

 The North County Times - Californian

## EDITORIAL: Return incumbents to Lake Elsinore school board

OUR VIEW: Trustees have demonstrated able guidance of district  
This article has been modified since its original posting

**The Californian opinion staff | Posted: Sunday, October 24, 2010 12:00 am**

We urge voters considering candidates in the race for three seats on the Lake Elsinore Unified School District Board of Trustees to return all three incumbents: Tom Thomas, Kim Cousins and Stan Crippen.

Thomas serves as board president and is executive director of Cops for Kids Inc. He has been a guiding force in managing the district's financial affairs and played a major role in securing employee furloughs to save jobs.

Cousins, who was first elected in 2006, is the president and chief/ceo of the Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce. He is right on all of the issues facing this school district ---- including the idea that district needs to be creative in finding new sources of revenue and his support of value added teacher evaluations.

Crippen, who replaced former board member Sonja Wilson who resigned in April, is a retired high school teacher and now works as an educational consultant for the county Board of Education. When he talks schools, people listen ---- he's been there, and done it, making his service on the board particularly valuable.

The heart of the argument to re-elect these incumbents is that the current board has overseen a district where test scores have risen and it has skillfully managed its budget, cutting \$30 million over the last two years while retaining all but two teachers. Additionally, it started a day care program this fall and added 50 positions to support it. We think there's good management here and no reason to urge a change.

This district has demonstrated good stewardship of its resources and accomplishment of its mission: Educating kids.

We thank the challengers ---- Heidi Dodd, Amy McMahon and Ralph Hernandez ---- and are grateful for their interest and passion in the district.

We were particularly impressed with Dodd's performance in interviews with The Californian and hope that the sales manager, who has children served by the district, remains active in its affairs.

**Correction:** This editorial has been corrected add a sentence that was inadvertently omitted in the original posting.

The third paragraph should have read: "Cousins, who was first elected in 2006, is the president/chief executive officer of the Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce. He is right on all of the issues facing this school district ---- including the idea that district needs to be creative in finding new sources of revenue and his support of value-added teacher evaluations."