



NJDOE News

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John A. Griffith Sworn in as Newest Member of State Board of Education

John A. Griffith, a one-time history teacher and guidance counselor who has more than 30 years of experience in public service, was sworn in today as the newest member of the State Board of Education. Griffith was appointed by Governor James E. McGreevey to a term that expires in 2008.

Griffith, of Montclair, holds a MBA in management from Fairleigh Dickinson University and is a 1960 graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, at the time known as Indiana State Teacher's College. There, he earned a bachelor's degree in education. He additionally completed guidance counselor requirements at Seton Hall University.

Griffith began his professional career in the 1960s as a history teacher and football coach at Nutley High School. He also coached track and field. Though he parlayed it into a career at Public Service Electric and Gas Company in 1969, Griffith has kept education close to his heart — he's been a member of his town's board of education and has been a high school guidance counselor.

"I'm extremely honored to have been asked to join the State Board," Griffith said. "These are all very capable people. I'm here to learn quickly and hopefully make a contribution based on my experience."

Griffith said he supports Governor James E. McGreevey's 21-point plan for education and the Department of Education's efforts to make sure students across the state of New Jersey receive a superior education by using multiple and diverse paths to success. He said he looks forward to bringing his strengths to the State Board in order to further enhance education in New Jersey.

Specifically, Griffith said he hopes to shorten the achievement gap among some minority groups, while at the same time keep top students energized.

"I think we are doing better than most states, from what I've read and what I've seen," Griffith said. "But it bothers me greatly that there is such a gap between minority students in the classroom. We cannot forget that we have an obligation to all children."

"I'm also concerned about those students who have shown outstanding achievement," Griffith said. "We need to provide them the resources to explore wherever their abilities take them. I think it's possible to address both."

Griffith is presently employed by PSE&G in Cranford, where he is the company's Regional Public Affairs Manager for the Northern Region — an area that covers Middlesex and Union counties. He has served in that capacity since 1991.

From 1989 to 1991, Griffith was the PSE&G manager of employment development programs. In that capacity, he directed and coordinated all phases of a pilot program geared toward giving job applicants an alternate route in the hiring process.

From 1980 to 1989, Griffith served as a personnel development manager. In that position, he was responsible for corporate training programs, tuition aid, the career counseling program and the company intern program. He had previously served five years as an employment manager; and six years as the urban affairs manager.

Griffith has spent time on numerous boards and committees in his lifetime. They range from terms as Montclair Deputy Mayor and township council to sitting for six years on the Montclair Board of Education (from 1979 to 1985), where he also served as President.

He is a past president and trustee of the Newark Boys Chorus School, a former president of the Newark Day Care Center and a past president of the Bloomfield Better Human Relations Council. Griffith has also been associated with the YMCA, Katherine Gibbs School in Montclair, the Montclair African-American Festival and Parade

Committee and the Bloomfield College Educational Opportunity Fund.

Griffith is also a former adjunct professor in personnel management at Kean College of New Jersey. He and his wife, Patricia, have three daughters: Pamela, Gail and Jennifer, and two grandsons.