

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR
Responsible
 GOVERNMENT

Pottstown plays same game as OJR

This summer, the lame duck Owen J. Roberts School Board voted 5-4 to fire superintendent Myra Forrest and buy out the last year of her contract at a cost of \$165,000. Now the five-member majority, three of whom were defeated in the spring primary, are rushing to hire a new superintendent before a new board takes over in December.

By state law, a superintendent of schools must be given a contract from between three to five years.

The lame duck Pottstown School Board is playing the same game. Proposed new five-year contracts for Pottstown's top administrators have been placed on the agenda for approval at tonight's board meeting.

At present, the contracts of the administrators — David Krem, superintendent; Reed Lindley, assistant superintendent; Jeffrey Sparagana, director of education and human resources; and Linda Adams, business administrator — are set to expire on June 30, 2010.

In the spring primary election, two incumbent school directors lost their bids for re-election. A third incumbent remains on the Republican ballot for November, but faces a strong challenge by a Democratic opponent.

It is virtually certain, therefore, that two and possibly three new members will take their seats on the Pottstown School Board this December.

Tonight's motion is designed to tie the

hands of the new school board and guarantee the jobs of the current administrators until 2015. It would allow school directors who have been voted out of office to control the destiny of the school district for years to come.

Two years ago, a slate of five candidates ran for the Pottstown School Board promising to retain and renovate Pottstown's five neighborhood elementary schools. They also pledged to practice fiscal responsibility.

They defeated five incumbents — the directors who appointed the current administrators — by an overwhelming majority.

Last May, two new candidates also won, by a wide margin, on a pledge to retain neighborhood schools and practice fiscal responsibility.

Tonight's motion is an attempt to thwart local democracy and achieve by legal maneuvering what incumbent board members could not achieve at the voting booth.

It may be that all four administrators should be retained for new terms. But that decision should be made by the newly elected school board — not members defeated at the polls.

Tom Hylton, a 37-year resident of Pottstown, is Web site editor of Pottstown Citizens for Responsible Government. He won both the Republican and Democratic nominations for Pottstown School Board in the spring primary.



Commentary by
 Thomas Hylton

Summary

- **A motion to extend the contracts of Pottstown's top school administrators by five years has been placed on the agenda for tonight's meeting of the Pottstown School Board.**
- **As a result of the May primary election, it is virtually certain that two and perhaps three new members will replace incumbents on the school board this December.**
- **The motion is designed to allow board members who have been voted out of office to control the destiny of the Pottstown School District for years to come.**
- **The motion is an attempt to circumvent the democratic process.**