

Few differences in Mapleton candidate forum

BY SARAH JONES
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Mapleton Public Schools board of education candidates seemed to be reading from the same book during the first and only candidate forum of the election.

Hosted by the Mapleton Education Association, the forum consisted of six questions that were answered similarly by all the candidates. The one issue in which the candidates diverged concerned vouchers.

Candidates Victor Domenico, the incumbent, and district parent and committee member Kenneth Winslow voiced a strong opposition to public funds going to private schools in a voucher program similar to that in Douglas County.

"I believe that we live in a great school district," said Winslow. "I want the money to go to schools we have here."

Candidate Karen Hoopes, however, said she believed Douglas County did what was best for its community.

"I support them in their decision," said Hoopes, adding that each board has the responsibility to act in the best interest of its district. She did not say whether she supports or opposes the measure being explored in Mapleton.

District funding and parental involvement topped the list as challenges to the district, with Hoopes adding that closing the achievement gap is a pressing issue as well.

"One of the biggest issues is

funding, but being cut funding due to the economy is even more difficult," said Domenico, who has been on the board for two years. "We have done so much with so little as a district."

All of the candidates were in support of charter schools and offering increased choice for parents in the district, with both Domenico and Winslow citing the need for transparency and board oversight for charters to continue to work in the Mapleton district.

"As public educators, we take everybody and have those challenges that come with that," Domenico said, adding that while charters have more flexibility in enrollment, they must continue to operate under the supervision of the board.



Hoopes



Domenico



Winslow

"I like the direction that the schools are going," Winslow said. "How great would it be if every student, from every school walked

across the stage and received a diploma? That's the kind of things I look forward to. You might think it's unattainable, but I think if we get people really on board, really sold, it's possible."

VOTE
Antonio B.