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**Section:** News

## Challengers Defeat **Rialto School Board** Incumbents

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**RIALTO** - Three challengers minus two incumbents equals one new school board. Michael Ridgway, Joe Martinez and Joe Ayala won the three seats up for grabs in the Rialto Unified School District.

The three challengers earned more than 44 percent of the combined vote in ousting incumbents Dan Mays and Walter Hawkins.

Ridgway, a school principal in Corona, took more than 16 percent of the votes. In a candidacy statement, Ridgway said the district needs leaders who treat teachers as professionals and focus on student success.

Martinez won more than 14 percent of the votes. His top priorities are school safety and early intervention programs for low-performing students.

Ayala, also an educator, earned more than 13 percent of the vote.

The school board and the teachers union this year have fought over the district's budget and whether dropout numbers released by the Department of Education are accurate.

Bill Hedrick, president of the teachers union, said the board has ignored the needs of teachers, something the elected candidates will change.

"We look forward to working with the new leadership," Hedrick said.

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