

**Text from Keller Citizen article, Friday, Apr. 18, 2008**

## **KISD board candidates tout experience**

**By SANDRA ENGELLAND**

Four candidates for the Keller ISD Board of Trustees discussed their qualifications and the challenges facing the district at a forum Tuesday night.

Just a handful of residents showed up at the Education Center for the forum, sponsored by the Keller ISD Council of PTAs and moderated by the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County.

Craig Allen and Richard Walker are vying for Place 4. Incumbent Scott Brown decided not to run for re-election.

Incumbent Lara Lee Hogg and Charles Youngblood are candidates for Place 5.

Early voting begins April 28 for the May 10 election.

### **CRAIG ALLEN**

As an administrator at Texas Christian University, Allen has experience dealing with budgets, construction projects and strategic planning.

In the school district, Allen has served on the Campus Educational Improvement Committee at Bette Perot Elementary and on the bond oversight committee.

He said a recent trip to Sky Ranch with his son's fourth grade class reminded him of the importance of supporting and enhancing student learning.

Growth is the biggest challenge facing the district over the next few years. Allen said he supports a November bond election because of the need for a few more schools and renovation at some older campuses.

Allen said the district seems to be making progress in increasing TAKS scores by looking at results and targeting those who need help.

“Education is not manufacturing widgets. When you're educating people, you have to take great care.”

## **RICHARD WALKER**

Walker touts his previous 10 years of experience as a board member, four of those as president. He decided not to run for re-election in 2005.

Walker said his greatest achievement was helping lead the effort to get the curriculum audit. The audit was conducted in the spring of 2005 and served as the catalyst for rewriting the scope and sequence of district curriculum.

Making sure that students in the same grade at different schools were getting the same instruction was an important step, Walker said.

He, too, believes a bond issue is needed to keep up with growing enrollment. Classrooms are the most important part of the next bond, but if it includes another large stadium, it should be in a separate proposition.

The district should return to recognized status, Walker said. Finishing the implementation of the new curriculum should help achieve that goal.

He said that board members need to look to the future and be held accountable for their actions.

“I think vision is the most important challenge to any school board member.”

## **LARA LEE HOGG**

Hogg was elected to the board in a special election for Place 5 last year after trustee Jarrett Armstrong stepped down mid-term. This year marks the official end of the term.

“The board went through a really big transition last year,” Hogg said of the turmoil that characterized the board before the 2007 election. “The focus, thank goodness, has gone back to the children of the district.”

Hogg said she had learned a lot about governance over the last year and said that her priorities were to see the integration of technology in the district, develop partnerships with the community, encourage clear communication between teachers and administrators and continue to urge the City of Fort Worth to improve roads around KISD schools.

Like the other candidates, she would support a November bond election to build several new schools. She said a stadium should be included on the ballot because it would be difficult to have four schools sharing one facility. Like Walker, she favored a separate proposition to allow voters to decide.

Hogg said she would like to see more funding for math and science because those are the biggest areas of student need.

### **CHARLES YOUNGBLOOD**

Youngblood has two sons at Keller High School and nearly 20 years of experience in the military. Now a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserves, he said he is used to being in leadership and working as part of a team.

As a board member, he would want to see the quality of education in the district continue to improve and help the district manage its resources well.

He said he would support a bond if additional facilities are needed, but trustees should keep a careful eye on the bottom line. He said he was concerned that the board had recently approved reducing the fund balance by about 10 percent, lowering it below the optimum percentage suggested by the Texas Education Agency.

Youngblood said he would like to see the district greatly improve its test scores.

His wife, Catherine Youngblood is a resource teacher at Parkview Elementary. He said he would like to see the district hire more resource teachers rather than overloading existing teachers.

“We need to put more emphasis on education and resources to help teachers.”