By Amy Sylvestri

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After three years heading the San Leandro School District, Superintendent Cindy Cathey is retiring at the end of this school year.

Cathey, 62, is currently in the middle of a 2-year contract, but will be leaving early. Her salary is $225,000 this year, according to the contract that was signed last summer.

Cathey said she decided to retire to care for her mother and spend more time with her family.

Cathey got her bachelor's degree from San Jose State and her master's degree from St. Mary's College. She has been with the San Leandro school district for 17 years as a teacher at Wilson Elementary, principal, director of curriculum, and assistant superintendent before taking the top position.

During Cathey's time as superintendent, the ninth grade campus and the arts education center opened, the $51 million Measure M bond to fund new sports facilities passed, as did the Measure L parcel tax tax that collects $2.4 million annually.

"She has done so much for this district," said Song Chin-Bendib, assistant superintendent.

School Board President Diana Prola said that she and the rest of the board are sorry to see Cathey leave, but proud of all she has accomplished.

“The superintendent works tirelessly and is highly respected by staff and community members and the board of education,” said Prola in a written statement. “She has created a legacy of educational upgrade and will be greatly missed.”

The school board will discuss the process for choosing Cathey’s replacement at their next meeting on Feb. 26.

Cathey says it was a difficult decision to retire, but she is confident the district is in a position to thrive. She says her fondest memories of her time in San Leandro have been of working on projects with others.

What I love the most is seeing what we can accomplish when we all work together,” said Cathey. “The community, teachers, parents, the kids, everyone – I love seeing what we can do

together.”