

New Ed Fund director takes on West Contra Costa challenges

By Shelly Meron

Contra Costa Times

Posted: 03/04/2011 12:45:22 PM PST

Updated: 03/04/2011 04:37:30 PM PST

Joel Mackey began work this week as the Ed Fund's new executive director, hoping to tackle education issues in West Contra Costa.

"The desire I have to see our children receive a quality education is something that motivated me to seriously consider the position," Mackey said. "Education is extremely important to any child's success in this society."

He will lead the nonprofit organization that supports public schools in West Contra Costa through grants, scholarships and recognition. Mackey follows former director Jennifer Henry, who left the Ed Fund in September, and interim director Rick Smith.

Mackey has worked with several Bay Area nonprofit organizations, including Habitat for Humanity East Bay and Harbor House Ministries. He is also an attorney and a minister, and teaches in the nonprofit management programs at Cal State East Bay and San Francisco State.

Most recently, he worked as a legal and policy analyst for Making Waves Academy in Richmond. The experience with Making Waves Academy "gives me a greater understanding of the issues schools are facing -- for teachers, administrators and foremost the students," Mackey said.

He'd like to tackle challenges related to school funding, parental involvement and what's known as multiple pathways to learning.

"We know a college education is extremely important to anyone's success, but we also know that a lot of students may not necessarily have the interest to go to college

in the time frame that's normally expected," Mackey said. "How do we ensure that all of our students are given the opportunity to succeed, whether by going to college, getting vocational training or whatever?"

Mackey plans to spend his first few months looking at what the Ed Fund has in place, how he can build on existing elements and what new programming can be implemented. One of his first tasks is helping organize the Ed Fund's annual banquet, set for May 20.

"I look forward to working with folks here, and I welcome any thoughts and ideas about things we should be considering," he said.

Staff writer Shelly Meron covers education in West Contra Costa. Follow her at [Twitter.com/shellymeron](https://twitter.com/shellymeron), and stay up to date on West County news at IBAbuzz.com/westcounty.

Advertisement

