

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH Foothill's NICK STEPHANY ...

PRINCIPAL STRESSES CHARACTER

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FOR THE REGISTER

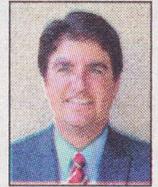
Dr. Nick Stephany, new to the Tustin Unified School District, is taking over for Foothill High School Principal Al Marzilli. Stephany has been an educator for 11 years and served most recently as principal at Palos Verdes High School in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District.

Stephany decided to begin a career in education during his senior year of undergraduate work at UC Davis. He volunteered as a football coach at his old high school and enjoyed working with kids and seeing them improve every day.

After earning his bachelor's degree at UC Davis in biochemistry and molecular biology, he taught biology and physics in Sacramento for two years before becoming a volunteer English teacher in the Marshall Islands. When he came back to the U.S., he went to Palos Verdes, where he taught, became an assistant principal for four years and a principal for the last two. During that time, he got his master's degree in educational administration from National University in 2007 and a doctorate in educational leadership from University of Southern California in 2011.

Stephany contributed to the school's implementation of a writing program and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, or STEM, programs during his eight years at Palos Verdes. Stephany also led his school to six-year Western Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation, a 50-point Academic Performance Index gain, and a California Distinguished School award.

Now at Foothill, Stephany's biggest goals are to teach his students good character, ethics and leadership that will contribute to their success after high school.



Stephany

1

Q. What is the most satisfying aspect of your career?

A. Seeing kids graduate from high school and go on to college and whatever they are doing after – seeing them be successful. It is a long four years of high school for a lot of students, so we are always making sure to support them and get them any kind of help they need so that we can see them successful and go on to do bigger things.

2

Q. What do you hope to accomplish during your first year as a new administrator in TUSD?

A. I would like to learn about the culture of Foothill, about the school and district and see how things are done. I want to see why Foothill is successful and why people from around the area see it as such a great school. I want to see what things are working well and can be improved, and then make those changes in the future. You can't make changes until you know what's working and what's not.

3

Q. What is your biggest goal in terms of your new position as Foothill's principal?

A. My biggest goal is to make sure all the kids are successful and have as many opportunities as possible in terms of their future after high school. I want to provide them with opportunities to go to college and get into a career right away and provide them with the information necessary to do so. I want to teach kids not only the right things in the classroom, such as Algebra and English, but also work ethic, leadership and integrity that will contribute to their future success.

4

Q. How do you think you will contribute to the success of the Tustin Unified School District?

A. I think that I will work hard and lead by example while bringing some new ideas to the district. At the same time, I see myself as a good leader who makes good decisions. I want what is best for the kids. Even if it is an unpopular decision, I will always make the right decisions for the kids.

5

Q. What do you hope TUSD students take away from their K-12 education?

A. Aside from basic subjects, I hope that Tustin Unified students leave with a good character. I want to help them learn what is right and what is wrong, and that if you work hard good things will come. I want them to gain good leadership skills, because that will help them throughout their life in terms of making decisions and in the long-run.