implemented i21 and created several thousand "high tech" classrooms. The strategic process to create quality neighborhood schools is underway. The A-G curriculum shift is proceeding. Planning and professional development for the common core standards is happening in earnest. These are all critical undertakings that must continue with unswerving commitment and energy. I am confident that you and the staff, in partnership with the community, will safeguard the way ahead for all of these endeavors.

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In closing, I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity that I have had to serve in public education. It is a calling that demands great personal reserves and dedication at a time when there is incredible debate and flux in the American educational system. I have nothing but the highest admiration for the educators and educational support teams that devote their lives to working in, around, and for schools. I wish you and the staff the very best in the years ahead in graduating our children as college and career ready young adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. A. Kowba", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William A. Kowba
Superintendent

c: Cabinet
Area Superintendents