

## **Progressive Newton 2017 Municipal Candidates' Questionnaire**

### **Kathy Marchi, Candidate for School Committee Ward 1**

1. How will you approach collective bargaining with public unions and how will you weigh the value of well paid, skilled union labor against potential cost savings from outsourcing?

As a former member of the Newton Teachers Association (NTA), I bring a unique perspective to this issue. My approach to collective bargaining is to find win-win strategies so that all parties can be satisfied with an agreement. I support ensuring that our employees are well paid, well-trained and treated with dignity and respect. I support the collective bargaining rights of our unions.

2. What value do you place on increasing affordable housing in Newton, and what concrete steps will you take to expand affordable housing?

I strongly support increasing affordable housing in Newton. The School Committee does not have an opportunity to take concrete steps to expand affordable housing. I have worked to support at-risk families in need of financial assistance with childcare expenses, I worked to provide access for Newton Youth to free out-of-school time physical fitness opportunities and I have worked to ensure that families in our community have access to food when they need it. I will work to give economically challenged students the greatest opportunity to thrive in our public schools.

For example, I will work to expand Newton Early Childhood Program so that students are prepared when they start kindergarten. I support full-day kindergarten because it helps level the playing field and gives students who may not have had pre-school opportunities a chance to develop social emotional skills that research shows helps them achieve their academic potential.

I support programs like the Calculus Project which is designed to close the achievement gap by improving math problem solving skills in African American, Hispanic, and low income students.

I strongly support the after-school programs that provide critical assistance to single parent families and families with two working parents. I support expanding access to the valuable after school enrichment programs. I support a more robust partnership between the Newton Public Schools and our independent after school programs.

3. Do you support the welcoming city ordinance? What other steps will you take to make our city welcoming to all, regardless of race, class, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other discrete characteristics?

Well before the welcoming city ordinance emerged, Newton schools have worked to welcome all students regardless of race, class, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other discrete characteristics. I strongly support this effort. I have worked for an organization that supports children who are born with physical and mental disabilities and genetic disorders and recognize the unique challenges students face when they perceive themselves as being "different." I am pleased that the School Committee through its yearlong policy revision process has reaffirmed our welcome policy, as it is right and it is part of what makes our system so special.

4. What concrete steps will you take to combat global climate change, increase renewable energy, and decrease energy consumption in Newton?

As a School Committee member, I will work with NPS to find ways to decrease the system's carbon footprint by decreasing energy consumption and using renewable energy whenever possible. I strongly support the School Committee's efforts to increase energy conservation in new and renovated buildings through more energy efficient windows, boilers, and heating and ventilation systems, and I want these successes to be teachable moments for all of us.

5. What does Black Lives Matter mean to you?

I support many of the guiding principles of Black Lives Matter and will work to ensure that our schools are a welcoming and supportive system for all students. As a School Committee member, I am looking forward to broadening the scope of Courageous Conversations About Race which the district began a few years ago. Courage Conversations About Race is a program that challenges participants to examine their unconscious biases. Families, administrators and educators will all benefit from expanding the reach of this important curriculum through a continuation of the trainings and workshops. I will also support the development and growth of the student led anti-bias curriculum at both high schools.

6. Would you support a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory language by city employees?

City employees should not use discriminatory language and I support a strong and unambiguous policy regarding language by school employees. While working for the Newton Public Schools, I supported the training of 250 community members to help young people in a mental health or addiction crisis. I fully support training all personnel to speak and behave appropriately and to not use discriminatory language. I am pleased that the School Committee through its yearlong policy revision process reaffirmed its anti-discriminatory and anti-bias policies for both employees and students.

7. What concrete steps will you take to address income inequality in Newton?

Newton is an economically diverse city. Newton has four schools that receive Title I funds. Title I provides financial assistance to schools with high numbers or a high percentage of children from low income families to ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

The School Committee sees the effects of income inequality in the level of preparedness with which students come to school and it is the school system's responsibility to provide equal access to resources to all students. As I mentioned above, I have worked to support at-risk families in need of financial assistance with childcare expenses and I will work to expand Newton Early Childhood Program; I support full-day kindergarten; I support programs like the Calculus Project; and I strongly support expanding access to our valuable after school enrichment programs.

8. Under what circumstances would you support an override?

I will work with the Mayor, City Council and School Committee to determine how to enhance city revenues, to maintain the financial allocation needed to achieve school excellence, and to find efficiencies and savings within our school budget. While the School Committee does not vote for an override, I will consider supporting one if it becomes clear that these various efforts are not sufficient to prevent the erosion of the education we provide for all of our students. We also need to continue to move forward with the city capital improvement plan to ensure that our school facilities continue to be upgraded for both regular and special education students. I do not take the request of an override lightly as I am well aware that many in our community have opposed overrides and could face financial hardships with an override. An override must be premised on needs and not wants.

9. What steps would you take to assist seniors, millennials, and others who might be cost-burdened? HUD defines cost-burdened as paying more than 30% of their income for housing.

I support property tax accommodations for seniors, millennials and others who are cost burdened. The long term solution is to provide Newton students with an outstanding education, enabling them to achieve their potential and earn salaries so that they are not cost-burdened.

10. How would you improve access to transportation? What do you see as Newton's role in advocating for expanded transportation?

I strongly support neighborhood schools and will work to develop policies that encourage families and students to walk, bike, bus, and carpool to our schools. It has been estimated that up to 40% of Newton city traffic is associated with getting our students to and from school, and we must work hard to increase options beyond the one-student-per-car that is so common today. Reducing this type of traffic will make transportation more efficient for all citizens and can be both an economic and quality-of-life enhancement.

I am pleased that the School Committee and NPS are creating a transportation working group this fall to develop citywide transportation policy in conjunction with our municipal departments.

11. What do you believe the role is of local elected leaders in promoting progressive policies at the state and national level?

Each School Committee Member should advocate strongly for state and national education policies. As a School Committee member, I will work to ensure that we work closely with our state legislative delegation.

I will advocate for S223, an Act Modernizing the Foundation Budget for the 21st Century. This bill will update the calculation of local aid for education to school districts by changing the formula to address inaccurate assumptions in the original formula. The original formula dramatically underestimated the costs of closing the achievement gap for low income and ELL learners. In addition the health care and special education cost assumptions are inaccurately low. This bill will correct these deficiencies.

12. Why are people poor?

My experience has led me to believe that there are almost as many reasons that people are poor as there are poor people. My work with the Centre Street Food Pantry, my experience working for families fighting cancer and struggling financially, and my experience working to support families with children with physical and mental disabilities has shown me that there are many factors that can cause people to be poor. Each person and each family has their own unique story. The Newton Public Schools must continue to meet all students where they are and provide each with the social-emotional, mental health and academic support that each needs. This will help them reach their potential as learners and empower them to be contributing members of our community and beyond into adulthood.

YES/NO (Massachusetts state legislature bill numbers follow in parentheses, where applicable):

1. Do you support or oppose a \$15/hour minimum wage? (S1004 / H2365)

I support a \$15/hour minimum wage and S1004/H2365

2. Do you support or oppose paid family medical leave? (S1048 / H2172)

I support paid family medical leave. My experience working for an organization that helped families who were fighting cancer and thus struggling financially showed me the importance of paid family medical leave and what a difference it could make.

3. Do you support or oppose the 2018 ballot question to place a 4% increased tax rate on taxable income over a million dollars per year?

I support the ballot question.

4. Do you support or oppose the 2018 ballot question to roll back protections for transgender individuals in public accommodations?

I have taken the pledge to protect full transgender equality in Massachusetts and I oppose this ballot question.

I stand with the Patriots, Bruins, Red Sox, Celtics and more than 100 businesses in opposing the ballot question.

5. Do you support the safe communities act? (S1305 / H3269)

I support the safe communities act.

6. Do you support the great neighborhoods bill? (S81)

I support this bill.

7. Do you believe Newton has met its obligation to provide affordable housing under MGL Chapter 40B?

I am not well-versed in the specific thresholds that Newton must hit under Chapter 40B, but I believe we have a moral obligation to provide more affordable housing in Newton so that we have adequate housing for people across the economic spectrum.