

STATE & LOCAL

Tedesco Wins Wake County School Board Runoff

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Parents in Wake County have waited breathlessly for weeks as the fate of Wake County schools hung in the balance. Although turnout at the polls was embarrassingly low in early October, school board candidates debated over one of the toughest issues to address. Tuesday, November 3rd, the pendulum finally swung towards a controversial new beginning for the school system.

Several candidates campaigned earlier this fall for a continuation of the current forced busing system in place for the children in Wake County Public Schools. They pushed for diversity among children from all backgrounds and

locations across the county.

However, other candidates argued that children should not have to travel all across the county just to go to school. They fought for neighborhood schools so children could stay reasonably close to home, although the opposing candidates feared this would essentially lead to re-segregation.

After the initial elections on October 6th, three of the four open school board positions were filled by supporters of neighborhood schools: Chris Malone, Deborah Prickett, and Debra Goldman. At that point, the school board, including the newly elected members

and the already existing of-ice holders, was tied concerning the issue of diversity. The fate of the county's children hung in the balance of the closest election. John Tedesco came out in the lead with 49.38% of the votes, while the runner-up, Cathy Truitt, won

23.72%. Although some felt Tedesco should have won with that percentage, Truitt immediately filed for a run-off for November 3rd. Parents prepared themselves for the final showdown between Tedesco, a neighborhood school supporter, and Truitt, a busing proponent. But Thomas Goldsmith and T. Keung Hui of www.newsobserver.com, report that this showdown almost did not happen. Truitt changed her mind and tried to cancel the run-off, but she was forced to carry through. She then voiced her decision to give all her support to Tedesco, but later she switched gears and said if parents voted her in, she would enthusiastically accept the office.

However, Tedesco won by a landslide this past Tuesday, as he received more than three times the votes that Truitt received. As newly-elected Deborah Prickett said Tuesday on www.newsobserver.com, "The parents just had enough. The public has spoken." Tedesco's win is a huge victory for proponents of neighborhood schools as supporters of this policy have filled every vacant office this fall. This new school board majority also has other plans, says www.newsobserver.com; these members strive to stop yearly school attendance and change teaching planning times and early release days as well.

They will also inherit the current economic situation and must implement their plans with a constricted budget in mind.

These officials have their work cut out for them, but as Prickett said, "The public has spoken." Parents want a change, and these individuals have promised to implement sensible solutions that will help families across the county.

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