

Levy County School Board



Levy County School Board members (from left) Brad Etheridge (Dist. 3), Cameron Asbell (Dist. 1), Chris Cowart (Dist. 2), Paige Brookins (Dist. 4) Rick Turner (Dist. 5) and Superintendent of Schools Robert Hastings are seen Tuesday morning (Sept. 22) in their first group photo taken since the passing of School Board member Robert Philpot. This picture was taken soon after Etheridge made his first motion, which was to approve the color of the roof of the future Williston Middle High School. The next WMHS is currently under construction and is anticipated to be complete before the start of school in the fall of 2016.

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Gov. Rick Scott appoints Brad Etheridge to Levy County School Board

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 19, 2015 @ 11:47 a.m.

LEVY COUNTY -- Florida Gov. Rick Scott announced the appointment of Brad Etheridge, 40, of Williston to the School Board of Levy County late Friday afternoon (Sept. 18), and Etheridge provided an interview on Saturday morning to HardisonInk.com. Etheridge owns Etheridge Cattle Co. LLC and is currently serving on the National Cattlemen's Beef Board, Scott noted in a press release. Etheridge is a founder of the Williston FFA Foundation.

Etheridge was appointed by Scott to fill a vacancy created after the death of Robert Philpot in March.

Etheridge began this term on Friday (Sept. 18), Scott said and Etheridge's service in that capacity will go until it ends on Nov. 15, 2016.

This selection has been a long process, Etheridge said, and he has studied and conducted research to prepare for his new duties. His appointment heralds the third generation of his family's service to the people of Levy County by being a School Board leader.

His grandfather Elliott Whitehurst was on the School Board for 14 years and Brad Etheridge's father Frank Etheridge was on the School Board for 20 years. And this appointment puts Brad Etheridge in the position for the School Board, where he intends to seek election after this term ends.

Philpot was his mentor and friend, Etheridge said. The two had spoken in December of 2014

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about Philpot's plan to make this his last term on the School Board. Etheridge told Philpot then that he would be interested in running for that seat at that time, he said.

In that regard, Etheridge's plan to run for election after serving the remainder of this term will be "an honor to keep a commitment I made to a dear friend."

Etheridge said he has been involved in the Levy County School System for 16 years as a parent of children in this district. He is a graduate of the Williston High School Class of 1993. Etheridge said that it is from those years here as a student that led him and his wife Shannon to decide to have their children attend the public schools of Levy County.

Their daughter Kaitlyn Crooms graduated WHS in 2012. Baylee Etheridge is a junior at WHS and Colby Etheridge is a seventh grader at Williston Middle School.

Incoming School Board Member Etheridge said he looks forward to the new Williston Middle High School opening and that he hopes it will be ready for the next school year. Everybody is excited about the new school and the opportunities to be made available to students who will be using the new technology, Etheridge said.

The most vital part is not the bricks and mortar, Etheridge said, nor is it the new technology. The most important aspect of any school is the teachers and administrators who care for the students.

Etheridge said he has no burning desire to make radical changes in the Levy County School System. Many aspects of the School Board are mandated by state and federal guidelines and laws, he said. As a School Board member, his perspective will be to do whatever is best to benefit the children.

As a local School Board member, he added, there is an ability to speak with leaders in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C., to encourage them to assure the morals and values that people of Levy County hold dear will continue in the public school systems in Florida.

Etheridge said that in his interview with the governor, he found that they hold similar beliefs in how the state's public school system should serve the people of Florida. Florida Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart has implemented positive changes, Etheridge said, and he anticipates this progress in Florida will continue.

Etheridge said he is ready, willing and able to start work at any time. There is a Levy County School Board meeting on Tuesday morning (Sept. 22) starting at 9 a.m., he said. He plans to be at that meeting. If there is a judge there to administer the oath of office, then Etheridge is prepared to take that oath then and there, he said.