

Five vie for Dale District school board seat on Nov. 7

When Dale District voters head to the polls next week, they will be asked to select a new school board member to represent their community. Five candidates are vying for the job including:

- **Jim Holland**, a certified public accountant and adjunct professor at Virginia Commonwealth University and J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College. He ran for supervisor in 1999 as a Democrat, but lost to Republican Kelly Miller. Holland is committed to improving communication between the school system and parents, encouraging lifelong learning and promoting safe, drug-free schools.

He received the endorsement of the Chesterfield Education Association.

- **Art Maxwell Jr.**, who is retired from the military after serving in both the Marines and Air Force. Maxwell and his wife own Open Door Realty, a residential and commercial real estate firm in the county. He has been critical of the decision-making process during previous school redistrictings and has questioned the location of Cosby High School.

- **Verena McCall**, who is currently serving as interim school board member for the Dale District. She was appointed to fill the seat temporarily after former board member Beth

Davis passed away last June. McCall is a portfolio administrator for Wachovia Securities and has an extensive track record with PTAs at the local, council, district and state levels. McCall intends to foster a safe, welcoming environment for students, teachers and parents at county schools and believes it's important to ensure equal access to educational resources.

- **Janet Stephens**, who works as a history teacher with Richmond City Public Schools while also serving as a funeral director for Bliley Funeral Homes. From 2000-2004, Stephens was an executive secretary for the Virginia Department of Education. She is a strong supporter of English as a Second Language initiatives and the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

- **David Wyman**, whose candidacy was endorsed by the Chesterfield Republican Committee. Wyman retired from his corporate finance career with Texas Instruments and Invensys in April and is now dedicated to spending time with his family and serving his community. Wyman supports offering competitive wages to attract the best teachers and making the best use of resources.

The winner of the Nov. 7 vote will serve a 12-month term. All school board seats will be up for election in November 2007.

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students were being moved from Curtis when that school isn't overcrowded. "It appears a good number of children are being moved without reason," she said.

Redistricting committee member Jason Moore responded, "The domino effect caused the map that we have."

Redistricting is required because another elementary school is being built in the district.

School Board Chairman Marshall Trammell, who represents the Bermuda District, acknowledged that a large number of students are being impacted due to the location of the new elementary school, which is away from the growth areas in the district.

District resident Steve Honn questioned why Wells was the only school under the proposed redistricting plan that doesn't include children from multifamily housing. "They made C.C. Wells almost a country club, because there's no diversity," said Honn.

Moore responded, "Socioeconomic status played no part. We were looking at student numbers."

At the close of the hearing, Trammell consoled parents, "We have not stopped looking at the figures. We will continue to crunch numbers. We will look at neighborhood issues.

We do listen, and we do care."

But other board members admitted the obvious: not everyone is going to be happy with any redistricting plan that's adopted. "[Redistricting is] inevitable in portions of Chesterfield County," said Tom Doland, Matoaca District representative. "It will be an inconvenience, but children adapt very readily to change. Parents struggle with it."

"I do believe we are improving the process," added Dianne Pettitt, Clover Hill representative, referring to the involvement of the redistricting committee. "We don't enjoy doing these things. We understand the feelings. We are learning. We are improving."

The school board is expected to vote on the redistricting plan at its Dec. 12 meeting. For specifics on the plan, visit www.chesterfield.k12.va.us and click on "changing school boundaries."

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