

Board of Education...from Page 1A

five of us working together."

Odom's area of expertise is in the business world, and she has had much success working with Moore Insurance Services.

What she brings to the board in terms of leadership is multifold. Odom has a natural way with people, is committed to being a good steward of taxpayer dollars, possesses a willingness to serve her community, and holds a sincere desire to maintain the positive momentum achieved by the school system over the years.

She is also a devoted family woman, and has a special interest in education because her children have experienced great success within Union County Schools with teachers she considers to be among the best in the state.

Odom regards the hiring of Dr. Fred Rayfield as superintendent to be one of the best decisions she and the board made during her first term, and she has previously expressed the high level of confidence she has in Dr. Rayfield's leadership abilities.

In March, Odom will attend board training where she will learn more about her duties as board chair, though she's already got a pretty good idea of what's expected of her.

"I was fortunate the last four years to watch a great board chair – if I can do it half as well, then I'll be okay," said Odom. "Every person on the board, it takes all five of us. Even though we're in different districts, we come together. That's what we did in the last four years, and I just want to continue that."



New Board Member Janna Akins, with Tony Hunter, after being welcomed to the board by Union County Schools Associate Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Williams. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Following Odom's selection as board chair, Board Member Patrick White was chosen by his peers to serve as vice chair of the board in that Jan. 17 meeting.

Also in the meeting, Union County Schools Associate Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Williams welcomed Janna Akins to her first meeting as a newly elected board member.

"In the December meeting, we had the opportunity to recognize Gary Davenport for his 20 years of service," said Dr. Williams. "When he was addressing those of us in attendance, one of the things he talked about was what an honor it was that his daughter, Janna Akins, would be able to take his role. So, Janna, on behalf of the board of education, Union County Schools and Dr. Rayfield, welcome."

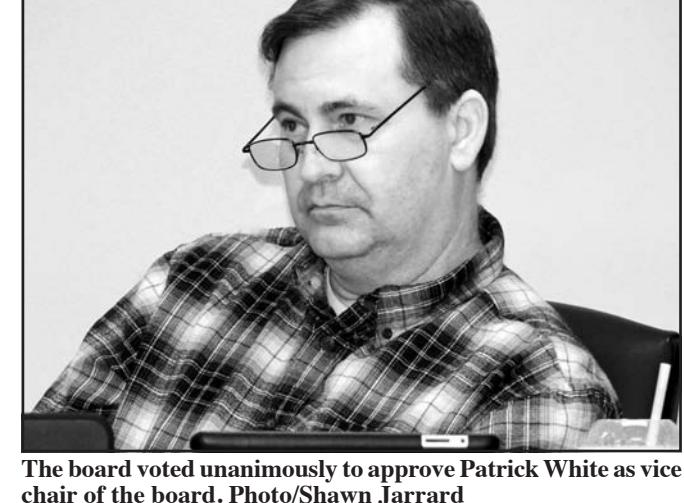
The board also approved the 2017-2018 school calendar in the meeting.

Odom was appointed board chair in a 4-0 vote, with Board Member Tony Hunter abstaining. White was appointed by unanimous decision to the vice chair position.

Dr. Rayfield was unable to attend the meeting due to a family emergency.



Odom was selected by her fellow board members to lead the board as chairperson in the Jan. 17 meeting. Photo/Shawn Jarrard



The board voted unanimously to approve Patrick White as vice chair of the board. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

2017 Budget Hearings Update

By: Sen. Steve Gooch
(R – Dahlonega)

The Senate reconvened for week two after a day off in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. This week was dedicated to Senate and House Appropriation Committee's budget hearings. Governor Nathan Deal and Georgia's various agencies outline their policy and budget proposals to the committee members. We also heard from several state economists who presented a positive outlook of Georgia's economy. They echoed the Governor's remarks that our state remains number one in the nation for business growth. We are at near full employment and our Rainy Day fund now exceeds \$2 billion.

On Tuesday, Governor Deal elaborated on the budget plan he introduced last week in his State of the State Address. Among the governor's recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) general budget is a \$2 billion allocation for transportation funding. These funds will go towards improving and upgrading aging aspects of our transportation infrastructure, such as road repaving, road expansions and bridge repairs. These upgrades will ensure that our state's roadways remain safe and easily traversable for all those who travel in or around our state.

Education has been and will remain a top priority for us this year. Our graduation rates are at an all-time high and our test scores are outpacing the national average. In order to keep up with the growing demands of our public education system, Governor Deal has recommended an additional \$133.2 million for enrollment growth and training, as well as \$240 million in bond packages to fund the construction of new schools and school equipment. The HOPE scholarship remains an important pathway to

higher education for so many of Georgia's students and the governor has recommended an additional \$49.3 million in order to ensure that pathway remains open.

You can find Governor Deal's proposed Fiscal Year 2017 amended budget and the Governor Deal's proposed Fis-

cal Year 2018 general budget online at <https://opb.georgia.gov/>.

Georgia State Senator Steve Gooch Senate Majority Whip



Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Group

Alzheimer's Caregivers support group will meet on the first Monday of the month at Southern Bank and Trust (formerly Cadence Bank) from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the community room. Please contact Sharon Penner for more information (770) 789-2044. Thank you.