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Incumbent Chris Small answers a question at Wednesday's Candidates Forum, as fellow candidates listen, from left, Dave McFadden, Lee Cox, Connie Catron, Rich Eisenmann and JoHanna Gash. Sponsored by Hoopeston Education Association and held at the Lorraine Theatre, the event drew a packed house.

## Board candidates square off at HEA-sponsored forum

At Wednesday evening's Candidate's Forum, sponsored by Hoopeston Education Association, Dylan Swank, HEA president, called the April 2 election "momentous."

Many of the six people running for three board seats agreed with that assessment.

Two candidates - JoHanna Gash and Rich Eisenmann - are running for one seat representing the area outside the congressional township. Inside the township, four candidates are running for two seats. Candidates are Connie Catron, Lee Cox, Dave McFadden and incumbent Chris Small.

Each candidate was allowed to make opening and closing statements and in between, responded to five questions asked by moderator Rich Stipp:

What makes you a qualified candidate?

What is the role of the superintendent, the board and staff?

With a 70 percent teacher retention rate, and a teacher shortage, how does Hoopeston Area attract and retain teachers?

What are the districts' financial weaknesses?

How would you build relationships between the board and staff and the district and the community?

Defining the superintendent's role, many looked ahead to what qualities are needed in the next superintendent.

Cox knows exactly what he wants. "To me, if you look up 'superintendent' in the dictionary, it's Don Dean," he said, drawing loud applause. Dean knew the students, the sports and "was a financial wizard."

See FORUM on other side

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## Forum continued from other side

Small said hiring a good superintendent “is not easy,” but is “one of the most important things we can do for the community.” The superintendent provides “leadership, leadership, leadership.” That person also oversees day-to-day operations of the district and is a mentor for not only teachers, but also students and the community, he said.

A cultural shift and resulting problems was something some candidates stressed in response to the questions.

Gash said she was a qualified candidate because she would work to bring respect and honor back to schools, where some students don’t respect teachers, some teachers don’t respect students or parents, and parents don’t respect teachers. Children are not born with characteristics such as honesty, respect and integrity and all sides must work together to install those traits.

With a teacher shortage, hiring is “becoming an employee’s market,” McFadden said. To get and keep good teachers, the district must change the culture problem in

## From the Blotter

**Andrew McKelvey**, 32, of Hoopeston, was ticketed after an accident at 9:22 p.m. Tuesday at Seventh St. and Young.

Police said McKelvey, in a 2006 Nissan Quest, failed to yield and struck the passenger side of a 2014 Chevrolet driven by Logan Robinson, 16, also of Hoopeston. She was taken by EMS to Carle Hoopeston emergency room for treatment.

He was ticketed for disobeying a traffic control device and failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

Hoopeston Fire Department also responded to the scene.

**Joshua Kempen**, 29, of Hoopeston, was arrested at 1:45 a.m. Wednesday in the 100 block of West Penn. Wanted on a Vermilion County warrant, he was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville in lieu of bond.

**Chase Hensley**, 23, of Danville, was arrested after a stop for a traffic violation at 7:46 p.m. Wednesday in the 200 block of West Penn. Charged with no valid license, he was released on a notice to appear in Vermilion County traffic court.

**Morgan Johnson**, 20, of Danville, was arrested at 7:46 p.m. Wednesday in the 200 block of East Penn. She was charged with disobeying police after she was allegedly asked several times by police to leave the scene of a traffic stop. She was released on a notice to appear in Hoopeston City Court.

the buildings, where teachers feel fearful of students. “There’s a belief that we’re soft on discipline,” he said. “When we don’t discipline properly, we tell our staff we don’t have their backs.”

Catron called teaching “a hard job,” adding kids are not always lovable. Teachers should not have an environment where they’re fearful and where “students rule the roost.”

In his final statement, Eisenmann stressed the need for children to learn life lessons. Of his own five, “I want them to win; I want them to learn to compete. I want them to learn how not to win. Real life is realizing not every day is happy. Real achievement should be recognized and celebrated.”

## Briefly

### At the library

Upcoming events at Hoopeston Public Library include: **Littles @ the Library** 10:30-11 a.m. Friday. For children ages 0-5 with parents, grandparents or day care providers, featuring stories, songs, crafts, learning and movement activities.

**Tree Climbers genealogy workshop**, 10-11 a.m. For beginners to those who want to take their search to the next level. Learn to use HPL’s online resources, including Ancestry.com.

### Softball signups

Hoopeston Area Softball Association will hold final signups for the season fro 12-2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Hoopeston City Hall, 301 W. Main.

## Weather

Mostly sunny today. High 46. Tonight, clear. Low 25. Tomorrow, sunny. High 49, low 34. Sunday, cloudy chance of showers. High 55, low 39.

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On finances, Small and Cox were the only two who addressed holding the line on property taxes, with Small saying he voted against the last two tax levies and Cox saying Illinois ‘is pretty much up a creek’ and that the district “shouldn’t tax the community any more than it’s being taxed by the state.”

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The City of Hoopeston is now accepting applications for Seasonal Employees for several of our departments. Applications are available at City Hall, 301 W Main St. Hoopeston.

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