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**Three of 11 Hoopeston Area school board candidates profiled**

*Editor's Note: Eleven people are running for four seats on the Hoopeston Area school board in the Nov. 4 election. For these interviews, candidates were asked why they chose to run, what issues face the district, and their opinions on consolidation and drug testing.*

Budget concerns top the list of issues for Hoopeston Area school board candidate **Patti Roberts**.

Roberts, 40, who owns a cleaning service, said increasing the number of students attending the district is a good way to keep the budget in the black.

To accomplish that, Roberts would like to see Hoopeston and Rossville school merge. Despite Rossville's ongoing talks with other districts, "I'm still hopeful, or at least optimistic, that we can get Rossville together with Hoopeston," she said. "Rossville has a lot to offer, probably more than they're aware of."

A tax increase is another revenue-generating option. "I feel residents are behind the school system and it would be OK if we had to raise taxes," she said.

Holding the line on costs is also something Roberts favors. Regarding drug testing, Roberts said the cost factors must be weighed before a policy is implemented. Also, she said, students are aware of current punishments. "They know what is expected and what happens if they cross the line," she said.

Roberts, who has three children in the system, said she has attended board meetings for the past two years and will continue to do so. "Whether I get elected or not, I'm still going to be involved," she said.

However, she hopes she'll be involved from the perspective of a board member. "I could really add a lot of plusses to the board," she said. "I love doing the homework part of it. I enjoy talking to other people."

Candidate **Duane Sheppard** has experienced the school system both as a parent and substitute teacher.

Sheppard, 41, has two children in the schools and during the farming off-season, he substitute teaches in the district.

Sheppard he is not going into the election with preconceived ideas. "I'm not going in with any agenda," he said.

He favors consolidation "when the time comes" and believes Hoopeston Area could approach Rossville-Alvin with something to benefit both districts. However, he said, Hoopeston Area can do little right now. "The ball is in Rossville's court now," he said.

Sheppard favors random drug testing. "I'm all for trying to keep things on the up-and-up," he said. "I'm all for trying to bring discipline back into the school."

Sheppard said he will bring "sound, level-headed decision making" to the board. "I'm not going to come in and bombard them," he said.




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