

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

December 11, 2017

For Immediate Release

Contact: Robert Herman
Public Information Officer
(559) 733-6606 – office
(559) 303-8568 – cell

Tulare County Office of Education Announces: Jim Vidak will not seek eighth term as county superintendent

Visalia – Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak announced today that he does not intend to run for an eighth term in office next year. Rather, he will retire at the end of his seventh term, which ends December 31, 2018. Mr. Vidak was first elected to the office in 1990 and has run unopposed since.

“In the years that I have been Tulare County superintendent of schools, we have done amazing work,” he said. “We have been able to do so much because we have an incredibly talented staff. Many of our educators and administrators are recognized around the state for their leadership in instruction, special education, migrant education, early childhood education, human resources and credentialing, teacher recruitment and business services.”

Jim Vidak is the longest-serving county superintendent in California currently in office. The veteran educator is also Tulare County’s longest-serving county superintendent, an office which was established in 1854. Tulare County’s second longest-serving county superintendent was J.E. Buckman, who served from 1910 to 1934.

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Jim Vidak began his elementary school education at Richgrove School in southern Tulare County. He moved to Cecil Avenue School in Delano, before transferring to Orosi Elementary. Mr. Vidak graduated from Orosi High School in 1958. He attended California State University, Fresno, where he obtained his bachelor of education degree, completed graduate-level coursework and earned his teaching and administrative credentials.

In 1962, Mr. Vidak's first teaching assignment was in a fourth grade classroom at Mineral King School (now part of the Visalia Unified School District). In 1968, then 27-year-old Jim Vidak was selected as the first principal of Visalia Unified's new school, Crestwood Elementary. Mr. Vidak continued to serve as Crestwood's principal until he became director of the Tulare County Office of Education's (TCOE) outdoor education program, SCICON, in 1977. He returned to Visalia Unified in 1981 as deputy superintendent, where he remained until he was elected Tulare County superintendent of schools. During his career, Jim Vidak also taught continuing education courses for Fresno Pacific University, and elementary education classes for University of La Verne.

Jim Vidak is the recipient of the Outstanding Alumnus Award from California State University, Fresno, the California State Superintendent of the Year from the Association of California School Administrators, the Executive Leadership Award and the Champions Award from the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association and the Kremen Noted Alumni Special Recognition Award from Fresno State. Throughout his career, Mr. Vidak has been involved in numerous national, state and local education and community organizations. In the past, he has served

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

on the National CHARACTER COUNTS! Advisory Council, the City of Visalia Planning Commission, United Way of Tulare County, YMCA of Visalia and American Little League of Visalia. He currently serves on the board of the Fresno Historical Society and the Creative Center in Visalia – a program for adults with special needs.

Under his leadership as Tulare County superintendent of schools, Jim Vidak has overseen the creation or expansion of numerous TCOE programs, including:

The new TCOE Administration Building & Conference Center (Completed in 2015. The Conference Center was utilized for student events and educator trainings attended by over 40,000 people in its first year.)

The new Planetarium & Science Center (Completed in 2015)

The TCOE Theatre Company

The Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! Program, which has recognized over 100,000 Kids of Character since 22 years. A monument to the Six Pillars of Character was erected in Mooney Grove Park in 1997.

Eagle Point Village at SCICON

An online resource for teachers using California's new state standards, plus increased instructional and technological support to districts in Tulare and surrounding counties.

University Preparatory High School (an early-college charter school on the COS Visalia campus)

La Sierra Charter School (with a military-style academy for middle and high school students)

The California Friday Night Live Partnership, which serves 54 counties statewide with youth development and prevention programs.

CHOICES Prevention Programs and CHOICES After School Programs

College and Career Program, supporting career pathway programs in Tulare & Kings counties

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Teacher Induction Programs for beginning teachers

Gang prevention education

Migrant Education service to students and families in Tulare and Kings counties

Early Childhood Education, including the expansion of center- and home-base programs throughout the county

Some of the widest offerings of student events in the state, with programs in the visual and performing arts, science, history, mathematics, career exploration, language arts, and outdoor education

Statewide teacher recruitment, including the formation of the California Teacher Recruitment Program and the California Center on Teaching Careers

Alternative credentialing programs for teachers and administrators

Behavioral health services

Bright Start Parent/Infant Program for children ages 0-3 with special needs

Bright Future Program for students with autism.

For more information, on the Tulare County Office of Education, please call Robert Herman, public information officer, at (559) 733-6606.

TCOE