



LOUDOUN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## 2015 BizVotes Questionnaire Results

### Loudoun County School Board – At-Large District

**Beth Huck / Stephan Knobloch**



Answer is consistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position



Answer is inconsistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position or nonresponsive to the question



Answer is partly consistent with Loudoun Chamber's Position

#### 1) What is the biggest issue/challenge Loudoun's K-12 educational system faces in the upcoming term?

**BETH HUCK:** The biggest issue facing Loudoun's school system in the upcoming term is making sure we have enough room at schools to keep pace with development to reduce overcrowding. Being a developing area is not a bad thing; it means we are maintaining the status of being a desirable place to live and, in turn, attracting businesses to help service the families moving into the area. However, proactive planning needs to take place to ensure that schools have enough space to accommodate all the students in the county. Bussing children halfway across the county because the child's home school is beyond capacity is not a place we want to continue to find ourselves.

**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** The greatest challenge for Loudoun County has been and continues to be maintaining high-quality school facilities, high-quality instruction, curriculum and resources as enrollment increases and funding dollars are stretched. Central to this challenge is the issue of equitable distribution of resources so all students are able to succeed and reach their potential. Examples include the inability to provide adequate resources to meet technology and infrastructure requirements in the classroom and across all schools; having sufficient classroom space in schools for new students; providing adequate curriculum resources for the diverse student body, such as non-English learners, Gifted/Talented students, special education students; and monitoring and evaluating programs and initiatives for efficiency and effectiveness. From my perspective, this challenge arises from a lack of systems thinking, processes and structures as the county has grown over the past two decades. This is an explanation, not an excuse. We can and must do better.



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### 2) How do you propose to address this challenge?

**BETH HUCK:** Proactive planning is key to keeping up with these demands. As a board, we need to keep up with the rate of growth and development, in order to identify where the needs are going to be greatest. We should work closely with our counterparts on the Board of Supervisors to identify the areas of development and growth across the county. We should identify potential school sites and partner with land developers and area businesses to negotiate the best possible situation for school growth, whether that is building a brand new school or building onto an existing school. Additionally, we must determine the best plan of action to fund new schools and/or expansions in conjunction with the growth.

**STEPHEN KNOBLOCH:** First and foremost, the school board must establish policy and guidelines to equip every school with the necessary resources to successfully prepare today's students for tomorrow's world. Loudoun is so much more than the Virginia Standards of Quality! If we are to ensure equitable opportunity for students, there must be a framework by which schools operate. That begins with a strategic plan and needs assessment to define our success - Vision 20/20 moves the district in the right direction. One of the most important requirements, as in business, is to define success and measure whether or not it is being met. There must be a policy that requires a written formal evaluation plan for any new programs or initiative prior to implementation. Goals must be established. If they are not met then scrap the program. Our kids deserve better than "untested, unproven" programs, including curriculum and instruction models.

### 3) Do you feel the working relationship between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board has improved over the last four years? Please provide additional comments that support your position.

**BETH HUCK:** I feel the relationship between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board has improved greatly over the last four years. The best example of this is that the Board of Supervisors fully funded the proposed \$991.7 million operating budget. This is the first time since 2001 that LCPS has not been underfunded, and facing additional budgetary cuts and shortfalls. I commend the Board of Supervisors, School Board, Superintendent Eric Williams, and other school leaders for their hard work and collaborative efforts in reaching a budget that provides so much for our schools, yet is reasonable and fair. Continued collaborative efforts like this will only strengthen the county as a whole and improves the opportunities for Loudoun County children to become highly skilled members of a highly competitive workforce. I look forward to serving with this decisively collaborative team in the very near future.



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**STEPHEN KNOBLOCH:** From the outside looking in, it appears that the working relationship between the two boards has improved. The joint committee of the boards has been a step in the right direction. There is greater clarity on the roles of each board. There remains more work to be done regarding understanding and empathy for the scope of their respective governance roles. A strong collaborative working relationship is predicated on common goals and equal responsibility for success. When it comes to the public services - education, safety, infrastructure - both boards should seek opportunities where the work of both county government and public education have a nexus. They should avoid stepping into the other's responsibility if possible. That is easier said than done and will take work. We are headed in the right direction.

**4) How can the Board of Supervisors and School Board work collectively to streamline the school site selection process, design, construction and associated land use approvals while ensuring that all sites selected best meet the community's needs and ease of access for students?**

**Chamber Position:** The Chamber supports the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, the School Board and LCPS continuing their efforts to work together on a framework for school site selection and land use permitting that streamlines the process and locates new schools in a manner that supports both the education and economic development mission of our community.



**BETH HUCK:** Working together with land developers and construction vendors to negotiate the best possible situation in terms of logistics and finances for future school sites and/or expansions and the use of proffers to offer school sites within communities should be a practice that continues, especially in areas of high potential growth. One of those areas will be the dense development that is sure to come with the silver line metro in a few years. Securing land/proffer agreements now is and should be considered a top priority for the School Board and Board of Supervisors alike. School designs should ensure the layout provides enough room to facilitate the area's students be adaptable to the ever changing technology and teaching techniques/requirements, but also incorporate eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient advancements to provide long-term recurring savings.



**STEPHEN KNOBLOCH:** Quite frankly, this is one topic for which I'm ill-prepared to respond. During my tenure as the LCPS Director of Research (2004-2012), I was on the periphery of the discussions and a casual observer. This is one area that will require my concerted effort to be better educated. Given the student enrollment projections and the approval process for development location and density zoning, it would seem that this is one of those collaborative opportunities I mentioned in my previous answer.



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5) Please provide your thoughts on the following potential approaches to supplement traditional education funding, and for those your support, how each approach could be incorporated into Loudoun Public School's budget and operating system?

- a. School-Business Partnerships;
- b. Public charter and magnet schools;
- c. Open enrollment to balance population amount schools;
- d. Distance-learning for in-school and home-schooled students;
- e. Adjustments to class sizes; and/or
- f. Other approaches that may complement the education today's Loudoun County children are receiving through LCPS.

**Chamber Position:** The Chamber supports:

- Every student being able to choose his/her school in order to foster successful individual educational outcomes;
- Flexible policies that enable public school attendance alternatives, such as open enrollment and expansion of online education options for in-school and home-school students.
- Providing authority to local school boards to determine its school calendar.
- Greater consideration and use of charter schools and magnet schools
- Greater use of pilot programs within the school system to provide opportunities to consider new and innovative ideas that offer additional education choices.
- Creation of a Loudoun County Teacher Cabinet by the School Board that provides an opportunity for Loudoun County teachers to share innovative ideas and successes so that others may have the chance to benefit.



**BETH HUCK:**

**a. School-Business Partnerships;** School-Business Partnerships are a great way to help supplement school funding and resources to provide some of the extras that are not covered in the school budget. A few of the ways I believe these partnerships could be implemented are by: •Providing funds or materials for special projects or school improvements. •Offering guest speakers to lead a demonstration, presentation, or discussion on a particular topic that students are learning in order to help make connections from the lesson at hand to real life applications.



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- Establishing a network of qualified mentors to help guide students to achieve educational excellence and to boost confidence in students with various challenges. These partnerships are an important part of building a sense of community between the schools and area businesses. It is important to ensure that student learning and achievements are always the goal of each partnership.
- **b. Public charter and magnet schools;** Public charter and magnet schools are both options that add value to the county, knowing that not all children learn in the same way and that often what works in one area of the county does not always work in another. Public charters will bring in some private funding to help offset the public funding. However, careful financial planning is required to make sure there is not a largely disproportionate amount of funding going into these efforts, especially when over-crowding is an issue at other schools in the county. With Loudoun's first charter school having a year under its belt, we can build on the successes and learn from missteps, and incorporate that knowledge moving forward with additional charter schools.
- **c. Open enrollment to balance population amount schools;** Open enrollment could help address some of the over-crowding issues if parents elected to enroll their children in schools closer to their place of work, route to work, or the children's afterschool care location. I am not sure there would be any significant cost savings and the cost associated with coordinating and administering open enrollment may outweigh the benefits. I support the current school choice policy with continued stipulation that parents provide transportation to and from schools that are not in a student's assigned district. However, the trend is that most families want their children to attend the schools within their community, or nearest to their home; therefore, this does not provide much relief to overcrowding in schools.
- **d. Distance-learning for in-school and home-schooled students;** Distance-learning would be a great way to offer a greater range of classes at a lower cost across the entire county. I see a great opportunity to implement distance-learning in high schools where students are disciplined and responsible, and selectively for middle school classes. Specialty classes could be offered from a host school and broadcast to satellite schools. Classes could be recorded and/or broadcast on the web for students with unique circumstances, preventing them from attending in-school classes for extended periods of time. My middle school-aged son is currently using the Virtual Loudoun system to take a math course over the summer and we have found the class to be of high quality. This system is a great way for students to get ahead and to allow for more elective classes to be taken.
- **e. Adjustments to class sizes; and/or** Reducing class size is essential to reaching long and short-term academic goals in Loudoun County Schools. By providing an adequate number of schools and teachers with more equally distributed school districts, we can reduce the class sizes. Using a common sense and consistent approach to school redistricting, while a painful process at times, will help Loudoun not only reduce class size, but may additionally cut per pupil costs. Some ways we can achieve cost savings are by:
  - Establishing walking zones for schools

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that offer a safe walk-able area for students, thus saving in some cases hundreds of thousands of dollars in transportation costs. •The ability to more adequately plan and equally distribute staffing in schools.

- **f. Other approaches that may compliment the education today's Loudoun County children are receiving through LCPS.** Establishing different academies at existing high schools will provide students the ability to learn specialized skills in areas of career interest that they wish to pursue post-graduation from high school and/or college. For example, one school could offer a law/government academy, another a business academy, another performing arts, etc. This is also an opportunity where business partnerships could play a key role. The current board is already making great strides in the development of Loudoun academies. This will offer many benefits for students, such as: •Opportunity to explore a career field interest and aptitude before entering college. •Giving students an added prospect of being able to learn in a captivating environment with students of likeminded interests and talents, especially in later school years when excitement and drive tends to wane. •Potential to be dual enrolled in their field of choice and earn college credit before graduating high school.



### STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:

- **a. School-Business Partnerships;** There are many strong school-business partnerships already established among Loudoun County schools. The annual celebration and booklet of school-business partnerships is a wonderful resources. It is important to go beyond sharing success stories. It is vital that we share what it takes to build strong partnerships. I recommend that the business community and school district develop "how-tos" and standards for building quality partnerships, if they haven't already. Additionally, there are great opportunities for the school district and business partners to create activities, lessons and curricular material that connect school subjects with the world of work, careers and local businesses. When activities like this do take place, typically at the high school level, many students are limited by their course schedule and don't have the flexibility to explore other topics/career paths. The school-business partnership is good, but could be great with a concerted effort on the part of all involved.
- **b. Public charter and magnet schools;** As stated earlier, I am a strong proponent for equitable opportunities for all students. As long as alternate school solutions, such as public charters and magnet schools, do not exclude students from opportunities and open up innovation, I am a proponent of them. That said, I do believe that there must be a measure of "ROI" when creating alternate schools - especially when the size of school may not produce an adequate economy of scale.
- **c. Open enrollment to balance population amount schools;** In theory, this may be a solution to some of the aforementioned school overcrowding issues. There may be some unintended consequences related to bus transportation, school programming (i.e. adequate staffing for an "open enrolled" student population), as





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well as changing electives/course offerings. That said, this option should be explored and if adopted in policy, there must be a means by which the programs goals/guidelines are assessed.

- **d. Distance-learning for in-school and home-schooled students;** In a previous position, I was senior director for PBS Teacherline - an online math and science teacher professional development program. I support online learning for both in-school and home-school students. My daughter experienced a Virtual Virginia course. While successful, I saw firsthand the overabundance of busy work, reading, video watching and note-taking, compared with in-person, face-to-face classes. Like Michigan, I would endorse a requirement for every Virginia high school student to experience an online course during their education. I served on the inaugural committee, in partnership with GMU that laid the groundwork for Virtual Loudoun. We need to continue pursuing effective ways to reach our students - online and in-person.
- **e. Adjustments to class sizes; and/or** I believe that LCPS should work to meet the stated class-size goals or adjust them accordingly. As a board member, I would work to provide a sliding median class size based on subject and school level, rather than an overall average. For example, reducing the number of students in an English class is critical if teachers are to provide sufficient time and attention to student writing. While at the same time, using the class size average is superfluous when applying it to a band or chorus class. Similarly, special education students and ELL students require a differentiated learning environment that warrants a much smaller class size. The policy needs to be thoughtfully adjusted to reflect reality in the classroom based on student needs. I appreciate the funding/staffing calculation that is required to determine budgets. We need to put some time and thought into making class-size goal adjustments.
- **f. Other approaches that may compliment the education today's Loudoun County children are receiving through LCPS.** As an advocate for the arts, I believe that LCPS could create an Arts Academy, similar to the STEM Academies of Loudoun and the Academy of Science. I believe that there should be more course electives at the middle and high school levels. I believe that LCPS should explore alternatives to the block schedule, which unintentionally constrains both courses, student choice and learning environments.

**6) How can Loudoun County Public Schools best improve either its curriculum or technical and career training to ensure its students meet the requirements of the future workplace?**

**Chamber Position:** • The Chamber supports: strong business-education partnerships to develop training programs for specific industries; stronger focus on college and/or career readiness for students earlier in their K-12 education experience; and emphasis on ensuring



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digital literacy by our students, to better preparing students to effectively enter the workforce.



**BETH HUCK:** Dual enrollment programs are one of the best ways we can address our need to improve technical and career training, so that we are addressing future workplace needs. This is another area where business partnerships are so vitally important. Loudoun is rich in technology companies and businesses. We should leverage businesses to give back to their community by investing time, effort and resources back into the schools that may one day be hiring our young people.



**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** The new Academies of Loudoun will go a long way to elevate technical and career curriculum in the eyes of the community and more importantly students. CS Monroe served many students, but many more couldn't attend due to size constraints. The course offerings and credentials/certificates students earn are of high quality and many are coordinated with businesses and post-secondary schools (NoVA). As stated earlier, I would like to see business work hand-in-hand with curriculum staff to design activities, lessons and curriculum material that reflect the world of work and expectations after high school. I have a staff of 15 people, several of whom are recent graduates. I find those employees who have had some internship/externship/work experience are better prepared for a job. The Vision 20/20 framework outlines important skills for the workplace - critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation. These need to be embedded into the curriculum - K-12.

### **7) How can Loudoun County Public Schools best improve its professional development training and evaluation procedures to ensure all LCPS personnel meet the standards required of their peers and demanded by this community?**

**Chamber Position:** The Chamber supports the development of a well-constructed and fair system to ensure all involved in the education of our children are regularly evaluated and receive feedback on how to improve based on measurable standards, outcomes and innovation beyond simple standardized test scores. The Chamber also strongly supports compensation being tied to evaluation, achievement and outcomes for educators.



**BETH HUCK:** I believe in establishing a clear, consistent, and fair way to evaluate teachers, aside from the use of standardized testing scores that will reward teachers going the extra mile to provide innovative learning experiences and close student achievement gaps. We should use a combination of evaluation factors, such as continuing education





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and classroom evaluations, and use tools such as the Interactive Achievement (IA) program to measure student and teacher progress. Additionally, I believe the county should link compensation to evaluation in some capacity, whether it be an accelerated salary step progression or performance bonuses. Rewarding deserving teachers is not only a way to recognize their efforts and initiative, but it will also encourage underperforming teachers to make efforts to make improvements.



**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** Over my 11-year tenure in LCPS, there was ample expertise and capability to provide quality professional development. Unfortunately, LCPS lacked a coordinated effort to design and deliver professional development across the school district. Too often, it was left up to the school principal or district leadership as to what the required training workshops were to be. The unintended result was a hodge-podge of training and expectations within subject areas and across grade levels. The Pathways to Reading and Writing was and remains a solid exemplar of professional development. The program is thoughtfully designed and adequately resourced. Other programs could use the example to replicate the professional development model. The current teacher performance evaluation instrument was developed by a committee of teachers, principals, parents, and district administrators. I served on the committee (2011-2012). The instrument fulfills both LCPS and VDOE requirements and includes evidence of student achievement.

### **8) What economies of scale or other creative efficiencies should the School Board initiate to reduce the cost of education per student while maintaining the highest level of educational experience for our K-12 students?**

**Chamber Position:** The Chamber supports consideration of services currently provided by school system employees that may be outsourced to provide greater efficiency, cost savings, competition and business opportunity in the private sector; consideration of consolidation of County and school functions to achieve increased efficiencies and cost savings; aggressive efforts to access all existing but untapped revenue sources to support current state and local funding, including grants, programs, and initiatives that provide opportunities for additional funding to support educating our next generation; continued and increased partnerships with non-profit organizations and foundations in both funding and programming given the demonstrated success of such programs and the geographic access to additional potential partners; and continued and greater use of school-business partnerships as a way for businesses to provide valuable resources of time, energy and funding to support the schools.



**BETH HUCK:** Assets and services supporting the operational needs of each school should be identified well in advance of actual need to optimize purchasing power. I would



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like to perform a workforce utilization study of the non-instructional LCPS workforce to identify areas for reduction and/or consolidation. I would like to evaluate the option of eliminating some of the non-inherently governmental functions (e.g. tech support) and outsourcing these types of functions through competitive performance based procurements to local small businesses. I believe in many cases, the private sector can provide these demand based services, on-call, at both a higher quality and a lower cost to the taxpayer. Another way we can reduce some costs, is to roll out new educational programs that require procuring additional programs or equipment in phases to test their effectiveness and track actual usage rates before purchasing programs or equipment linked to those initiatives for the entire county.



**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** My first recommendation is to assess the usefulness of print textbooks and materials. In many cases, there are classrooms in which students are accessing course content online versus in print. If that is the case, change the textbook adoption policy and save money by not purchasing the unneeded print text. Evaluate resource utilization. This would include evaluating the needs for staff and specific positions. I believe it would be helpful to have a position audit to determine if there is overlap or redundancy of job responsibilities within and/or across schools or departments.

### 9) Do you see any areas where LCPS and County functions may be pursued collaboratively to better leverage available services and resources?

**Chamber Position:** The Chamber supports consideration of consolidation of County and school functions to achieve increased efficiencies and cost savings.



**BETH HUCK:** The needs of the school system should be evaluated against similar needs across the entire county Government in order to further advance the county's purchasing power. The School Board should move to implement shared services within the school system, as well as across the entire county Government, in order to eliminate unnecessary overhead and redundancy. Loudoun County should also look to partner with neighboring counties when procuring like items to further leverage local government purchasing power. Eventually, I would like us to explore procurement reform at the state level and advocate for the establishment of large, multiple-award contracts/schedules for common assets, supplies, and services, so savings can be shared by all school systems, large and small, across the entire state of Virginia.



**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** Along with the current HR and finance collaboration between the two boards, I would explore maintenance, custodial, procurement and security



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services as potential opportunities to create some synergy across the two functions - County and LCPS.

### 10) Please briefly describe what best qualifies you to hold the office for which you are running.

**BETH HUCK:** I believe any great board is represented by a diverse group with unique perspectives. The board currently hosts teachers, lawyers, business professionals etc. The board also hosts a multitude of personalities. I have a history in early childhood education; however, I believe I have so much more to offer than that. Since moving to Loudoun, I have been an active volunteer and leader in the community, as well as in my children's schools; serving as PTA Vice President, Room Mom, member and Chairperson for the Loudoun County Advisory Commission on Youth. I am a compassionate individual, and often referred to as the "voice of reason" in many difficult situations, as I listen, gather information, and then act. As the At-Large member, I desire to be the board member that parents feel they can contact and know their concerns will be heard.

**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** My professional experience makes me highly qualified to serve on the school board. I taught in public schools for 13 years at all levels. I was a public school district administrator in Loudoun County for 11 years - LCPS Director of Research. I have been self-employed as a national consultant and currently I am the Senior Vice President of Research and Advisory Services for K12 Insight, LLC. I earned my Doctorate in Education from the University of Virginia, a Masters Degree from Arizona State and a Bachelors Degree from St. Norbert College. I understand public education policy at the local, state and federal levels. I have successfully implemented systems within LCPS. I led the implementation of the LCPS data warehouse and CLARITY, the parent portal for student grades and assignments. Accountability and transparency are at the core of my career.

### 11) What is the chief factor that differentiates you from your opponent(s) (if you have one)?

**BETH HUCK:** No one can deny that Knobloch has experience in the field of education; experience that I feel would have been of greater use had he remained an administrator in our schools. He might even impress you with numbers and statistics. What sets me apart, is that I look past the numbers and see students as individual children, each important, each child some parent's son or daughter. I have a true heart for service in advocacy for youth and youth programs. My history can speak to my work, both professionally and personally, in Loudoun and beyond, always leaving things better than I found them. School board is an elected position; residents can choose who they want to serve and lead



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their schools. If Loudoun wants someone with a true heart to serve, who will be a good steward, to listen with an open -mind, and advocate for all students ...that's me.

**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** My 30 years of experience in education is the chief factor that differentiates me from my opponent. I have committed my professional career to public education. With my background I can delve deeply into the systems, policies and regulations that govern a public school system. In my current job, I work with school boards and district leadership teams across the country. I can bring that experience to help make a good school district into a great school district.

### 12) Is there any other personal or professional information you would like the business community to know about you that is not already covered?

**BETH HUCK:** As Community Lifestyle Manager for Brambleton Community Association, a large-scale, master planned community, I wore many hats. I managed the community's vast amenity portfolio, including all parks, pools, trails, and facilities. In addition, I developed, planned, and managed all community events and programs. During my time with Brambleton, we experienced growth unlike other areas in the county and even the country. I became an essential member of the management team, consistently proving value within the organization. I found ways to improve and grow our events and programs to new levels, increasing revenue to offset the costs, and identifying cost savings in day-to-day operations, all the while providing the upmost level of customer service to our residents, as well as maintaining strong relationships with my core vendor base. This experience, along with being a small business owner, will serve me well as a Loudoun County School Board member.

**STEPHAN KNOBLOCH:** I have lived in Loudoun County since 1992. I have served my school community as PTSA member and treasurer at Loudoun County High School. I am an ardent supporter of the arts in Loudoun County. I volunteer with Loudoun Symphony. I have collaborated with local theater companies and currently, I perform with the Master Singers of Virginia. I attend St. James' Episcopal Church with my wife Karen. My two children graduated from Loudoun County High School. My son, Michael (22), is a software developer who graduated from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH and my daughter, Katherine (19), earned a 4-year ROTC scholarship and is attending UCLA. My dedication to serve this community and public education stems from my parents' example and sacrifice to provide a high-quality education for their children. I now am totally committed to do the same for my family and this Loudoun County.

### Campaign Committee Information:

Candidate's Name (as it will appear on ballot): Beth A. Huck



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Campaign Manager: Elizabeth Venafró

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Candidate's Current Occupation: Owner and Managing Partner for Flip Switch Events, LLC. - Event Management and Consultant

Candidate's Political Experience: First time candidate

Candidate's Business Experience: Former early childhood educator, Community Lifestyle Manager for Brambleton Community Association from 2010-2015, Owner and Managing Partner of Flip Switch Events, LLC.

### **Campaign Committee Information:**

Candidate's Name (as it will appear on ballot): Stephan F. Knobloch

Campaign Manager: Stephan Knobloch

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Campaign Website: <http://knobloch4schoolboard.com>

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Candidate's Current Occupation: Business Executive

Candidate's Political Experience: None

Candidate's Business Experience: three years as SVP of Research and Advisory Services for K12 Insight, two years as a private consultant, two years as Sr. Director at PBS.