



Markling to join the school board Incumbents also elected

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By David George
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In a race between electoral newcomers, attorney and professor Matthew Markling narrowly edged out two other rivals Tuesday to win one of three seats on the Lakewood school board.

Meanwhile, longtime incumbents Linda Beebe and Charles Geiger scored decisive victories in retaining their seats on the five-member board. Markling will replace incumbent Debra Sweeney, who chose not to run for re-election after one term.

According to final, unofficial results from the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, Geiger was the top vote getter with 6,943 followed by Beebe with 6,537. In a contest that was not decided until 2 a.m. Wednesday, when all votes were counted, less than 600 votes separated the other three candidates.

Markling received 3,109 votes, compared with 2,957 for Martin Lowell, owner of a local painting firm. Minister and public speaker Dawn DeFreeze trailed with 2,564 votes.

During the campaign, Markling, whose law firm has represented Lakewood schools in legal matters, campaigned on his knowledge of issues facing Ohio schools in legal and funding areas. He was mutually endorsed by Beebe and Geiger, incumbents who pointed to their management of the district's building program and good financial condition as among the reasons they should be retained.

"I'm pleased for Mrs. Beebe and myself that the voters seemed pleased with the way the board has run their schools and managed their dollars," Geiger said. "I think they recognize the schools are doing good work but have a complicated mission."

Lowell was among the most vocal critics of the district's decision to close Franklin elementary school at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. He also stressed his business experience and the fact that he was the only candidate with children attending Lakewood schools.

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