

Candidate: Joe Stokes Office: Manatee Co School Board Dist 4

Party: now an R; *was a Democrat until June 2018*

For the school board races, we did not do vetting in the same way as the other races. For years, Linda Schaich and TPM board member Peg Martin have documented and reported to TPM the performance of the board members.

We are three points away of being an A district; now is not the time to lose the chairman who is leading the charge. Moreover, with a district whose superintendent represented a \$25 million deficit as a surplus we, voters, need a Finance Committee performing oversight, not hindsight.

Top Issues:

“Fiscal issues, school management, school safety and the lack of sufficient numbers of teachers.”
<https://www.bradenton.com/news/local/education/article209345364.html>

Financial Oversight and Fiscal Responsibility

- “Stokes was appointed to Director of Elementary Education for the whole district but when Rick Mills came in as superintendent he gave Stokes a choice: retire or be fired.”—email from Peg Martin 072318
- Stokes voted for the 1 mill increase for Manatee County
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180730/manatee-county-school-board-district-4-gampa-with-joe-stokes>

Education

Bachelor's degree from Ball State University, 1971; master's degree from Ball State University (1975); License for Administration from Ball State University (1979); and Indiana Principal Leadership Academy (1992-93)
<https://www.youobserver.com/.../manatee-county-school-board-district-4-joe-stokes>

Experience and Good Management Skill

- “When Stokes took over (as Director of Elementary Education), Manatee County had zero D and F (rated) elementary schools in the county. After four years, we had over 10. **It was the worst decline in the history of the district.**”— Scott Hopes, speaking to Tea Party Manatee Oct 2, 2018
- In 2004, Stokes was hired as principal of King Middle School and from 2009 to 2014 as Director of Elementary Education. When then Superintendent Rick Mills gave Stokes the choice to retire or be fired, Stokes transferred for one year to Samoset Elementary as assistant principal. This demotion allowed him to increase his pension.)
<https://www.votemanatee.com/Candidate-Information/Local-Candidates-Committees>
- Moreover, when Stokes was in charge of the elementary schools he started with 18 A-rated schools and ended with 9. <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/accountability-reporting/school-grades/archives.stml>

- When he was a Manatee middle school principal, Joe Stokes gamed the system to improve his school's rating, at the same time dropping the number of students who could read at grade level by 10% and sending them to high school to fail.
<http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/accountability-reporting/school-grades/archives.shtml>
- (this vetter) took the time to look up Joe Stokes' track record at King Middle School. The reading scores did nothing (compare the 2004 6th grade reading scores with 2006 8th grade reading scores—basically the same children). If he can't get one little middle school to improve how can we expect him to get the entire district to improve.
<http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/accountability-reporting/school-grades/archives.shtml>

Supporters/Endorsements include:

From Linda Schaich:

- “Stokes is supported by former school board members **Bob Gause** and **Harry Kinnan** and former Manatee Co school superintendent **Tim McGonegal**.
- “**Gause** is the board member that initiated a hold on impact fees by developers resulting in a **loss of almost \$100 million to the taxpayers**. And (he) lied on his financial forms, discovered by the ethics commission.
- “**Kinnan** was part of the "rubber stamp" school board and pretty much stopped the investigation into **McGonegal**.
- “**McGonegal** is the superintendent who covered up \$55 million in deficits and then ran out in the middle of the night. He was allowed by retire by Kinnan and Gause and now receives \$8,400 per month retirement.
- “Watch out for Stokes and his buddies.”

Also Stokes' Supporters/Endorsements include:

Indivisible

Democratic parties

Recommended by Manatee Education Association

Endorsed by the Gulf Coast Builders Exchange

Recommendation by Indivisible East Manatee

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180730/manatee-county-school-board-district-4-qampa-with-joe-stokes>

Stokes is being supported heavily by former colleagues in the school district, and his list of more than 80 individual donors includes former superintendent Roger Dearing and former school board members Larry Simmons and Bob Gause. Dozens of former and current principals and administrators have contributed to Stokes's campaign

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/20180805/manatee-school-board-campaign-contributions-reveal-fundraising-winners-losers>

Summary Comment:

School district community activists Linda Schaich and Peg Martin strongly endorse Gov. Rick Scott-appointed Scott Hopes and we couldn't agree more.

Dr. Scott Hopes, the incumbent candidate for Manatee Co School Board Dist 4, comes with a wide range of experience in management, finance, administration, health care and more. He is a take-action man who, the day after the Parkland shooting, walked five Manatee school campuses and found several not able to be secured. As this document shows, Manatee County School District has operational issues. Scott Hopes will provide the leadership to insulate the classroom from those issues and ensure Manatee students truly get a quality education.

In contrast, Stokes, a former principal and director of elementary education for Manatee County schools, was given a choice by then Supt. Rick Mills to retire or be fired. Moreover, when Stokes was in charge of the elementary schools he started with 18 A-rated schools and ended with nine. Based on his results Joe Stokes just doesn't have the skill set to bring Manatee's schools to an A rating.

We strongly endorse Scott Hopes for Manatee County School Board Dist 4.
