



Pacific Elementary School

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June 15, 2017

Dear Pacific Elementary Community,

As most of you already know, our much loved kindergarten teacher, Samira Hartje, has decided to pursue new opportunities. While we lament her departure, we are comforted in knowing that she will still be present on campus as a parent of two students, and she will even continue teaching as an involved parent volunteer in the Independent Studies Program.

For those who are concerned about what might happen next in Room 2, I have great news to report. Jennifer Bird, who taught at Pacific Elementary this past year, but had planned to accept an offer at a neighboring district, has agreed to stay with us as our new Kindergarten Teacher!

Ms. Bird is eminently qualified for the job. Her broad professional experience, extensive training, strong ties to the community, and connection to the school, are a perfect fit for our needs. It is difficult to imagine a better outcome.

Ms. Bird has over two decades of professional teaching experience in a wide variety of settings. She has taught in a Special Day Class in Santa Cruz, served as a Resource Specialist (e.g. what Lori Postie does) in Oakland & Santa Cruz, taught English in Mexico, served as a Community Education Coordinator in Alaska, and worked with at-risk students in Alaska.

Ms. Bird has earned several degrees and certifications. She has an Autism Authorization, a CLAD Certificate, a Level 2 Education Specialist Certificate, and a Masters Degree in Special Education. Her professional accomplishments include being a Baldridge in Education Presenter wherein she facilitated trainings throughout California. She earned the county's Exceptional Achievement in Teaching Award (as Ms. Postie did this year). She has served in several key roles in her former schools. Her references (who I know to be reliable) were both unanimous and effusive in their praise of Jen and her work.

Like her predecessor, Ms. Bird is also a parent at Pacific Elementary. While her daughter will be enrolled in Ms. Hettenhausen's class (Another teacher with a daughter at Pacific!), Ms. Bird did volunteer in Ms. Hartje's class when her daughter was in kindergarten. The two of them will commute from their organic farm in the hills above Davenport to school each day.

Many of you already know Jennifer Bird, so "welcome" isn't exactly the right word to express to her. Perhaps, "welcome back", "congratulations", or "it's about time" may be more appropriate. However you put it, we are very excited that she will be our kindergarten teacher next year!

Sincerely,

Eric Gross