



Steve Barnette
Superintendent

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 14, 2025

Deborah Collett Re-Elected Chair of Paulding BOE, Jeff Fuller Vice Chair, for 2025

In unanimous votes at its regular meeting Jan. 14, 2025, the Paulding County Board of Education re-elected Deborah Collett as chair and Jeff Fuller as vice chair for 2025.

Collett represents District 4 in south Paulding County and was elected to the school board in 2020. She was re-elected after serving as board chair in 2024. Fuller, the school board's at-large member, was elected to office in 2016 and was re-elected as Vice Chair after serving in that role in 2024.

Mrs. Collett joined the school board during the COVID-19 pandemic and she and Mr. Fuller, who was chairman at the time, helped provide leadership for the school district during that challenging period as Paulding County schools were among the first in the nation to return to in-person instruction. She and Mr. Fuller also were integral parts of the school board's search for a new superintendent that resulted in the appointment of Steve Barnette to the interim position in 2021, and to the full-time role in 2022.



Deborah Collett

During their time on the Board the school district has implemented a comprehensive five-year Strategic Plan that deals with five key areas of focus including: Growth and Success For All; Communication and Engagement; Attracting, Developing and Retaining Quality, Diverse Professionals; Operational and Organizational Excellence; and Innovative Practices and Resource Implementation. Under the school board's leadership, the district has seen its four-year graduation rate increase to the highest levels in its history. The current graduation rate of 90.3 percent is well above the state average of 85.4 percent.

The school district has also taken extensive steps to address growth, capacity, and facility aging issues in schools throughout the county. Multiple renovation and classroom addition projects have been completed or are under way, including the construction of a brand-new school, Crossroads Middle School – the first new school to be constructed in Paulding County in more than a decade – that opened for the 2024-2025 school year. The school board also recently approved the construction of a new elementary school that will begin soon on the Crossroads campus.



Jeff Fuller

During Collett and Fuller's time on the school board, the five-year E-SPLOST one-cent sales tax was renewed for the sixth consecutive time with 76-percent approval among those who voted. Additionally, the school board's efforts have been consistently recognized by the Georgia School Boards Association which granted the Board of Education its fifth-consecutive Exemplary Board status in 2024.

As board chair, Mrs. Collett will oversee a school board that governs the 11th largest school district in Georgia with 34 schools and approximately 32,000 students. The diverse district employs more than 4,000 staff and has an annual budget of approximately \$430 million.

"I am extremely proud to serve our students, our staff, and our entire education community, and I thank my fellow school board members for re-appointing me to this important role," said Mrs. Collett. "The school board's motto this year is, 'Our Focus is Their Future,' and we intend to keep that theme in mind as we make the best possible decisions for our students each and every day. We have an outstanding leadership team in place that will help us deliver excellence and value for all Paulding County stakeholders. I look forward to the challenges and successes ahead."