

### Pike has been on board for 10 years

*YUSD has three board seats available*

By Cassidy Smith / Correspondent

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When Yosemite Unified School board member Priscilla Pike needs a teacher's perspective, she doesn't need to look far.

Pike's four children all became educators, ranging from the elementary level to college.

"I think it must have been my bringing them up with the idea of helping their fellow man and doing what they can in their communities," Pike said.

Pike, on the board for the past 10 years and seeking re-election to a four-year term, describes her leadership style as a hands-on approach.

"I think that the closer I am to the administration and teachers and everybody running the school, the better off we are," Pike said.

Pike is no stranger to the Oakhurst area. As a child, she helped teach a junior lifesaving class at Bass Lake, and she has owned property in Oakhurst since the 1950s. She and her family moved to the California coast, but later made the decision to return to the area.

"In '89," Pike said, "the children were all in college and on their own and I said I'm coming back to my mountains."

Pike, a court reporter for the past 27 years, got heavily involved in education issues when the state was debating creation of a community college in Oakhurst. She recalls taking a busload of kids to Sacramento to lobby for the college. After her efforts, area residents encouraged her to run for the school board, she said.

Her experience and love of the school and children are what Pike describes as her strong suits.

One of her proudest accomplishments was her part in founding the El Capitan Educational Foundation. That organization has given out over 100 scholarships to students attending the Oakhurst Community College Center.

As far as the controversial topic of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, Pike has a few problems with it.

"The difficulty I have personally with No Child Left Behind is that it's so narrowly laid out that it will never include a lot of students," Pike said. "It's a really fascinating concept but really isn't practical. Each child's educational needs need to be addressed at where that particular child is rather than just a broad rush of 'no child is left behind.'"

Standardized testing in general is something Pike agrees with.

"Standardized tests are fine because they tell us where the child is," Pike said. "When we have the child that is extremely intelligent, we can challenge that child. When we have the child that has special needs, we can prepare that child as best we can."

Pike praised the district's facilities as well as its staff.

"Our teaching staff is marvelous," she said. "Our campuses are first-rate and up to date, offering the child everything he needs. The district is just an exceptional district. I really would stand it up against any in the state."

A proposed four-day school week might improve the district's financial standing and Pike supports the research to see if the plan is viable.

"We have to emphasize that we're trying to get the community together to investigate it," Pike said. "Before we make a decision, we're going to investigate all parts. We've got information from schools all over the United States that have done it successfully and unsuccessfully."

Pike praised the district's efforts to help kids who are struggling at Yosemite High School.

Alternative schools are available for children having a tough time in regular high school classes. Unlike most alternative schools that require students to complete their education at the alternative site, students in the Yosemite Unified School District get a second chance to return to regular high school.

"If they feel like they can manage the high school campus again, then we invite them back," Pike said.



Priscilla Pike

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