



## 2025 School Committee Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Jonathan Guzman

Office Sought: Lawrence 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?**

I'm running for the Lawrence School Committee because I believe every student deserves access to a high-quality, equitable education that sets them up for lifelong success. My priorities include expanding bilingual and culturally responsive learning opportunities, advocating for increased funding to support mental health and special education, and restoring local control to ensure that decisions reflect the voices and values of our community. Above all, I'm committed to building a school system that is transparent, inclusive, and driven by meaningful community engagement.

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

As a lifelong resident of Lawrence, a product of its public schools, and a current School Committee member, I understand the challenges our students face. I've worked closely with youth, parents, advocacy groups, and teachers, and I bring a deep commitment to equity, accountability, and inclusive leadership.

### (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?**

Lawrence has taken important steps toward educational equity, but significant disparities remain, and in many cases, they've deepened under the leadership of Superintendent Carrero, Mayor Brian A. DePeña, and DESE. To move forward, I would advocate for stronger, targeted support for English learners, bring back the DEI office, request the completion of the Equity Audit, broaden access to advanced academic opportunities, and prioritize hiring practices that ensure our school staff reflects the qualifications and the rich diversity of our student population.

**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 Earlier this year, the Trump administration repealed a Biden-era policy that protected schools from immigration enforcement.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?**

I would push for strong district policies that explicitly ban immigration enforcement on school property, ensuring our schools remain safe havens for all students. I'd also prioritize comprehensive staff training on student rights and work closely with trusted community organizations to provide resources and support for undocumented families.

**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?**

I'm committed to fostering inclusive, affirming school environments where LGBTQ+ students feel safe, seen, and supported. That means implementing inclusive curricula, enforcing strong anti-bullying policies, providing staff with comprehensive training, and cultivating a culture of respect and belonging across all our schools.

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

Schools have a powerful opportunity to lead by example in the fight against climate change. I would champion initiatives that invest in green infrastructure, integrate sustainability into the curriculum, and build strong partnerships with local environmental organizations. Upgrading school

buildings to be energy-efficient is not only fiscally responsible, it also teaches our students the value of environmental stewardship through action.

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

Have you seen my social media? Everything I do is rooted in accountability, both for myself and for those elected to serve. I'll continue pushing for regular community forums, transparent budget and policy updates, and a decision-making process that puts public input and oversight front and center.

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

I will keep advocating for the creation of a participatory budgeting process that actively involves students, parents, and educators. Their voices deserve to be at the center of funding decisions, helping shape priorities that truly reflect the needs and values of our school community.

**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?**

I will continue working alongside fellow school committee members across the Commonwealth to advocate for fair and equitable funding formulas. Together, we'll testify at legislative hearings, engage with state leaders, and elevate the voices and needs of students in Lawrence and other historically underserved communities throughout Massachusetts.

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

I remain committed to opposing any policies that weaken or threaten our public schools. I will advocate for inclusive, evidence-based curricula that reflect the diversity and dignity of all students, and I'll continue to defend their rights, no matter their background or identity.

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

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

**We're at a moment in our nation where safety is a real concern, and I believe School Resource Officers (SROs) can play a role in protecting our schools, particularly when it comes to preventing external threats. However, I do not believe SROs should be involved in disciplining or managing our students. That responsibility belongs to trained school safety staff and mental health specialists in our district who understand our youth and their needs. I strongly oppose any practices that mirror or reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline. At the same time, we must acknowledge that many families in our community live in fear for their safety, and we owe them a school environment that is both secure and supportive.**

3. Do you support teaching comprehensive, medically accurate, consent-based, LGBTQ-inclusive sex ed in schools? **YES/ NO**
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/ NO**

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

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

As a candidate for the Lawrence School Committee, I'm deeply committed to building a school system that reflects the heart and values of our community, equity, inclusion, opportunity, and respect. I believe public education is one of the most powerful tools we have to uplift families, strengthen neighborhoods, and transform lives. Every child in Lawrence deserves access to a safe, supportive, and high-quality learning environment, regardless of their background, language, or zip code.

I will fight to ensure our schools are not only places of academic excellence, but also spaces where students feel seen, heard, and empowered. That means advocating for culturally responsive teaching, mental health resources, and meaningful family engagement. It means restoring local control and making sure decisions are driven by the voices of those who live and learn here. I'm running to make sure our schools serve every student with dignity and ambition, and I won't stop until that vision becomes reality.