San Joaquin County Office of Education swears in new Superintendent of Schools

Today Dr. Mick Founts was sworn-in as San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools at San Joaquin County Office of Education.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity to build on the strong foundation that we have created at SJCOE," said Founts. "Now more than ever, educational reform is needed to meet the needs of our students. This is not the time to cut programs such as the arts, music, and physical education; all ensure our students will graduate with a well-rounded breadth of educational skills that will allow them to be successful in the challenging future."

The ceremony opened with a few words from Mark Condit, a former student, then teacher for Founts while he served as an administrator. Fredrick A. Wentworth, the former Superintendent of Schools for more than 20 years, moved the presentation along by praising Founts before introducing Superior Court Judge Richard Vlavianos, a long-time Judge of San Joaquin County and advocate for at-risk youth and adults. Judge Vlavianos administered the Oath of Office. Founts’ philosophy and passion for enhancing the lives of students was felt throughout the room during the heart pounding performances of Venture Academy Family of Schools’ (VAFS) alumni. Michael Buchanan, class of 2010; his sister, Kirsten Seymour, class of 2006; and younger sister Leslie Watts, an eighth-grade graduate of VAFS, sang their rendition of Imagine by John Lennon. Jonathan Kral, class of 2010, then captivated audience members as he recited a monthly journal article written by Mick Founts in 1995 that outlined his dreams of the promise education holds for a brighter future.

Founts also announced Dr. Gary Dei Rossi will be the new Deputy Superintendent of Student Programs and Services at San Joaquin County Office of Education. Dr. Dei Rossi formerly served as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction at SJCOE. Dei Rossi’s counterpart, Jim Thomas, will remain the Deputy Superintendent of Business. The other members of the executive team also will remain: James Mousalimas, Assistant Superintendent of County Operated Schools and Programs and Kathleen Skeels, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education.

Prior to being Superintendent of Schools, Founts served as Deputy Superintendent where he oversaw a variety of key programs including special education, migrant education, teacher development, charter schools, alternative education, student events, and outdoor education. Founts developed the one. Alternative Education program, which is known to be one of the finest in the State. Founts has served as an educator for more than 30 years; however, first started as an English teacher, and coach of football and wrestling.

Aside from his role at SJCOE, Founts has been an active community member serving as a board member for United Cerebral Palsy and the Community Health Forum, as well as being an avid supporter of agricultural programs. Founts resides in Manteca with his wife, Kristin, a resource specialist at Tracy High, and two daughters, Larissa and Rashonne.

California’s Constitution establishes county offices of education to provide a support infrastructure for local schools and districts. SJCOE fulfills state mandates to audit district finances, register teacher credentials, certify school attendance records, and develop countywide programs to serve special student populations. In San Joaquin County, voters elect the superintendent of public schools and a five-member board of education. This year’s board members are President Dave Sorgent, Vice President Jill Fritchen, Gretchen Talley, Anthony J. Gutierrez, and Mark A. Thiel.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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