



LETTERS, January 19, 2007

Kansas schools chief

In its recent editorial on Kansas schools and the state department of education (1/14, "Kansas curriculum is heading back on track"), *The Star* recommends that "the new administrator be, first, dedicated to public schools, and second, experienced in education administration."

Solid experience as an administrator is valuable to anyone overseeing a budget of several billion dollars. But nontraditional administrators have served school systems well in cities ranging from Seattle to New York.

While being open to new forms of leadership is important, being innovative in how we think about "public education" is even more so. Public schools are part of public education. But so are home schools and privately run schools and new models such as charter schools and virtual schools.

Education is the goal; diverse schools are the means. Lawmakers and citizens alike should be open to alternative sources for administrators — and alternative ways of delivering education.

John R. LaPlante

Education Policy Fellow

Flint Hills Center for Public Policy

Wichita