

CLIFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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NEWS RELEASE

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New Board Member for Clifton Public Schools

Jim Smith was sworn in as the new board member for Clifton Public Schools at the February 6, 2020 Board of Education meeting. Smith fills the vacancy left by Franklin Montero, who was appointed as a Bergenfield municipal judge on January 5, 2020.

The board received 14 applications for the position. Thirteen candidates interviewed in a public televised forum after one candidate withdrew from the process. Derlys Gutierrez, Board Attorney, facilitated the interviews by asking each candidate three questions that were mutually decided upon by the board. Board members deliberated for approximately 30 minutes before Gutierrez announced that the board had reached a consensus that Jim Smith would fill the vacancy left by Franklin Montero.

Clifton Board of Education Vice President, Judy Bassford, thanked the candidates for coming out to show an interest in the position and asked that they stay involved with the school community. "It was the consensus of the entire board and a collaborative effort. My colleagues did their due diligence and research to make this process fair," said Bassford. "Everyone who got up made one common comment about what is best for the children. We thought about who would bring that."

Dr. Danny Robertozzi, Superintendent, said of the decision, "I feel confident that Mr. Smith can help our district to reach its goals. His experience, professionalism, and willingness to serve will bring a seamless transition as we move forward with plans for our children and our schools."

Although Smith was appointed as Clifton's newest board member, he is not new to the position. Smith was a commissioner on the Clifton Board of Education from 1992-2006, five years of which he served as vice president. When asked why he chose to serve again, Smith responded by saying, "I wanted to help the community. I liked the direction that the new superintendent, Dr. Robertozzi, is taking. I feel that, along with my experience, I can offer positive input and help make the district better for the students."

Lifelong Clifton resident, Smith was an elementary school teacher for 20 years in a private school and an active member of the community. He is currently on the Board of Recreation, the State Chair of Youth Activities for the Elks, and on the Clifton Veterans Committee. Additionally, Smith has been umpiring baseball and refereeing basketball for over 30 years, and formerly coached boys baseball, girls softball, and basketball.