

## **Trustee Christine Bene's Farewell Address**

Huntington School Board Meeting – June 6, 2011

I have two older children who went through the school system, but my involvement in the inner workings of this district came in 1998. I walked into a meeting at Woodhull Kindergarten Center and walked out the president of the PTA. I met a crazy redhead that day and have been friends ever since.

I have met the most incredible people! Each year I have been lucky enough to add new friends. Their wish like mine was to make our schools the best they could be. I have made lifelong friends who have carried me through good times and bad. We had challenges and we didn't always agree, but we worked it out. We talked until we came to an agreement. Nothing is insurmountable.

I have walked many paths: Organizer, fundraiser, leader. You name it, I have done it. I have put my heart and soul into this district for over 13 years. Being on the Board was one of the most incredible experiences I have ever had. It has been satisfying and frustrating at the same time.

Jay, I wish you well in retirement. Bill thank you so much for your service, I will miss our talks. To my fellow Board members: We really did have some good times and many laughs in executive session. Stay strong and open to new ideas and different ways of thinking.

To the assistant superintendents, principals, directors, teachers, secretaries, security -- all the staff -- a huge thank you. You have always been there for everyone, even if they don't think so. I know so.

Thank you to my family. For your patience, in rarely having me home. Never complaining that a meal is not ready because of a phone call. Having to track me down in the endless meetings during the day. And now the late evenings are coming to a close.

To the news organizations: Please make people use their real names. Anonymous comments only lead to hard feelings and misinformation. And as your children can tell you, it is a form of bullying and so is standing by and doing nothing! Let's set an example for our children.

Parents stay involved. You are the backbone of this district. If nothing else, you will find, as your children get older, it's the only way you know what is going on in their schools!

This district is incredible. And you are beginning a new chapter. Be patient and give everyone a chance. Time is needed, please don't rush into decisions. Weigh the options and listen to the feedback.

It is very hard to walk away from something you love and believe in. Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving you and your children.