

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION WELCOMES NEW MEMBER TO REPRESENT DISTRICT 2

The newest elected member of the Alabama Board of Education is **BETTY PETERS** representing District 2. Elected in November to a four-year term, the former accountant who resides in Dothan was officially sworn in during inaugural ceremonies in Montgomery on Jan. 20. In a recent interview with *Alabama Education News* staff, Peters expressed the following views.

AEN: Why did you decide to run for the Alabama Board of Education?

PETERS: I decided to run for the state Board because I felt our schools were reaching a financial crisis and that there is a lack of citizen confidence. In some localities, such as my hometown of Dothan, we have lost a tremendous number of students in the past decade, but it's not because we have fewer school-age children. I have an accounting background, which should be an asset with the first issue (the financial crisis). My public relations background should be a plus in working with school systems to restore the public's confidence.

AEN: What are your major goals for your four-year term?

PETERS: My major goals are (1) having stronger academic content in our curriculum; (2) restoring taxpayer and parental confidence in the public school system; (3) making it easier for teachers to teach by reducing paperwork and restoring discipline; (4) having better financial accountability so that money is not wasted or misappropriated, and more will reach the classroom; (5) having all children, except the profoundly disabled, master the fundamentals of reading, writing, and math in the early grades so that they will not be left behind; (6) having better qualified teachers and removing those who cannot teach well by improving the new exam for prospective teachers; and (7) having students who have a good grasp of our nation's heritage, system of government, and values so they will be good citizens and, when and if the time comes, good parents.

AEN: What do you think are the main issues facing public education?

PETERS: Controlling finances; dealing with disruptive students; handling outrageous lawsuits that waste financial resources; lack of faith in the educational system by what appears to be a growing number of parents as well as taxpayers in general; students who graduate from our schools but who still must be remediated before they are ready for college or employment; and losing so many excellent teachers each year.

AEN: What is the best thing about public education today?

PETERS: The best thing about education today is that students have such a wide range of choices available in most communities. The high schools of today offer a great selection in classes, from Advanced Placement courses to career/technical education. The dual enrollment option offers even more flexibility.



New state Board of Education District 2 member Betty Peters admires student artwork during the Board's inaugural reception, Jan. 20.