

## District's chief plans quick exit

**By Jennifer Gentile/Staff Writer**

The superintendent of the Fairfield-Suisun School District Woodrow Carter has accepted a job in Southern California, which he is expected to start in early September, the vice president of the district's governing board confirmed Saturday.

"Apparently, he has accepted a position with the Capistrano Unified School District," said Anne Griffin, vice president of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District. A release from the Capistrano Unified School District explained that the board of trustees unanimously selected Carter as its interim superintendent.

Carter will be the chief of a district that encompasses 195 square miles in seven cities, as well as an unincorporated part of Orange County. The district's Web site expresses a commitment to more than 50,000 students and 4,000 employees.

"We are pleased to be announcing Carter's appointment this evening," Board President Sheila Benecke said in the statement.

"He is a man of impressive credentials. All of the board members are looking forward to working with him."

Carter served in the Army for 27 years before he turned his sights to education. During Operation Desert Storm, he was a Battalion Commander with the 101st Airborne Division.

He started out as a superintendent for Bourbon County Schools and served as interim superintendent and state administrator for Floyd County Schools, both in Kentucky, before being hired as a deputy superintendent for the Oakland Unified School District in 2003, which at the time was facing a multi-million dollar deficit.

Fairfield-Suisun trustees voted to hire Carter in March of 2005. Governing Board President Gary Falati said Carter would be missed.

"It's definitely our loss," Falati said. "He was hired as a change agent, and he made major changes in our district."

The changes were necessitated, he said, by the thousands of students identified as falling behind in math, English, or science.

"He's done a great job for our district," Falati said, "and I'm saddened by his leaving us."

Also speaking highly of Carter, Griffin said, "he did a number of things in the district, as far as making changes that needed to be made." She added, "I am disappointed he is not going to be with us; we offered him a three-year contract, but apparently, he felt it wasn't a good fit."

Griffin explained that trustees voted in the spring to extend Carter's contract to 2010.

"My feeling was it was important to have someone in place and have some stability," she said.

In Carter's absence, the board vice president said she is not concerned about the day-to-day operations of the district.

"I know our district is in good hands," she said. "Our staff does an excellent job."

Falati said he expects to call a special board meeting for Aug. 27 to discuss the the superintendent situation.

When contacted Saturday, Carter declined to comment.

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