

# Lee returns to lead city's school district

**By Chris Sykes Staff Writer, Orange Transcript**

A former official within the Orange School District has returned to lead the district.

Ronald C. Lee was introduced as the new superintendent of Orange's public schools Tuesday night during the Board of Education meeting.

For Lee, who was previously employed as the district's business administrator, his rehiring represents a return to his administrative roots. He left Orange a few years ago to serve in a similar capacity in the Newark Public Schools, but has come back and, apparently, a lot of people are very happy about that.

"As a member of the board when he left the district, it is my great pleasure to introduce our new superintendent," said the Rev. Reginald Jackson, who still serves on the board. "He is somebody who has been with us before, but was hijacked down the road. He's returned to us and we selected him because we feel he is the right man to move the schools forward."

That might be the case, but Nicole Williams-James, a former board member, said Lee has his work cut out for him. She said turning the district around and reforming the approach to education in Orange is going to be "quite a challenge," but she believes he is the right man for the job.

"The state guidelines and qualifications for selecting school superintendents recommend it be some one with a classroom background, but it doesn't mandate it," said Williams-James. "Districts are left with the ability to interpret and craft that requirement to suit their needs. I think, in Mr. Lee's case, his lack of a background in the class room won't be a hindrance when it comes to leading the district."

Gloria Stewart, a longtime city resident who has shown her concern for education and other issues in Orange, said she is willing to give Lee a chance.

"Mr. Lee and I go way back to when we were in the Colgate building working together, but I must say I have a few reservations about his hiring," said Stewart. "I do agree with some of the things he said about 'taking the handcuffs' off our principals and other administrators so they can do the job of educating our children."

Lee said he intends to reach out to residents and local businesses to enlist them in his efforts to revamp the public school system.