



## ★ ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE ★

**Deadline: September 25<sup>TH</sup>**

**Candidate Event: October 15<sup>TH</sup>, 5:30PM**

# Solidarity Lowell 2023 School Committee Questionnaire

**Name:** Fred Bahou

**Office Sought:** District 1 School Committee Member

**Website:** n/a

**Facebook:** n/a

**Twitter:** n/a

**Instagram:** n/a

### 1. What qualities will you be looking for in a new superintendent?

A superintendent who understands the 13000 students of the district, their caretakers, the staff and administration. A Superintendent who will have conversations with parents, students, staff & Community, A Superintendent who understands the ethnic Diversity of the School District and how he can have staff that is as diverse as the student body. A Superintendent who understands the budget and is willing to work with the School Committee to come up with the best plan on how to use our funds for all students including our most at risk students including our special needs students.

### 2. What suggestions do you have to ensure that the search for a new superintendent of schools is as inclusive as possible?

By Advertising for the position on the MASC website, School Spring, Boston Globe, and in New England publications as well. Lowell Must cast a wide net to get as many applicants as possible to ensure the School district has the best choices for the betterment of our District.

**3. During the city's listening session on racism, students reported disparities in disciplinary actions between white students and students of color. Do you agree that a disparity exists?**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***Why or why not? If you agree, how would you address this issue?***

If the students feel that way we need to address it. We need to offer more DEI training to our staff to make sure the students feel like they are ALL BEING TREATED FAIRLY.

**4. The school system budget process should include input from stakeholders.**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***Explain your answer.***

Our budget should be discussed with teachers, administration and the School Committee. The district needs to understand its whole population and have all leaders of every sector of the school district submit thoughts on what each school needs, Principals should weigh in on the budget for their school and submit to the Superintendents advisors so they can have a true feel on what each building needs. Budgets can be very complicated and it should be dealt with methodically and include as many staff, administrators and community members as possible.

**5. Lowell Public Schools staff and teachers should reflect the population of Lowell and its students.**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***Why or why not? What are your proposals to address LPS staffing issues?***

Lowell has a true diverse student population and we must address the parity of it. This will take some time due to the staff that is currently there, but over time our hirings of teachers, principals and administration should be a reflection of our student population, therefore our population will feel inclusive to not only their culture but also the overall being.

**6. The creation of a Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices program with a full-time coordinator and sustainable funding through the LPS budget is a critical step for LPS to take to engage, support, and recognize our diverse student population through hiring, curriculum, and other initiatives.**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***Why or why not? Please elaborate on your response.***

LPS needs staff reflecting the student body which will offer the most benefit to all students and improve inclusion for all cultures. A Human Resource person in the role that is described above would be beneficial for our district.

**7. What initiatives/steps would you take to support and ensure the social, emotional, and mental well-being of staff and students in our schools?**

I would want to work with our Human resource director to find the best solution for this.

**8. Systemic racism is a public health crisis in Lowell.**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***If so, why and how do you propose to answer the crisis in Lowell-specific ways? If not, why not?***

I am the son of an immigrant and was brought up in an immigrant family in the city of Lowell. My family ran its own business in the city of Lowell for over 20 years and I ran that business for the next 20 years. In my experience as being a part of an immigrant family that lived in town and ran a small business, I did not see systemic racism. Everyone I encounter is a person and I have always seen Lowell respect me and others the same way. Have there been some one offs of people being disrespectful in the City in all my years here? The answer is yes and I would share my point of view with anyone who did address people in a derogatory way based on their culture. This is not a public health Crisis, Guns are, Homeless is, graduating at 85% is, obesity is. But I do not believe there is a Systemic Racism issue.

**9. Communications between the Lowell School administrators/School Committee and the students, parents, and teachers of Lowell needs to be improved.**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***If so, what ideas do you have to improve the communications between the Lowell administration and the students, parents, and teachers of Lowell. If not, why not?***

Having more than one open house per year would be a good place to start. Having an ice cream social a few times a year, having a fall and Spring carnival at each school would be nice. All of these events would mean everyone is approachable and share the goodness we have in all of us and would show parents, teachers and students we all are open to open communication.

**10. High stakes standardized tests like MCAS are essential to determine student achievement and should be used to determine high school graduation.**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***Please elaborate on why you agree or disagree. What, if any, proposals do you have to modify this requirement?***

MCAS is unfortunate here to stay, I understand the importance of it so we can understand how each student scores and how the school district can teach their students better, however I do not believe we need to have the standard of having to pass the MCAS in the 10th grade be a requirement to graduate. Other states are not doing it, Why should Massachusetts?

**11. Cafeteria offerings are an important part of student health and their ability to focus and learn.**

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

***How might the city focus on improving the nutritional value and quality of school meals?***

We must focus on more grains, vegetables, fruits and low fat meats without a high content of Sodium. We need to get away from sugary treats and Pizza. Our Diet is essential to our focus, energy and health and we need to make sure students understand the benefits of healthy diets and exercise.

**12. The past two years have highlighted the problems with our building infrastructure. Air quality, temperature control, rodent infestations, and flooding emerged as major problems throughout the district. How will you engage with the City Council and city administration to make sure that school buildings are adequately cared for?**

I would call our council regularly and ask them to begin to offer us services to service our schools. I would first focus on the councilors who previously sat on the Lowell School Committee. I would identify if there is any MSBA money to assist us with our repairs. I would call the city manager frequently and give him updates on our buildings. I would visit the buildings regularly and invite the councilors or Press to see what the concerns are.

**13. Would you agree with the creation of a plan to revitalize unused spaces for special education? (YES/NO)**

YES.

**14. Do you think that emergency evacuation of students with disabilities, and other accessibility issues are a concern? (YES/NO)**

YES.

**Please share any additional thoughts on how our city meetings are run.**

Make sure all of our students understand that students with disabilities should be allowed every benefit to assist them in leaving the school during all fire drills and safety drills. We should offer our students with disabilities extra drills to assist them in understanding their safety needs to be one of their top priorities.

**15. Would you support a School Committee resolution in support of the Thrive Act, which would end MCAS tests in 10th grade and state takeover of school districts deemed to be failing? (YES/NO)**

NO.

**16. When elected, will you agree to add a budget item for emergency transportation needs? (YES/NO)**

YES.

**17. What are your top budgetary requirements for the schools?**

Hiring more teachers and paraprofessionals for our classrooms ensures students keep up with the academics being taught.

Same goes for Special Needs students, classes generally have 10 students in them and maybe one paraprofessional but frequently the para. does not have any experience. We need to address that need.

a short term and long term plan on improving our buildings which are falling into disrepair.

Coming up with a Long Term contract for our teachers and staff so we are not constantly negotiating new contracts.

**18. What would be your top three policy priorities if elected?**

Developing a Vocational program within the Lowell Public schools program  
Increasing Graduation Rates Focus on developing a more diversified staff so our  
student body can feel the reflection of themselves in the school district  
Fix our buildings.