

# Where the Democrats running for Arizona education superintendent disagree

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*Opinion: David Schapira and Kathy Hoffman agree on a lot. But a few things differentiate the Democratic candidates for Arizona education superintendent.*



(Photo: Arizona Republic)



Kathy Hoffman and David Schapira – the two Democratic candidates vying for state superintendent of public instruction – agree on a lot.

- They agree that Republican incumbent Diane Douglas has **made a mess** of the Department of Education. Both believe she will be their opponent in

November.

- They support the grassroots **#RedforEd** movement. Hoffman was among the teachers who voted to walk out, and Schapira was a fixture at the protests.
- They believe that a **Democrat can be effective** in the seat, even if other state and legislative offices remain dominated by Republicans, because support for education cuts across partisan lines.
- They **don't like the AzMERIT test**, a sentiment they [share with their Republican opponents](#). Hoffman and Schapira say the test takes too long to get results that teachers can actually use to help their students.

- They also agree that **charter schools need reform**, that they should not be allowed to spend taxpayer money on no-bid contracts, something district schools are not allowed to do.

## But where do they differ?

Policy-wise, perhaps the biggest difference between the candidates is on [#InvestinEd](#), the proposed income-tax increase on the wealthy. While both support the measure, Schapira says it doesn't raise enough money to restore what's been cut from education since the recession.

Perhaps the larger differences are in **style and experience**. Hoffman comes across as reserved and soft-spoken. Schapira is more direct and has a booming voice.

Yet Hoffman has been more critical of Schapira than he has been of her. She has [accused him of bullying](#) in press releases, where she disclosed a private conversation she recorded with Schapira in 2017, and a paid TV ad, which included anonymous comments from two women who say they were former employees.

Schapira has downplayed Hoffman's criticism. A spokesperson said in an emailed statement that the accusations are "salacious" and that Schapira preferred to focus on the issues.

Hoffman is a teacher. Schapira is a former teacher, school administrator, state lawmaker and, most recently, a city council member.

Schapira says his experience translates better to the superintendent's seat, because being a former administrator and lawmaker will help him oversee the Department of Education and use the seat's bully pulpit to advocate for public education.

Hoffman says managing a classroom also gives her the required experience to manage the department, and that being in the classroom now makes her the best advocate for teachers.

*This is an opinion of The Arizona Republic's editorial board. What do you think? Send us a letter to the editor to weigh in.*

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/editorial/2018/07/29/arizona-education-superintendent-democrat-candidates/837993002/> Acesso em 30/07/2018