

1. Please provide some basic information about yourself.

Name: Melanie Haas

Position you're running for: KS State Board of Education, District 2

2. Please briefly tell us why you are running for public office.

I saw an opportunity to leverage my technology and business experience to benefit Kansas students. In my career I have run my own company and have held corporate executive roles. School districts are implementing 1:1 device policies (one device for every student) but they often lack the IT expertise to manage the infrastructure and content filters, creating a painful user experience for kids, teachers, and parents. As a parent of two children in public schools, I was frustrated that these devices added distraction and didn't offer an opportunity to learn about the real capabilities they had access to.

3. (State & Federal) Over the past decade, Kansas City has started to become recognized as a midwestern technology hub. There are multiple programs in place to allow this to happen, which should lead to high quality, high paying jobs. If elected, what types of policies would you support or advocate to continue the creation of startups, growth of the industry, and/or attraction of technology companies looking to relocate or expand to the Kansas City area?

If we're serious about providing a world-class education for Kansas students, then we must improve technology curriculum and align efforts to that goal. I've worked with technologists from all over the world and I know that KC companies would love to be able to source more of that high-level talent right here in our own community. It's an effort that pays us back: we help cultivate skills to enable higher wage earners which creates opportunities -- not only for Kansas students, but for Kansas employers.

4. (State Only) During the past few legislative sessions, education funding has been prioritized through new reforms to computer science and STEM education, allowing qualified courses to count as a high-school graduation credit. Due to COVID-19, funding proposals for computer

science and STEM initiatives are in jeopardy. What, if anything, do you think needs to be done regarding education funding? How would you fund your ideas?

The legislature determines Kansas' education. As the State Board of Education makes decisions about how to allocate that budget, I will remain committed to modern curriculum and programs that position students to broaden their exposure to all aspects of STEM, including arts and medicine which are often labeled as STEAM and STEMM. I look forward to working with lawmakers to help them understand the importance of these initiatives.

5. (State & Federal) Finding talent is one of the most critical challenges that Kansas City technology companies face. Workforce development programs and STEM education are two ways in which the state can help address this concern. What do you believe can be done to fill the void to ensure companies can find the qualified workers they need?

We should start by recognizing that at this point, nearly all companies are technology-first companies. Whether it's finance, construction, retail, shipping – all businesses can participate in STEM education programs and help keep interest and demand high. Additionally, business leaders can partner directly with schools. It's a win-win for employers and school districts when young people are given the opportunity to see STEM careers in real world workplaces. How else will students recognize their interest in a STEM career, if they don't even know it exists? School districts write their own curriculum to meet state standards, which leaves a lot of room for collaboration and creativity.

6. (State Only) COVID-19 significantly changed the budgetary landscape we faced at the beginning of 2020. Though we are all hopeful for a speedy economic recovery, funding will have to be prioritized in the meantime. What are your top three budget priorities, in order of importance to you? Please include a brief description of each priority.

1. Maintaining the required funding for Kansas schools, as established by the Kansas constitution and Kansas Supreme Court rulings.
2. Equitable and adequate funding for special education in Kansas. Nearly 1 in 6 students in Kansas receive special education services.

3. Ensuring that Wi-Fi and technology needs are fulfilled throughout continuous learning mode during and post-pandemic. By addressing this we will be better prepared for a similar situation in the future.

7. (State & Federal) Regarding the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, how important is the technology business community to economic recovery, and which measures can speed the positive impact of this industry on the economy?

N/A

8. (State & Federal) If the federal government makes additional funds available for infrastructure, where would you prioritize that spending? Alternative energy, repair bridges, increase freeway capacity, increase airport person and freight capacity, smart infrastructure, public transportation, or other?

N/A

9. (State Only) In 2019, the California general assembly successfully passed the California Consumer Protection Act. This legislation regulates how companies can collect, store, and sell consumer data. Federal pre-emption is looming and will likely mirror similar legislation to the General Data Privacy Rights passed by the European Union in 2017. If more states continue to pass similar legislation, compliance could become a difficult and expensive task for any online business. Do you support state legislation on this issue or would you prefer a Federal privacy law to preempt states' laws and to cohesively protect American consumers and businesses? If you prefer a Federal law, do you support giving the FTC the resources and authority it needs to be the enforcer of the federal law, or do you believe plaintiffs' attorneys should be empowered to bring class-action lawsuits against companies?

N/A

10. (Kansas Only) The Kansas Angel Investor Tax Credit program was not renewed in the 2020 legislative session and must be renewed in the 2021 session to continue. The return on this

investment has been exceptional and provides the necessary capital to grow new companies and attract outside investors to Kansas companies. What is your view on the Kansas Angel Tax Investor Credit and other economic development incentive programs?

N/A

11. (Missouri Only) In the last legislative session, funding for the Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC) was significantly decreased - allocating just \$1 million in this fiscal year. In 2016, MTC funding totaled \$17 million. MTC programs include MissouriTechLaunch (co-investment program), Seed Capital Co-Investment, and the Missouri Building Entrepreneurial Capacity program (MOBEC Grants). These programs will struggle to remain, if at all, with the cuts in necessary funding. Would you support future funding increases for MTC, or do you have recommendations for policies the state of Missouri can adopt to support the future of new tech businesses and startup support organizations?

N/A