

# BLUE VALLEY 2025 VOTER GUIDE

**Blue Valley voters have a critical school board election this year.**

With the recent termination of a beloved teacher in the district, it is understandable that emotions are running high in Blue Valley. As such, it is important to reiterate why it is **CRITICAL** that the candidates recommended below are elected to the school board this November.

## Blue Valley Recommended Candidates

**NOTE:** only contested races are included

**Gina Knapp**

**Dr. David Benson**

*Recommended candidates value public education, understand the role of a school board member, and will advocate for our public schools and the success of all students.*

## Opponents are concerning for public education

Not only are the recommended candidates above highly qualified for the job, more importantly, public education advocates have had major concerns with their opponents (Steve Roberts and Jim McMullen), for some time now.

Scroll straight to the side by side candidate comparisons if short on time.

## Candidates should be evaluated on more than just one vote

At the moment, some people are encouraging voters to go to the ballot box and elect school board candidates (or vote against candidates) based simply on how they voted on this one issue—the termination of Mrs. Hart.

It is completely understandable that many are throwing their support behind a teacher they know and love. And it would be helpful for the community if we could hear more from the board members who voted in favor of termination (it was a 6-1 vote).

Unfortunately, by law, neither they nor the district are permitted to disclose any information, but it may help to have an understanding of what is involved in the [termination process](#) that is outlined below.

Regardless, it is unwise and dangerous for the future of the Blue Valley School District to base the decision of who will be elected to the school board on one school board vote alone, especially considering two very concerning candidates may be elected.

**Voters should take a broad look at each candidate in the two races and do a side-by-side comparison.**

## Gina Knapp vs. Steve Roberts

Knapp was one of the six board members who voted to terminate, but it is worth looking at her full record as compared to her opponents (Steve Roberts) and the lone board member (Jim McMullen) who voted against the termination.

**NOTE FOR VIEWING ON A PHONE:** The table below has two columns, one for each candidate. Swipe to see both columns.

Gina Knapp	Steve Roberts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attended the <a href="#">Johnson County Post forum</a> where she provided thoughtful answers demonstrating a deep understanding of the Blue Valley school district, school financing, and that she was qualified for the position</li><li>• Elected to BV School Board in 2021 and served as president for the 2024-2025</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only candidate that did not attend the Johnson County Post candidate forum</li><li>• <a href="#">Campaign website</a> is limited to a link to Steve's Talking Points (a lengthy list of his education beliefs) and four one minute videos on YouTube, <a href="#">such as this one</a>, that provide little substance</li></ul>

school year

- Oversaw the new strategic plan and the hiring of the new superintendent
- 20+ year career experience working for nonprofit organizations focused on youth (Boys & Girls Club, Kauffman Foundation, Camp Fire USA, Boy Scouts of America)
- Recipient of the National Service to Youth Award
- Currently the CEO of YMCA of Greater Kansas City
- Has been a strong public education advocate often traveling to Topeka and D.C.
- Has an established history as a special education advocate who has implored state legislators to fully fund special education
- Served on the Kansas State High School Activities Association Board and on their Executive Council
- **Consistently votes for needed supports for students, teachers, and the district**
- **Approved** mental health supports for students, unlike fellow board member McMullen
- **Approved** district technology needs, unlike fellow board member McMullen
- **Approved** athletic equipment needs, including safety and training equipment, unlike fellow board member McMullen
- **Knapp is endorsed by:** Game On for Kansas Schools, Stand Up Blue Valley, Blue Valley NEA, KNEA, and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense
- Says he is a licensed math teacher and an engineer. Says he was a librarian, an IRS tax examiner, a truck driver, a project manager for Sprint, a beer vendor for Royals & Chiefs for seven years, the sports guy on 101 the Fox, and currently a ride share driver for the last 9 years
- In 2008, he was elected to the State Board of Education where his tenure was fraught with controversy and unconventional behavior
- [Made headlines](#) when he used the N-Word during a State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting
- [Derailed an SBOE board meeting](#) during the pandemic by reading from his lengthy list of education beliefs for seven minutes
- Since losing reelection, he has run for multiple offices, all unsuccessfully—US Senate, US House, State Treasurer, and now BV School Board
- Believes in school choice (i.e., vouchers) that divert public funds to private schools
- Has unconventional/confusing beliefs; traditional grades should be eliminated, students shouldn't be labeled "by color"
- Makes contradictory statements suggesting he doesn't understand budgets—should pay teachers more and reduce class sizes (good things), but believes taxes are theft

	<p><b>How would he fund his initiatives?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Believes teachers should be responsible for their own professional development.</li><li>• To our knowledge, Roberts has no endorsements</li></ul>
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David Benson vs. Jim McMullen

David Benson is not currently on the board; he was not involved in the vote to terminate Mrs. Hart.

Jim McMullen was the lone vote against termination. But, he is quite often the lone vote on the board. He regularly votes against supports for students and the district.

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Dr. David Benson	Jim McMullen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 44 year career as an educator</li><li>• Former Blue Valley Superintendent (1993-2004)</li><li>• 2001 Kansas Superintendent of the year</li><li>• Former Kansas State Representative (2019-2020)</li><li>• Served on the K-12 Education Budget committee while serving in Topeka</li><li>• Over the years he has served on a number of boards — United Way, Chambers of Commerce, Pittsburgh State University, United Community Services of Johnson County</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Made headlines</a> for disparaging tweets towards LGBTQ+ youth using his school board title</li><li>• Removed from his VP role on the board after parents petitioned for his removal due to the tweets</li><li>• <a href="#">Voted to ban two LGBTQ+ themed books</a> from the high school despite the inclusion of the book having followed district policy</li><li>• July 2023, <b>only NO vote</b> on social worker contract with Children’s Mercy Hospital (CMH)</li><li>• May 2024, <b>only NO vote</b> on social worker contract with CMH</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate of Leadership Overland Park and Leadership Kansas</li> <li>• <b>Consistently supported public education while serving in Topeka</b></li> <li>• <b>Opposed</b> a tax bill that would have jeopardized the state's ability to fully fund schools</li> <li>• <b>Opposed</b> a voucher bill that would have diverted public dollars to private schools, undermining public education funding</li> <li>• <b>Benson is endorsed by</b> Game On for Kansas Schools, Stand Up Blue Valley, Blue Valley NEA, KNEA, and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• February 2025, <b>only NO vote</b> on social worker contract with CMH explaining his opposition to the Johnson County Post saying, <a href="#">"the buzzword of our culture these days is — mental health"</a></li> <li>• <b>Only NO vote</b> on tech contract for cybersecurity and building security</li> <li>• <b>Only NO vote</b> on tech contract for devices</li> <li>• <b>Only NO vote</b> on providing students at a new school in the district with computers; would have been the only students in the district without computers</li> <li>• <b>Only NO vote</b> on turf fields at the high schools; becoming the norm allowing games/practices after rain</li> <li>• <b>Only NO vote</b> on hitting tunnels; safety feature for high school baseball &amp; softball</li> <li>• <b>Supported by</b> the 1776 PAC and associated with Moms for Liberty, suggesting he may not support inclusive and fact-based education.</li> </ul>
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## Termination Process

Though it doesn't bring the community all of the answers we would like, understanding the termination process may provide a little clarity.

Dr. David Benson held two community roundtables in response to the termination of Mrs. Hart. He stressed that he is not privy to any information relating to the termination beyond what the rest of the public is aware of. However, as a former Blue Valley superintendent, during the roundtable he was able to shed some light on the process itself:

- Policy 3522 is based on state law. The district is bound by federal and state laws because it receives federal and state funding.
- The board and administration are left to interpret the law, but they are **guided by legal counsel**.
- The first step in the process involves the school administrator, head of Human Resources, and **legal counsel** discussing, gathering, and reviewing the evidence surrounding the situation that occurred.
- Those findings and a recommendation are presented to the superintendent.
- The superintendent reviews the information and the recommendation provided and makes a recommendation to the board.

For their part, during an executive session (not open to the public due to matters of privacy), the board reviews all of the information provided including the causes for termination and considers the recommendations. They can ask questions, hear testimony, ask for more information gathering, and discuss amongst themselves.

**However, by law, the board cannot reveal anything that was discussed or reviewed during their executive session.** Basically, we will never and should never know the full details of this situation because board members are not at liberty to explain the recommendations and information before them that led to the 6-1 decision to terminate.

With a near unanimous vote, it seems likely the board was presented with a recommendation of termination and followed that recommendation after performing their own due diligence.

## **A Clear Choice for Blue Valley**

It is unfortunate that we will never have full clarity when it comes to this one vote.

Nonetheless, the choice for Blue Valley could not be clearer when taking into account the full picture of each candidate. Gina Knapp, Dr. David Benson, and Dr. Sonya Evans (unopposed) will support the important work of the district and advocate for public education.