

Board

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board holds its meetings. The newcomers outnumber the veterans on the nine-member board. This is the greatest amount of new blood the board has seen in years. New members like Deanna Taylor are hoping to make an impact.

"I know I'm here for the right reasons," she said. "I'm here not only for our students, but our teachers and the rest of our staff. I'm excited for what the future is going to hold for all of us."



Motsinger

Democrat Taylor and her husband - City Council Member James Taylor - have three children in the school system. Taylor said she hopes to bring her perspective to the board, as both a parent active in the PTA and a long-term substitute teacher. She said school equity and making sure every student has what he or she needs to learn will be her key focuses.

Taylor, who was elect-

ed to serve District 1, is the only Democrat among the new batch. She and Republican Robert Barr are the only African-Americans among the new members. Longtime District 1 member Vic Johnson is also black.

Barr, who won an At-Large seat, said he ran because he cares for students and wants to be an advocate for the "so-called disadvantaged child that comes from a single parent home."

"I came from a single-parent home where my mother emphasized education," he said. "I want to be able to help kids like myself."

Barr, who grew up on Patterson Avenue and in Happy Hill Gardens before earning his education degree from Winston-Salem State University, said he brings to the board his 14 years of experience teaching in the school system. He plans to visit every school in the district to get a feel for their needs.



Photo by Todd Luck

Assistant Superintendent Carol Montague-Davis introduces herself to the new members.

Mark Johnson, a former teacher and current attorney, also won an At-Large seat, narrowly edging out Democrat Katherine Fansler, who requested and received a recount.

The other new members come from the heavily Republican District 2, where longtime incumbents Jane Goins, Jill Tackabery, A.L. "Buddy" Collins and Marilyn Parker decided not to seek reelection. They were replaced by fellow Republicans Dana Caudill Jones, a former member of the Kernersville Town Council; Lori Goins Clark,

an IT professional and daughter of immediate past board chair Jane Goins; and David Singletary, an insurance agent.

Incumbents returning to the board are Republican Jeannie Metcalf, a former At-Large member who ran this year in District 2, and Democrats Johnson and Elisabeth Motsinger, who sat in on last week's orientation.

With Taylor's election, the heavily Republican board now has three Democrats. But Montsinger said most issues the board tackles are non-partisan.

"Nobody runs for school board who doesn't care about kids," she said. "I think every new board member is coming in with the intention of doing what's best for kids."

She does concede that the board will have its share of challenges, dealing with hot-button issues like school equity and Common Core standards.

During the orientation the new members learned about procedures, regulations and structure of the school system and its various departments. Top administrators introduced themselves to the new members, led by Superintendent Dr. Beverly Emory.

Emory, who was hired last year by the previous school board, has worked as superintendent in various districts for 20 years. She has become accus-

tomed to dealing with board changes. She said this change on the board is a big one for the entire school system.

"In our district this has been a very stable board for a very long time, so this is a very big deal in our community to have this number of new people," she said.

Emory said she hopes the board will work on the district's major goals of increasing graduation rates and the number of third graders reading at grade level and closing the achievement gap between high and low performing students.

The next board of education meeting will be 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 13 at the Education Building, 4801 Bethania Station Rd. It will be televised live on Cable 2.

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