

Recommendations for the State Board of Education: Hudak, Griggs, and Middleton

The eight-member State Board of Education is responsible for all policies and procedures that affect K-12 public education not assigned to the Legislature and local school boards. You may think that gives the State Board little to do. But the State Board has a huge job – and the board's decisions affect everything that K-12 educators do in their own jobs.

Authorized by the Constitution with “general supervision of the public schools,” the State Board appoints the Commissioner of Education; employs everyone who works at the Department of Education and approves the agency's budget; regulates teacher and principal licensing; accredits 178 school districts; distributes federal and state education funds; and supervises adult basic education programs and public libraries, as well as the State Library.

Beyond these jobs, the State Board has a few other responsibilities – making all the rules, regulations, and policies that govern pre-kindergarten through grade 12 and granting waivers from state law to local school boards. The board sets K-12 academic standards and oversees CSAP and the School Accountability Reports. The board also has judicial authority over school boards regarding appeals by charter schools dissatisfied with local board decisions.

Lately, the acrimonious partisan divide on the State Board has not only been publicly evident, but a barrier to making positive strides for public education across the state. This November's election for members from Congressional Districts 4 and 7 is particularly important.

Three of the eight seats on the State Board are up. **Evie Hudak** represents CD 2 and is running unopposed. CEA has recommended Hudak in the past and continues to support her advocacy for public schools and educators on the board. We recommend her for re-election.

CD 4 – Tom Griggs v. Bob Schaffer

CEA recommends **Tom Griggs** for election to the CD 4 seat. A Ft. Collins parent and volunteer in his children's schools, Griggs is a University of Northern Colorado professor in the teacher preparation program. He has served as the president of the Colorado Association for Bilingual Education.

Griggs says, “As someone truly committed to leaving no child behind, I will promote the use of research-based approaches to teaching kids with a wide range of needs and back-

grounds, provide teachers with the professional development they need, and find the most effective means to augment and support efforts to improve our schools. We can't be successful by punishing or cutting resources from kids, teachers and schools when they fall short.”

Contrast Griggs' pro-public education positions with those of current board member Bob Schaffer. Schaffer was appointed last January to complete Clair Orr's term and is running for a new term. He is an employee of Aspect Energy, Inc., where Alex Cranberg, outspoken voucher proponent, is president. Schaffer also serves as president of the Parental Alliance for Choice in Education, a nonprofit that promotes school

vouchers. Schaffer is best known for serving in Congress from the 4th CD from 1997-2003. Prior to that, he was in the State Senate for nine years.

Schaffer declined to participate in CEA's recommendation process. Unfamiliar with his record on public schools? You can get an idea of his views from his comment about the Legislature appropriating public preschool funds, but not taxdollars for private preschool: “Government may be part of the solution (to early childhood education), but we ought to not make the same mistake we've made with the K-12 system by relying exclusively on a government-owned, unionized, bureaucratized monopoly.”

CD 7 – Karen Middleton v. Lee Kunz

CEA recommends incumbent **Karen Middleton** for election to the CD 7 seat on the State Board. Middleton, a proven Friend of Education, has been involved in various aspects of education for many years. She currently owns a nonprofit firm that manages education related projects. Middleton has served as legislative staff and worked for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. She has been assistant dean at the University of Denver Graduate School of International Studies and a community college instructor.

Middleton says, “I believe that schools, students, parents, businesses, and the community must work together. Education is a community responsibility and together we can prepare our students to become engaged and productive citizens. They are our future. Enhancing civic education and community engagement is one way of building strong ties between schools and the community.”

Middleton's opponent is real estate developer and former pro football player Lee Kunz. He owns Lee Kunz Construction Co. He is also a Wheat Ridge High School football coach.

Kunz, who did not participate in our recommendation process, is endorsed by some of the most virulent anti-public education individuals in the state, including voucher supporters Steve Schuck and Ed McVane and Pam Benigno and Ben DeGrow, Independence Institute staff. ■

Our three recommended candidates:

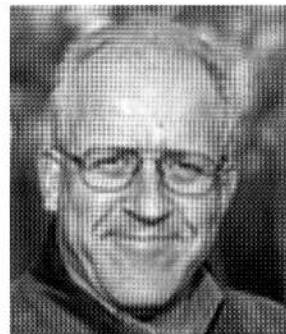
hudak.org

KarenMiddleton.org

Tom Griggs: knowledgemessenger.com/a/KM-Tasks/View.aspx?app=tgsbc&cid=111



Evie Hudak, CD 2



Tom Griggs, CD 4



Karen Middleton, CD 7