

From: Brett Ridgway bridgway@d49.org
Subject: Resignation
Date: June 22, 2022 at 9:59 PM
To:

BR

Dear SLT:

I have resigned my position as Chief Business Officer for School District 49, effective Friday, July 15, 2022.

This decision is difficult but, unfortunately, necessary. Despite all that has been accomplished over my 13+ years at D49, I cannot continue to perform my role, in the face of well over a year's worth of Board of Education, and Community, disorder, distortion and manipulation. The recent environment driven by frenetic, emotional, self-aggrandizing, pontifications has taken D49 back to the early part of the 2000's – back to the 'old Falcon days'; days we thought were behind us.

With no end in sight to the current rancor, I will approach the situation by pursuing the last and only remaining option of intentionally walking away from it. Continuing on, despite the difficulty, seems only to have enabled the discordant behavior that I no longer want to be associated with.

What my resignation definitely cannot be characterized as, is a political or ethical disagreement with the topics of the recent board and community conversation – i.e. the actual issues that are underneath the surface of the discussions in the recent months. The actual issues are good and appropriate issues to discuss; good issues to address, to pursue clarity on, and protection from, the potential harm. However, the manipulative portrayal of those issues, along with the disregard for propriety, decorum, and intellectual integrity, in the over-zealous pursuit of the opinions and manufactured crises surrounding these issues, has sacrificed the potential of being a strong, upstanding, forthright organization, that others can see and follow.

In the last fourteen months, overtly personal and political interpretations of objective issues have become the most highly pursued board items. Emotional justifications and rationalizations of extreme behaviors are incongruous with the beliefs and philosophies that the people portend to espouse. The acrimonious behavior fuels the culture war as much, or more than, it fights it.

In the end, I am confident that I leave behind a good organization – a better organization than I entered into 13 years ago. D49 is more agile, more sophisticated, more efficient and more effective. The Business Team can and will be successful IF they are allowed to do their work, through their training and expertise, in an environment of collaboration with the board and community, rather than one of consistent suspicion and confrontation.

Hard questions can be, and always should be, asked; but they should always be pursued with propriety and decorum, with honesty and humility in an earnest pursuit

or good information; so as to form good opinions, and to ultimately make good, informed, decisions.

As I leave District 49, I will endeavor to focus on the good things accomplished. In particular, I remember four successful elections in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018. Additional items include:

- Financing the acquisition of, then renovating, and then expanding, the facility that now knows as 'The Campus'.
- Financing/arranging the acquisition of, and then renovating, the former RMCA facilities at both Creekside and Horizon Middle School.
- Financing, Constructing, and now expanding Bennett Ranch Elementary School.
- Financing, and Constructing IVES, with space for the Homeschool Program.
- Financing, and Constructing ALLIES, after a previous strategy had run aground.
- Setting the financing for, and strategically negotiating the placement of, Elevation Middle School in a geographic area that is not yet due the district.
- Initiating the decennial refresh & refurbish pattern for all district buildings.
- Supporting the efforts to make District 49 a model organization through the Malcom Baldrige National Program for Performance Excellence. In the last completed iteration of the Annual Performance Report, D49 received its highest marks in the category of financial reporting.
- Improving District 49's credit rating so that the D49 rating is the same as other large districts in the state, which fueled five successful financing and refinancing actions completed in the last decade.
- Improving Teacher base pay by \$10,000 per year, & Improving ESP base pay by over 65%
- Establishing the Professional-Technical and the Special Service Provider Pay Schedules, as well as redesigning the Extra and Co-curricular pay schedule.
- Taking Mill Levy Override Operational Support from \$0 per year to nearly \$5mm per year, which will now also be supplemented with the State's Mill Levy Override Match program that I created and worked to get passed through the state legislature this year with bipartisan support.
- Helping D49 become an early adopter, and advocate for, financial transparency; and for not backing off of that even when state statute relaxed and no longer required the level of transparency that D49 still provides.
- The hiring and/or development of several members of the Business Office Team (HR, Finance, etc.), the Business Office Leadership Team (BOLT), and the Service & Leadership Team (SLT).
- The existence of, and the progress driven by, the VCT – (VoW [Voice of the Workforce] Collaboration Team) whose work includes the introduction of service award payments, double-step opportunities, the 5-5-90 plan, and their active support of the aforementioned MLO matching program.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity I have had here at District 49 to make an impact and to lead through difficult situations and innovate through and around

impact and to lead through difficult situations and innovate through and around difficult circumstances. I take pride in what we have all accomplished, together for this district – its students, the staff, and the community.

Sincerely,

Brett Ridgway
Chief Business Officer



*Providing stewardship, customer service and
communication through and with our business team*