

Since the resignation of Mike Helms from the Cabarrus County School Board, the Board of Education (Cabarrus County) has intimated that they would "appoint" a new member and more specifically, a Republican. The Board of Education is supposed to be a non-partisan elected office. This means that the board members themselves decide if the vacant seat needs to be filled and if so, by whom. In general, good form would suggest that since Mr. Helms is a Democrat, he should be replaced by a Democrat.

Unfortunately, Andrea Palo, a self-professed "die-hard Republican" has very publicly commented that the seat vacated by Mike Helms, a Democrat should be filled by a Republican because the school board is "already primarily Republican" while at the same time insisting that the Board of Education remain non-partisan. This leads to an immediate "huh???" moment.

The reality that Ms. Palo needs to grasp is that House Bill 413, GA Session 2011 specifically states:

SECTION 2. If a vacancy occurs on the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education and the total votes received by the next highest vote getter who was not elected in the election in which the vacating officer was elected received a number of votes that is within ten percent (10%) of the total votes received by the vacating officer, the appointing authority shall appoint that person to serve the remainder of the unexpired term if that person is still eligible and does not decline appointment.

This would specifically mean that Wayne Williams, a Democrat, should be named to the Board of Education.

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Grace Liem, Ph.D.
Chair, Cabarrus County Democrats
980-322-5447