



## 2025 School Committee Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Gumersindo M. Gomez

Office Sought: Springfield School Committee (Wards 1 &3)

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### (A) Your Candidacy

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

I am running for School Committee in Wards 1 and 3 in Springfield, Ma because our communities are being directly impacted by recent federal budget cuts and harmful immigration policies. These attacks hurt lower-income families and disproportionately affect the immigrant and minority communities in Springfield—especially in my district. I want to make sure that every child, regardless of their background, feels safe in school and has access to the services they need without fear. My top priorities are addressing

**School Safety** (updating security systems, implementing anti-bullying programs while also creating a culture of inclusion and respect.)

**Ensuring Equitable Resources** (advocate for policies that promote diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities for all students, particularly marginalized groups)

**Community and Parent Involvement** (Strengthen the partnership between schools and parents, and create more avenues for community involvement in school decision-making to help amplify the voices of families in Ward 1 & 3 who deserve strong representation).

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

I am a lifelong resident of Ward 1, and my deep roots in Springfield have shaped my lifelong commitment to serving this community. For over 20 years, I've worked with at-risk youth in our inner city—from the YMCA and DYS detention facilities to DCF residential programs and alternative schools. I currently work with the Mental Health Association, and I serve as a minister at Union Church of Springfield, where we've supported some of the most vulnerable families, especially immigrants. I've also served on neighborhood boards, giving me direct insight into the needs of our communities. These experiences have prepared me to be a strong, compassionate, and effective advocate on the School Committee for Wards 1 and 3.

### (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?

Massachusetts has clear disparities in educational outcomes, and in Springfield—especially in Wards 1 and 3—these gaps are felt most by students of color, low-income families, and English language learners. As a School Committee member, I would push for real, measurable steps toward equity.

First, I would advocate for increased funding for schools in underserved neighborhoods to ensure access to high-quality teachers, culturally relevant curriculum, and wraparound services like mental health support, after-school programs, and family engagement resources. Language access must also be a top priority—families should be able to communicate with schools and fully participate in their children's education, regardless of their primary language.

Second, I would work to ensure that equity is at the center of every policy and budget decision. That means using data to identify disparities, then targeting resources where they're needed most.

Finally, I would partner with community organizations, faith leaders, and parents to bring those closest to the problems into the decision-making process. Our students and families are experts in their own needs—and they deserve to be heard.

**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?**

Every student—regardless of immigration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation—deserves to feel safe, seen, and supported in school. The repeal of protections against immigration enforcement in schools sends a chilling message to many families in Springfield, especially in Wards 1 and 3, where immigrant and marginalized communities already face daily challenges.

As a School Committee member, I will work to strengthen local policies that explicitly protect all students from discrimination and harassment. I would push for a district-wide "Safe Schools" policy that limits cooperation with immigration enforcement on school grounds and ensures that schools remain sensitive, supportive environments for all students.

Additionally, I would advocate for ongoing training for educators and staff on LGBTQ+ inclusion, trauma-informed care, and cultural competency—so that schools not only avoid harm, but actively affirm every student's identity. I would also work to expand access to counselors and safe spaces for students who feel targeted or unsafe.

In Springfield, we must make it clear: our schools are places of learning, not fear—and every child belongs.

**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 School Committee member, I would fight to ensure Springfield schools are safe and inclusive for all. That means enforcing strong anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies that specifically protect LGBTQ+ students. I would support professional development and training for staff to better understand and support LGBTQ+ youth, and push for curriculum that reflects the diversity of our students and affirms their identities.

I would also advocate for safe spaces in every school, access to mental health services, and stronger partnerships with local LGBTQ+ organizations. Our schools must be places where every student feels like they belong and can thrive—no matter who they are.

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

The school district has a vital role to play in Springfield's response to climate change—not just as an institution, but as an educator of the next generation. Our schools can lead by example, modeling sustainability while empowering students with the knowledge and tools to build a greener future.

As a School Committee member, I would advocate for environmentally sustainable school buildings, including energy-efficient upgrades, green spaces, and better air quality in older facilities—especially in neighborhoods like Wards 1 and 3, which are already impacted by environmental injustice. I would also support expanding environmental science education and climate literacy in our classrooms, starting in elementary school.

In addition, I believe schools should serve as hubs for community education around climate resilience—especially for families facing disproportionate risks due to poverty, housing conditions, or language barriers. By partnering with local organizations and city agencies, our school district can be part of a just and inclusive approach to climate action that benefits all Springfield residents.

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

If elected, I would model transparency and accountability by being consistently present, accessible, and responsive to the families and communities I represent. That means holding regular public meetings in Wards 1 and 3, sharing updates on key decisions, and creating clear, open channels for parents, students, and educators to voice their concerns and ideas.

I would push for a school committee that is more transparent in its budgeting, policies, and decision-making—so the community understands not just what decisions are made, but why. I believe true accountability also means listening to those most impacted—especially immigrant families, low-income residents, and students themselves—and making sure their voices are part of every conversation.

I'm not running to make decisions behind closed doors—I'm running to bring the community to the table and keep them there.

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

Engaging stakeholders in budget decisions is essential to ensure the district's resources meet the real needs of our community. I would prioritize creating multiple, accessible opportunities for input from students, parents, teachers, and community members. This could include town halls, surveys, and focus groups held in different neighborhoods, especially in Wards 1 and 3, to reach families who might otherwise be overlooked.

I believe students should have a meaningful voice, so I would support establishing or strengthening student advisory committees that provide direct input on budget priorities and how funds are allocated. Engaging educators and staff is also key, as they understand the daily needs of classrooms and students.

Transparency would be a guiding principle—I would make sure budget information is clear and understandable, so everyone can participate knowledgeably. By involving the community throughout the process, we can make more equitable and effective decisions that truly reflect the priorities of Springfield's families.

**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?**

As a School Committee member, I would use my position to be a strong voice at the state level for equitable education funding—especially for historically marginalized communities like those in Wards 1 and 3. I would work alongside other school committee members across the state to demand full and fair implementation of the Student Opportunity Act and ensure that funding formulas truly reflect the needs of low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.

I would also meet directly with state legislators, share real stories from families and educators in Springfield, and push for increased investments in mental health services, language access, and resources for schools in underfunded districts. My goal would be to make sure the state hears directly from the communities most impacted by funding disparities.

We can't close opportunity gaps without closing funding gaps—and I'm ready to fight for that every step of the way.

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

As a School Committee member, I will stand firmly against the Trump administration's ongoing attacks on public education, which threaten to undermine our students' rights, defund our schools, and divide our communities. In Springfield—especially in Wards 1 and 3—our public schools are lifelines for immigrant families, low-income students, and children who have been historically underserved. I will fight to protect them.

I will use my position to ensure that our district resists harmful federal policies—whether they involve cutting funding, weakening civil rights protections, or pushing privatization efforts that drain resources from public schools. I will advocate for policies that center equity, inclusion, and safety for all students—regardless of race, income, immigration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Public education is a right, not a privilege. I will work with families, educators, local leaders, and state officials to make sure our schools remain strong, welcoming, and fully funded—no matter what happens in Washington.

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

1. Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools? **YES**
2. Do you support police-free schools? **NO**
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? **NO**

### (D) **Additional Comments**

*(Use this space to make any final comments you deem important for progressive voters assessing your candidacy.)*

This November 4th, we have a choice—and a responsibility. Our communities, our schools, and our children’s futures are on the line. The Trump administration has made it clear: they’re coming after public education, immigrant families, and the basic rights of our students—especially in cities like Springfield.

That’s why it’s more important than ever to stand with Progressive voters and make our voices heard at the ballot box. Local elections matter. School committees, city councils, and mayors shape the policies that impact us every day—from school funding to public safety to community support.

If we want to protect our children, defend our public schools, and build a future rooted in justice, equity, and opportunity, then we have to show up and vote.

This is our time. Our power is in our vote. Let’s use it to fight back—and move our communities forward.

Thank You,  
Gumersindo M. Gomez