

# 3, including newcomer, vie for 2 school posts

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By Casey Hans  
staff writer

One newcomer will challenge two incumbents for two seats on the Farmington Board of Education this June. It is the third consecutive year that a lone challenger has entered the race against incumbents for a school board seat in one of the state's largest, out-of-formula districts.

It has also been a year of controversy in the 10,700-student district, where hundreds of parents turned out to thwart redistricting efforts.

It was the redistricting controversy that prompted 37-year-old Bruce Jacob of Farmington Hills to seek a school board seat. The first-time candidate goes up against third-term incumbent Helen Prutow, 47, and first-term incumbent James Abernethy, 47, who are both seeking re-election.

In bordering districts, two incumbents will run unopposed for their seats in Clarenceville, while six Walled Lake schools residents — including five newcomers — will vie for two seats.

The top two vote-getters in June will win four-year terms on their respective boards.

JACOB SAID he is running for the Farmington school board to try and prevent controversies similar to the one surrounding elementary school boundaries. He also wants to "get the board directed in long-range planning" and bring enrichment programs to all students.

"They should be offered at all the schools," he said. Monday was the filing deadline for nominating petitions from candidates interested in running in the June 13 non-partisan school elections. Candidates have until today at 4 p.m. to withdraw from the race; after that time, their names will automatically appear on the ballot.

Following, in alphabetical order, is information about the Farmington candidates:

• James Abernethy — A professor of architecture at Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield and a Farmington resident, Abernethy is ending his first term on the board. He and his wife, JoAnne, have two children, one a Farmington High School senior, the other a graduate of the district.

• Bruce Jacob — The political newcomer is a podiatrist who practices in Hamtramck and is a resident of

Farmington Hills. He and his wife, Joan, have one child at Beechview Elementary and another pre-schooler at home.

• Helena Prutow — This Farmington Hills resident is completing her third term on the Farmington board. She also sits on the Oakland Schools Board of Education, the intermediate district for the county. She and her husband, William, have two children who graduated from the Farmington district.

IN CLARENCEVILLE, incumbents Richard Wood, board secretary, and Michael Manore, board president, will run unopposed for their seats.

A small portion of Farmington Hills residents live in the Clarenceville district. Clarenceville voters will also be asked to approve a waiver required by the Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment. The Headlee amendment requires that if property taxes go up faster than the rate of inflation, the tax rate must be reduced.

Last June, Clarenceville voters approved a Headlee waiver when property taxes increased 5.8 percent while inflation was just 1.9 percent.

Administrators anticipate a 1-percent increase in state aid for the next school year, which they say will not offset rising costs.

ONE SQUARE mile in northwest Farmington Hills has residents who attend Walled Lake Consolidated Schools.

Six residents, including incumbent Robert Gallagher, are vying for two posts in that lakes-area district.


Gallagher, a retiree, was first elected in 1985 to fill the vacated post of a board member who quit. The Union Lake resident currently serves as board secretary.

Patrick Urbanski, the other board member whose term is expiring, has decided not to run. Other candidates for school board trustee are Marc Belsky of West Bloomfield, Stephen Dibert of West Bloomfield, Kathryn Mizzi of Union Lake, Kenneth Tucker of Walled Lake, and Melone Kaczowski of Walled Lake.

Tucker previously served on the school board from 1978 to 1982 and 1983-87. He was defeated in last year's election.

Dibert was also an unsuccessful candidate in the last election.

Staff writer Carolyn DeMarco and members of the Livonia Observer news staff contributed to this report.



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# Youths meet, seek racial harmony

Farmington Hills students are among interracial young people ages 12-17 meeting to learn about the history of the civil rights movement and to discuss race relations.

Each Sunday from April 10 to May 22, groups of 60-100 youths are meeting at the Detroit Historical Museum under the guidance of the Detroit Historical Department and the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights.

Students from St. Clare of Assisi

Catholic Church in Farmington Hills and Farmington Hills Mercy High School are among those focusing on the television series, "Eyes On the Prize, America's Civil Rights Years." The series chronicles the civil rights movement from 1954 to 1965.

Lectures and audience participation discussion following the showing of each film will feature Detroit-area civil rights activists.

"We are trying to address what

has been widely recognized as the most critical problem in metro Detroit — racism," said Thomas Fenlin, MCHR executive director. "We are doing it the old-fashioned way by bringing youth together to learn from one another."

The series will kick off MCHR's yearlong program, "Project Jericho: Tearing Down Walls — Building Bridges."

More than 300 youth groups are participating.



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