



## 2025 School Committee Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Emily Serafy-Cox

Office Sought: Northampton School Committee, At-Large

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### (A) Your Candidacy

#### 1. Why are you running, and what would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

When I first decided to run, I said I wanted to bring a fresh vision to Northampton schools.

I envisioned innovative and inclusive curriculum models, like dual immersion Spanish programs, which embrace our diversity as a strength and are highly sought after by families. I envisioned a district that funds fair wages to retain excellent educators and staff. And I envisioned intentional plans for inclusion and equity.

During my time on SC, I have made these my core priorities. It hasn't always been easy—late nights, high stakes, hard decisions. But, when I talk to students who find joy and meaning in their classrooms, I am inspired to deepen my commitment.

#### 2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

As a parent of a ninth grader who graduated from Bridge Street School and JFK, I am deeply committed to the success of our public schools. That's why I've served on the Northampton School Committee for the last 6 years.

I have been a community organizer for over 20 years, organizing with mostly women of color to build power and realize justice. This experience with both the dynamics of power and the hard work of solidarity has been instrumental in helping me accomplish things as a School Committee member.

## **(B) Open-Ended Policy Questions**

- 1. Massachusetts has wide racial, income-based, and language disparities in educational outcomes. How would you evaluate your school district's work to improve educational equity? What additional steps would you advocate for?**

I have long believed in a dual immersion Spanish/English program for our district. This kind of programming embraces our diversity as a strength, is highly sought after by families, and will help our young people create a strong and vibrant society in the future.

Before we moved here, my daughter went to a dual immersion kindergarten for two years. Half the day was taught in English, the other half in Spanish. It was incredible to see how it changed the dynamics in the classroom because for half of the day, the Spanish speakers were the experts. It gave those young people a sense of confidence and belonging.

- 2. Earlier this year, the Trump administration repealed a Biden-era policy that protected schools from immigration enforcement. What steps would you take to ensure that schools remain a safe and welcoming place for all students, regardless of immigration status?**

As someone who has been personally affected by deportation and the broken immigration system, I am deeply committed to ensuring the safety of my neighbors who currently face these challenges.

I have signed on to this [petition](#) that encouraged the Northampton School Committee and Superintendent to release a statement, in English and Spanish, to strongly state the District's refusal to cooperate with ICE. It was already our policy not to allow ICE agents to enter school buildings nor to share information about our students or their families. But this petition and the accompanying community advocacy has helped push NPS to more publicly state these policies to our school community.

**3. The Trump administration has been targeting LGBTQ students's civil rights. What steps would you take to ensure that schools remain a safe and welcoming place for all students, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation?**

As a queer family, we have felt seen and held by the Northampton public schools in a way we did not and my daughter's previous school in California.

NPS has some of the most affirming policies and curricula for students of all genders and sexualities. There is still room to grow, including supporting gender, neutral bathrooms at all schools.

**4. What role do you see for the school district in the city's response to climate change?**

I was so inspired by the high school students from the Sunrise movement club who spoke with the school committee last year, advocating for a Green new deal for schools. I had the opportunity to meet with them. Once they found out I am a community organizer, they even asked for some advice. I would love to work with the City Of Northampton and the state legislature to fully realize these young people's vision for a Green new deal for schools.

**5. How would you model transparency and accountability if elected?**

Accountability has been a key challenge for the school committee during my time as a member. It has hindered our ability to follow through on things we say our priorities and causes us to be reactive rather than proactive.

If I am elected to another term, I plan to run for the vice chair position of the school committee, in which I will help set the agenda for committee meetings. In this role, I can have more influence on the committees, follow through and public communication communications.

**6. How will you engage stakeholders, including students, in budget decisions?**

I know that recent discussions about the needs of schools have gotten heated and uncomfortable. But let's be real, if people just kept quiet, the students in our schools would be without millions of dollars of investment.

As a community organizer, I see public discourse as the necessary fertilizer for meaningful democratic decisionmaking.

But to be clear, I choose to avoid the vitriolic rhetoric on social media and focus on the communications and testimony I receive directly from caregivers, educators, and students, because that is what really matters here—the students.

**7. How will you use your position to advocate at the state level for increasing education funding, especially to provide additional support for students in historically marginalized districts/communities?**

If I am elected vice chair of the school committee, I will work to add a regular section in SC agendas for us to strategize how to engage in state advocacy work.

We can't just wring our hands and say the state needs to step up. We need to organize ourselves into coordinated action both as a SC within itself and in coordination with other SCs.

**8. How will you use your position to combat the Trump administration's war on public education?**

By continuing to support the educators in our district with fair and competitive wages, academic freedom, and a grateful community.

**(C) Yes/No Policy Questions**

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools?/ **NO**
2. Do you support police-free schools? **YES/**
3. Do you support teaching comprehensive, medically accurate, consent-based, LGBTQ-inclusive sex ed in schools? **YES/**
4. According to the American Library Association, in 2022 there were at least 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA schools, disproportionately books that speak to the experiences of LGBTQ students and students of color. Would you oppose such book-banning efforts if they occurred in your city? **YES /**

**(D) Additional Comments**

Young people are still recovering from the massive disruption to their lives brought about by the pandemic; our special education system must do better to address the

needs of all our learners; and big decisions about the future of our schools are looming.

Now is not the time to be penny wise and pound foolish—especially when it comes to our children.

We need to make real plans to stop the cuts, keep quality educators, and actually make critical investments in our district's success into the future.

That's why I have taken a stance that any future override should include concrete investments in long-term growth for our district. We shouldn't just be plugging the hole with each override.

Some wise and powerful women once said: It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the Air Force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber.

Let's imagine that future together and then take real steps towards making it a reality.