



## 2025 School Committee Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Randy S. Dudek

Office Sought: School Committee - Fall River Public Schools

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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, mostly because I have been watching and attending School Committee meetings since moving to Fall River. While, I must admit, the meetings are usually pretty entertaining, they don't seem to accomplish very much to actually make our schools, students and teaching staff any better.

My biggest priority is going to play a large role in changing the culture and tenor of the School Committee meetings. I feel that way too many of the current committee members are up there trying to advance their own agendas and not having the interest of the school community as their biggest goal. The amount of time it took to reach a fair agreement with our teachers is a big example of this.

Which ties in to my second priority. Making sure that the teaching staff of the district feel like they are a valued and prioritized part of the school community. Over the past two years, I've heard way too many teachers say that they had to choose between their students and their own families.

My third priority will be to protect and celebrate the diversity of the Fall River schools at each and every opportunity. Every student who lives in Fall River has the right to an educational environment where they feel safe. Fall River was made successful on the backs of hard-working people from all different

cultures, most of which are still thriving communities to this day. While we need to work together to be successful, we must do this knowing that we all have our differences, and that this can be used to make us stronger.

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

I currently have two daughters who are students at Moron Middle School. I have a step-son who graduated from Bristol-Plymouth Regional Tech. All three of my children have offered different skill sets to their schools. I have an understanding of what schools need to do to help students with varying degrees of natural aptitude succeed.

I have listened to teaching staff, both in Fall River and in other districts, and have an understanding of what challenges they feel that the staff faces in Fall River.

But, I feel that my biggest qualification for this office is that my one and only reason for seeking this office is that I want to see our school district succeed. Not just for my daughters, but because I believe that a strong school district is vital for the success of all of Fall River.

**(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 will advocate for both continuing and expanding any current programs in place to help address the challenges that come with Fall River's diversity. I would like to see a growth in programs that reach out to the families of our students that face these challenges, to help make them realize that they are an important, wanted part of our school community.

**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?**

In order for our students to be their best, they need to feel safe and wanted in their classrooms.

Our schools already have a strict policy on who is allowed into the buildings and who is allowed to sign students out of the buildings for the day. I will work to make sure that these policies continue to exclude any member of immigration enforcement from entering any FRPS building without confirming that they have a signed warrant from the proper judicial authorities.

**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?**

Though he is not a part of the LGBTQ+ community, my stepson was a constant target for bullying in his time at B-P, which was also an alleged "No Bullying" facility. So I have experience in knowing that seeing the words on the wall of a building is nothing more than a very nice first step.

I will do my part to make sure that the district is following through and making sure that all credible threats of bullying are properly investigated and that appropriate action is taken when these claims are found to be valid.

Additionally, this would be another opportunity for increased understanding and celebration of people who are different from us.

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

From what I have seen, most closely at B.M.C. Durfee High School and at Morton Middle School, our new/refurbished buildings seem to have been designed with an eye to reducing the buildings' carbon footprints.

Making sure that the district is pushing for green initiatives wherever we can will be a huge step towards controlling Fall River's response to climate change as best as we can.

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

I will model transparency and accountability by making sure that I am reachable to the families of Fall River by as many non-Twitter avenues as reasonably possible. I will work to respond to all questions and comments in a timely matter.

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

I would like to see the budgetary decisions made by the School Committee take on much less of an “us versus them” feel than I have seen from the most recent negotiations with the teaching staff. The schools belong to the entire community, and input from all stakeholders is very important. However, as the ones who are most directly affected by the decisions made by the school community, the teachers AND STUDENTS should be able to see their voices carry a little extra weight.

There is currently time for student leadership input at the beginning of most School Committee meetings. But these typically come off as quickly read statements. There needs to be an opportunity for the students themselves to feel like they are welcome to communicate what is working well, and what needs to be looked at for changes in their schools. Including areas where they think budgetary matters are part of the problem or potential solution.

**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 know that Massachusetts is better than most states in working to ensure that districts in marginalized communities are funded at a more even level than they are in other states.

I also know that we can look at our surrounding communities and see that Fall River does not have the same level of funding as some of our neighbors.

I feel that advocating for increasing our state funding is one of the primary duties of this position, one that I will take on willingly.

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

Public education is on the short list of things that make this country and especially Massachusetts special. Which is why destroying it has been a priority of this administration from the very beginning.

I will be a vocal and visible fighter to make sure that public schools are protected and retain all of funding that we need to remain successful.

**(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**

I would like to thank Progressive Mass for this opportunity to share my views, and I hope that my answers align with what progressive voters want to hear. Almost universally, the parents and guardians of our students want their children to receive the best education that they possibly can.

I believe that it is on us, both the community as a whole and the School Committee in specific, to work together to provide anything and everything that the students, teachers and staff need to succeed.

I know that there are going to be significant challenges that face our schools. But I believe that by working together, we can succeed together.