

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2016 State Board of Education Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Steve Roberts

Board District: 2

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Occupation/Work History (last five years – 25 words or fewer): Licensed Teacher in Kansas; private math and physics tutor, Johnson County; Professional Engineer (Missouri).

Other recent political/community experience (25 words or fewer): Volunteer, Johnson County Republican Party; volunteer, Men of Nativity (Church of the Nativity, Leawood)

If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization, please list which organization(s) and any leadership position you have held: Principal (owner) Real Math Standards, dedicated to revision of Kansas (American) math standards and replacement of Common Core, a.k.a. Kansas “College and Career-Ready Standards.” www.realmathstandards.com

As a candidate, what are your top three education policy issues? (10 words or fewer per issue):

1. Better Schools, Fewer Rules. Simple, declarative, principled policy making.
2. More professionalism in classrooms at all ages, levels.
3. Smaller classes in early primary and primary grades.

What changes would you propose, if any, regarding how K-12 education is currently funded and/or how that funding is spent? (100 words or fewer): The governor was correct two years ago when he said the Kansas public school funding formula was too complicated, designed to be “not understood.” Three principles should be incorporated into a new funding formula: 1. The largest “pot” should be equitable distribution to students. In short, the money follows the student. 2. Localities able to raise money locally must keep most of it in their locality (the percentage retained locally – 80 percent, 90 percent – to be negotiated by legislators). 3. Less federal involvement in funding should be the trend, eventually getting the Washington bureaucracy out of the local school business.

Control over decision-making regarding, for example, curriculum, charter schools and funding, is being debated by the Legislature, the State Board of Education and local school board. What (are) your views on this issue? (75 words or fewer): Article Six of the Kansas Constitution is well crafted. The legislature “controls the purse strings” and the state board on which I serve concerns itself with teacher licensure requirements (a passion of mine – we need to welcome professionals into public schools), length of

school year, accreditation of buildings and/or districts, and the like. It's a good system when people across the political spectrum actually put the needs of students and families first.

What are your views on the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards? (50 words or fewer): Fifty words? Academic standards, like most policies, statutes, regulations, and guidelines, need to be simple, principled, and declarative. We have written such standards, the draft published at www.realmathstandards.com. Common are the standard rules of English and standard rules of mathematics, which we have had in American schools for 200 years.

What do you believe is the most pressing challenge facing K-12 education in Kansas today? (50 words or fewer): Government arrogance is breathtaking. Personal responsibility is lacking. Children of parents who struggle with modern life are getting shorted, and too often those with natural gifts are stunted because of our inability to get great teachers and mentors into the lives of children between the ages of 4 and 8.

What do you believe distinguishes you from your opponent in this race? (50 words or fewer): I'm an engineer. Math and physics teacher, I appreciate the political wrangling that must transpire to effect meaningful change. My challenger in the general election would maintain the institutions essentially intact, methinks, and defend the status quo. We have a system to repair. We have a nation at risk.