

Retired educator to run for state superintendent

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EAST COBB - East Cobb resident Dr. Beth Farokhi, a Democrat, will announce her candidacy for state school superintendent in a campaign kickoff Monday at 11 p.m. on Marietta Square.

Farokhi is a retired Georgia State University College of Education administrator.

She is perhaps best-known in Cobb for running against the Rev. Dr. John Crooks in the November 2006 race for the Post 6 seat on the school board. In heavily Republican east Cobb, Crooks, a Republican, garnered 14,086 votes, or 57.13 percent, compared to Farokhi's 10,554, or 42.08 percent.

Most recently, she has served as president of the Cobb-Marietta Retired Educators Association, a position she stepped down from in May.

State Rep. Rob Teilhet (D-Smyrna), who is vying for the Georgia Attorney General's seat, greeted her announcement with applause.

"Beth Farokhi is an extraordinarily talented woman, and I'm glad she's offering herself for public service. Her contribution to the debate will be immensely valuable," Teilhet said.

Veteran educator Betty Gray of Mableton said the determining factor of Farokhi's success will be whether she can raise the money to get her message out across a state as large as Georgia.

Farokhi has lived in Cobb for nearly 40 years. Her husband, Dr. N.R. Farokhi, is a political science professor for the Atlanta University Complex. Her son, Amir Farokhi, a corporate attorney with McKenna Long & Aldridge, is vying for an at-large seat on the Atlanta City Council.

Farokhi, who is the daughter of an accountant and a homemaker, was born in Augusta. After she earned an education degree from LaGrange College in 1970, she began teaching fourth grade at Mableton's Riverside Elementary. In 1974, she married her husband, N.R., who came from Iran in the 1960s. Two years later, she left public schools

to earn her doctorate. She began work as an administrator for Georgia State University in the 1980s, where her main thrust was curriculum development.

She has served on such boards as the Boys and Girls Club Advisory Board of Gender Inclusion and National Board of American Association of University Women.

Other candidates who have announced for state superintendent include Democrat Brian Westlake, of Decatur, a high school social studies teacher with the Gwinnett School District; Democrat Jeff Scott, a middle school math teacher with the Walker County School District; and Republican Richard Woods, an elementary school curriculum director with Irwin County Schools.

Former Cobb Democratic Party Chairman David Wilkerson said Farokhi will make an excellent superintendent for Georgia.

"She brings valuable experience from working at various levels within the educational system. She has worked in Cobb County schools and at the college level. After the challenges of the last two superintendents, it will be good to have someone whose only concern is the education of our children," Wilkerson said.