

## A SCHOOL BOARD HOPEFUL | B2

Former university president plans to run for Lee district seat

# Local & Business

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## LEE COUNTY Ex-educator to run for school board

Les Cochran, a former president of Youngstown State University and a San Carlos Park resident, announced his candidacy Wednesday for the Lee County School Board District 3 seat now held by Jane Kuckel.

Kuckel, whose third term expires in November

2012, told The News-Press in April she does not intend to seek re-election. She still has about 16 months to go in her third term.

Cochran was Youngstown State's president from 1992-2000. While at Youngstown State, Cochran was the former boss to fired Ohio State University football coach Jim Tressel.

Cochran said his role in managing a \$100 million

budget and upgrading academic programs at Youngstown State would "bring a new level of educational leadership to the board."

## School board race

Les Cochran, a San Carlos resident and former president of Youngstown State University, declared his candidacy for Lee County School Board on Thursday at the meeting of Businesspeople United for Political Action.

He's running for the seat held by Jane Kuckel, who has said she does not expect to seek re-election.

With local colleges saying most students need remedial classes when they enter, Cochran said the problems are obvious, and he wants to offer experienced education leadership.

His ideas include longer school years — perhaps starting 10 days earlier and ending 10 days later; putting the best teachers and principals at the lower-scoring schools; and an emphasis on student work between grades 5 and 10, where tests show a decline in achievement.

Some of those involve increased costs, Cochran said, but he believes money can be found by cutting less needed spending elsewhere.

## School board race

Lee County School Board candidate Les Cochran will have a fundraiser hosted by Michael Reitman, director of the Lee Building Industry Association, at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at Mastello restaurant in south Fort Myers.

Cochran, a Republican who formerly made a unsuccessful bid for Lee County commission, is running for the seat held by Jane Kuckel, who has said she does not intend to seek re-election.

— Betty Parker is a freelance writer specializing in politics. Her column runs on Saturdays.