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Grad Student on State Board of Education

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University of Dayton graduate student Tracey R. Smith of Van Wert was sworn in Monday as a member of the Ohio State Board of Education.

Smith is a doctoral student and graduate assistant in UD's School of Education and Allied Professions pursuing a Ph.D. in educational leadership. She enrolled in the program in the fall of 2008.

Ohio Governor Ted Strickland appointed Smith last week to an at-large seat on the Board of Education after she lost a close election for an open seat from the board's District 1 in northwest Ohio. Ann Jacobs of Lima defeated Smith Nov. 4 by a 52-48 vote.

The State Board is made up of 19 members serving four-year terms, including 11 elected members and eight at-large members appointed by the governor. The new board convened this week by swearing in seven district representatives and four at-large members.

Smith said she appreciated Strickland's decision to choose her and another candidate who had lost a campaign for the State Board for two of the four open at-large seats.

"I believe it shows respect for the commitment we made to involve ourselves in the rigors of an election process and recognizes our commitment to the position," she said.

Originally from Cleveland, Smith now lives in Van Wert with her husband and 6-year-old son. She has a degree in education from The Ohio State University and a master's in public administration from Indiana University. She has worked as the assistant director of admissions for Indiana Institute of Technology and as a social studies teacher and assistant varsity swim coach at Van Wert High School. She has also served terms on the Ohio Fair Schools Board and as a legislative liaison for the Ohio Federation of Teachers.

As a member of the board, Smith will serve on the achievement committee.

"I am looking forward to creating a dialogue between Northwest Ohio and the Ohio Department of Education to advocate for the needs of students and concerns of parents," she said. "With 10 new members, this is a fantastic opportunity for the board to be progressive in our goals for educational achievement. I plan to work tirelessly with other board members to advance education in Ohio, to improve our economy and future opportunities for our youth."

The State Board of Education sets education policy and directs the planning and evaluative functions of Ohio's public schools, as well as appoints and evaluates the superintendent of public instruction.

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