

Dr. Charlene West

Biography

Dr. Charlene West was elected to the Modesto City Schools Board of Education in November 2017. Most of her adult life has been spent in the field of education, beginning with work as a paraprofessional in deaf and hearing-impaired classrooms in the Bay Area in the early 1980s. She studied interpreting for the deaf at Ohlone College in Fremont, but soon realized her passion was to work directly with students in a classroom setting. She graduated with her Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies, with a minor in Theater, from California State University, Hayward.

In the late 1980s, Dr. West moved to Modesto and continued working with deaf and hearing-impaired students at Lakewood Elementary School and Downey High School. She also worked as a substitute teacher in general education classrooms throughout Modesto City Schools. It was while teaching at Downey High School that two of her students frequently shared their problems with her, and they often suggested she would “make a great counselor someday,” which prompted her to return to college to earn her Counseling Credential.

Dr. West earned her Master of Arts degree and Pupil Personnel Services Credential in School Counseling from California State University, Stanislaus. Immediately following graduation, she was asked to begin teaching graduate students in that program as an adjunct professor. After several years, she moved to teaching at Chapman University, and currently teaches graduate students in Counseling and Psychology at Brandman University.

Dr. West’s counseling career began in the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, where she spent six years counseling students in grades K-8. She then transitioned to the Sylvan Union School District, where she spent 17 years working with at-risk students, mostly at the middle school level. It was during this time she decided to go back to school, and earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oxford Graduate School in 2004.

Working directly with at-risk students and their families was extremely rewarding for Dr. West. She values diversity and is a strong advocate for children. In her personal life, she has two adult children and three grandchildren. Her daughter and son-in-law are both teachers, and her son and daughter-in-law have plans to earn their teaching credentials as well. Dr. West recently retired from School Counseling. She enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, teaching graduate students, participating in Board of Education activities, performing in local theater, and traveling whenever possible. Dr. West is honored to be elected to the Board of Education and humbled to serve our students, families, and employees.