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## **School board VP is a student**

It's a first in county; Gilleland is new president

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The Anne Arundel County school board elected Josie Urrea, 18, to serve as the body's vice president, making her the first student member to serve in the position.

Urrea narrowly won her seat. Six of her colleagues voted for her, she needed five for approval.

"I have been an advocate for education since middle school," Urrea said. "Although I have the word 'student' in front of my position, I am an equal board member in voice, vote and value. I hope to be judged by the integrity of my thoughts and actions, not my youth."

Board members unanimously voted for Terry Gilleland to serve as president. He has served previously as board vice president.

"I appreciate my colleagues who have approached me and asked me to serve in this transitional capacity and while my initial reaction came with some hesitation, I have come to appreciate the request to step up," Gilleland said upon accepting the nomination.

He will serve until 2020.

Former board president, Julie Hummer, shared concerns about the length of Urrea's term. The vice president will graduate from Severna Park High School in May.

The board will have to elect a new vice president when Urrea's term ends June 30. Then, members will hold officer elections again, in December, per recently adopted policy. That will make three elections in one year.



"I don't think that disruption bodes well for us," Hummer said, citing concerns from the public regarding the board's organization and leadership.

Hummer said she has "the utmost respect" for Urrea, but voted against the high school senior.

Urrea has a little more than four months left in her term, but she said that's enough time to address her priorities — eliminating class rank, encouraging students to do more community service, and tacking issues surrounding racism in schools.

"I'm the best for the community and students right now, during this transition," she said.

Michelle Corkadel, District 7, was the only other board member nominated for vice president, by District 30's Bob Leib.

She abstained in the vice presidential election because she was "not convinced (Urrea) was the best choice," but there were no other candidates — besides herself.

Corkadel said she would have accepted Leib's nomination if Urrea couldn't capture enough votes.

Leib also abstained.

"It was never envisioned that the student member become the presiding officer over a \$1.2 billion business entity," Leib said.

"I cannot support the student member of the board being in a leadership role in that capacity. I just don't think that was ever envisioned and I believe it would set a precedent for the future that we would come to regret."

The student board member has had full voting rights since 1975 and is the only member of a local school board in the country with that status.

Members in September started considering changes to its voting policy to accommodate the board's needs as it transitions to a fully elected body.

That policy was adopted in January.

The new policy reschedules board officer elections to early December. Members used to vote for president and vice president in July, after new appointees were sworn in.

The policy change also addressed the board's current composition and gave five new members an opportunity to elect their leaders. Former President Julie Hummer and Vice President Terry Gilleland were elected to serve their second terms in July — months before the newcomers joined the board.

Gilleland first joined the Anne Arundel County school board in 1994 as a student member and returned in 2016. His term as vice president began that same year.

Hummer, who was ousted from her seat in the middle of her second presidential term, said she will continue to serve students as she always has. Her term ends in 2020.

"It has been an honor to serve," she said. "I will always be a voice for students and speak out."

Four elected board members — Candace Antwine, District 1; Dana Schallheim, District 5; Melissa Ellis, District 4; and Corkadel — are serving six-year terms.

Leib, as well as District 33 member Eric Grannon, will serve on the board until 2020.

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