

MOUNTAIN BROOK

Jane Menendez to head school board

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Jane Menendez

She said the biggest issues facing the board are financial.

After many years of working with Mountain Brook Schools on behalf of her children, Jane Menendez is now getting the system ready for her three grandchildren.

"They will probably be future Spartans," she said. "So I have a vested interest in the future."

Menendez, who has served on the Mountain Brook Board of Education since 2005, was named the board's chairwoman last week. Board Member Michael Thompson was voted vice chairman. Menendez replaces Chairman Gary London, who rotated off the board last month after 15 years.

A native of Atlanta, Menendez saw four children go through Mountain Brook Schools and served as PTA

president for Cherokee Bend Elementary and the junior high and high schools. She said taking over the board chair is enough to make her "a little nervous."

"I've got big shoes to fill," she said. "Gary did such a great job and there was such an ease about serving on the board."

The biggest issue facing the board, Menendez said, is its financial situation. Though Mountain Brook has a sizable reserve and a large local tax base, it has still been affected like other

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Alabama schools by three years of state education budget proration. This has made for tighter budgets and harder decisions on where money should go.

"The financial situation is the most daunting issue on the horizon," she said. "We've been fortunate to weather it as well as we have. Of course, that's been due to the financial management the system has had, and the fact that there's a consensus about cost issues. But it looks to be the dominant issue for years to come."

Menendez said she has

been very pleased with the direction of the system under Superintendent Dicky Barlow, who is entering his second year. Menendez was part of the board that chose Barlow.

"I look forward to working with him and the rest of the staff," she said. "You couldn't ask for a better system to work with."

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