Kansas Citizens for Science
Kansas Legislature Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate’s name Larry Meeker House/Senate District 17

1. As a member of the legislature, which of the following organizations would you use to inform your decision-making in regards to science? Check all that apply.

   a. American Association for the Advancement of Science   x
   b. Kansas Policy Institute
   c. The National Academies of Science   x
   d. The Discovery Institute
   e. The American Institute of Biological Sciences   x
   f. Answers in Genesis
   g. The National Science Teachers Association   x
   h. The Institute for Creation Research
   i. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)   x
   j. Marshall Institute
   k. Fox News Network
   l. Public Broadcasting

Other organizations you rely on for accurate information in the area of science: (Please name)

2. What does “academic freedom” mean to you in terms of higher education?

   It is the unfettered to explore the unknown and challenge the status quo.

3. As is being proposed in other states, what would you think about the legislature introducing measures to regulate the teaching of “controversial” topics in K-12 science education, sometimes referred to as “academic freedom” bills?

   Science and religion are both essential topics but must be kept separate. Poor Galileo had to wait until 1992 (359 years after his death in jail) from the Catholic church. Our teachers deserve better.

4. How would you decide what constitutes suitable funding for public education in light of the projected continuing decline in tax revenue?

   The Rose standards are already in place in Kansas and will expose the need for additional funding for our public schools.

5. On what issues affecting Kansas do you feel you could need scientific information to inform your legislative decision-making?

   I always want the latest and best scientific information to inform my decision on legislation.
6. How do you assess the reports by the IPCC and the National Climate Assessment on the impact of climate change on our nation and globe? What actions should be taken in response?

Climate change and our impact on the climate is fact. We should set national standards which address carbon emissions and allow the free market to determine how that is accomplished.

7. How do you view the role of organizations like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) in initiating model legislation?

I oppose the ALEC agenda.

8. How do you view the role of the legislature and other elected bodies in determining policies and procedures such as the licensing of secondary science teachers and curricular decisions under the Next Generation Science Standards?

Our first priority should always be having certified teachers teach science and other topics. However, where there are no quality, certified teachers to teach a topic we must proceed with great caution in opening the door for to experts who lack teaching credentials. Further, we must support those experts to gaining the necessary skills to be effective classroom teachers.

Standards should be developed by experts and be removed as much as possible from political influence.

9. What can the legislature do to help recruit and retain highly qualified STEM teachers for Kansas schools?

Provide them competitive pay and restore due process. Further, we must provide an environment that respects scientific principles and separates science from religion. We should expand STEM to STEAM to include the arts and encourage more creative thinking in all disciplines.

10. Do you have any other comments on the relationship between science and public policy in Kansas?

More than any other standards, our science standards speak to the quality of our educational system. I was embarrassed for Kansas in 2007 when I checked into a boutique hotel in Istanbul, Turkey and the hotel clerk said in broken English, “no evolution,” after writing Kansas, USA at the bottom of my registration form.