

**Jonathan P. Raymond Prepared Remarks**  
**News Conference: August 10, 2009**

Good morning, everybody, and thanks for coming. It's great to be out here, even for a short visit like this one – and I'm really looking forward to being out here full-time!

This is my first media briefing with all of you, but certainly not my last. I thought I would begin by telling you a little about myself, my general philosophy, some broad plans I have for the Sacramento City Unified School District and how I plan to spend my first 90 to 100 days as your superintendent.

First, I want to thank President Grimes and the other School Board members for their confidence in me. I also want to thank interim superintendent Susan Miller and the rest of the staff – many that have joined us today – for their service to the children of this community.

I had an opportunity to visit Sacramento in Dec. 2007 and fell in love with the city and area at that time. This was reaffirmed in my visit this past June and July. My wife Julie and I are looking forward to moving to the area and becoming part of the community. My three kids are excited too - They can't wait to see the mountains!

The strengths of this school district are real: reputation for innovation; focus on continuous improvement; diversity and passion in the community for education. There is much to build upon – helping to lead a good urban school district to be great!

Without question there are lots of fiscal challenges in California – while they are extreme these challenges are not isolated just to California.

I learned at an early age the power that a great teacher can have on the life of an individual child.

I am coming to Sacramento from a district 3,000 miles away – Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina. Like Sacramento, CMS is a diverse, urban district with a lot of successes, even more potential and some significant challenges. I hope that my experience in North Carolina will help me as I begin my work here.

For the last three years, I have worked as the CMS chief accountability officer. That experience, plus my other education-related expertise, will shape and drive many of my plans here.

My experience has also shaped my philosophy. I believe that it is the obligation of any school district to put children first. I also believe that leadership and accountability go hand in hand. Leadership means owning your work, taking responsibility for it. Educating children is one of the most – maybe THE most – important responsibility our society has. How well we do it will determine our children's future, as well as our own.

It's not only a moral and social issue – it's a business one. Schools are the most important indirect economic investment a community can make. How well our schools do determines the future for all of us.

So my philosophy is that children come first and adults have a responsibility to educate children well. To do that, I think we need to make sure we meet some important general standards. They are: transparency, accountability and a culture of collaboration. I'm going to talk about each one of these in a little detail.

Transparency means sharing information with all of the people who are involved in children's education. Parents, citizens, the community at large – all of us should be, indeed must be, involved in public education. We can't expect people to support something they don't understand or know much about. So as a district, we have an obligation to be transparent, to share information and to be honest and straightforward with parents and the public.

The next big standard is accountability. Accountability is more than just numbers on a page, or scores on a test sheet – although those are important, too! Accountability means all of us in public education taking responsibility for our work. We must make sure that work is effective and efficient – that schools are well run and children are learning and achieving. I believe that adults must be held responsible for their work, and I also believe it's important that they have the support they need to succeed.

For our school district, that means we must be clear about what schools control and what they don't. One big thing we can control is the quality of teaching and learning. Another is the leadership at the school level. We need to also look at sustainability: When something works, can we expand it? Can we sustain it across the entire district? How best can we do that? And if it isn't working we need to make changes. In both cases we need to focus on how we can continuously improve.

In order to answer those questions, we need a culture of collaboration. We need to work together. We need to collaborate within schools and across the entire district. We need to share our successes and talk over our challenges, because we can learn from each other. No one has all the answers – so we need to collaborate, to work together, to succeed.

So, those are the big philosophical things that I am bringing to Sacramento. Some of you are probably saying, Yeah, but what is he actually going to DO? Good question – but I can't answer it yet. It's much too soon for me to tell you what specifically I plan to do here, except for one thing: My first 90 to 100 days will be spent listening to the many members of this community, and learning from them. I'll also be listening and learning while I visit our schools and get to know the district, the administrators, the principals, the teachers and the students. I feel some urgency about this, because I am eager to begin my work. But I also recognize that it's important for me to take time to listen and to learn – and I hope to hear from everyone in this community!

That is my short introduction for all of you. Now I'm going to open it up for questions, and I'll try to give you as many answers as I can. But when I don't know something, I'll tell you that too. Since I am new, I'd like for each of you to tell me who you are and your media outlet or community affiliation – are you a parent, a public official, a teacher – before you ask your question. That will help me get to know you.

Now I'll take the first question....