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## Biographical Question

1. *What can you tell us about yourself? Please include a brief outline of your relevant experience, including public offices held, and volunteer work.*

I am a mother, an experienced teacher, administrator, and curriculum development professional. My husband and I have lived in Lexington since 1999, both in East Lexington and Burnham Farms. We have two wonderful children and are currently proud Diamond parents.

I have served as a founding teacher for a private school and presently as a lead teacher in the Waltham Public Schools. In addition to teaching, I develop curricula in partnership with teachers and administrators and provide professional development there. I am also an advocate for students, working with them and their parents to create success plans. I hold a Masters degree in Education, teaching and superintendent licenses.

## Candidate Platform

2. *Why are you running for the School Committee?*

I entered a Masters of Ed. Program and became a teacher based on my love and passion for educating the next generations. I have gone beyond my duties as a teacher to make sure I can have a positive impact on as many children as possible.

As a teacher, I address students’ needs and pressures, parents’ challenges and concerns, and educational system’s intricacies on a daily basis.

I am passionate about curriculum, instructions, and the delivery of content.

I am running because I care about our students and know that with my experience, I can make a positive contribution to our community.

*3. What are your short-term and long-term priorities for the Lexington school system?*

I care about student safety, student wellness, and quality of workload rather than quantity, which may take away from healthy interactions and play. I value a Project-based learning approach and have observed first hand the amazing results it produces, both academically and socially, while still meeting external educational Standards.

In the short-term, I would like to use my skills and experience in curriculum development to:

- 1) Support and enhance the existing focus on our learning spaces, helping in the review of designs for new spaces to ensure that they can support 21<sup>st</sup>-century creative, rigorous and playful learning.
- 2) Support work of the Lexington Community Coalition, including parents and school personnel, in ensuring that the classroom and home learning experiences are not only helping students learn material and be inspired, but also able to be done in a time-frame which allows family life and outside activities and quiet time.

For the short term, I would like to collect quantitative data from students and parents to better understand the reasons for unhappiness and stress. Only a careful analysis will enlighten us about the true causes of student stress.

In the long term, we continue to address the growing school population in relation to the rest of the town's needs, and ensure that we stay a community.

Additionally, I'd offer my expertise in supporting our educational vision and formulating a new collaborative vision that addresses providing professional development, designing spaces, and piloting innovative methodologies in teaching and learning.

## Policy Questions

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*3. How do you view the relationship between school spending, the quality of our schools in terms of teaching, programs and facilities, and the desirability of our community as a whole?*

From what I have learned, our schools are very much traditional in terms of curriculum, teaching, and homework, with pockets of innovation and inspiration, which could be strengthened system-wide. High test-scores can be an attractor, but can also mask many of the issues we are already addressing related to youth, family, teacher and administrator stress. School spending is driven by legally required mandates, much as the federal budget is – the room for discretionary items is far less than many imagine, despite the high amount. Nevertheless, within the mandates we can do more to make learning effective and enjoyable, with positive instead of negative spillovers into family and personal life. As much as we spend, we have legacy buildings still in use with elements that would surprise anyone who moved to town based purely on reputation, or even who attended

the schools years ago. Who would expect that a school system with our reputation doesn't have elementary foreign language? Doesn't require every student to take at least a minimal programming class? Yet we have much strength that can be further developed.

4. *What is your view of the Lexington METCO program?*

I believe diversity in our community makes our schools more desirable and serves all our students. The METCO program is a legacy of a focus on civil rights, and of mutual learning and support between city and suburban populations. It is still needed for both. It was pitched in part on funding from the state, which has not been sufficient, and on the idea that "excess capacity" in the suburbs would minimize costs to host towns. We are over capacity, but we should be clear that diminishing the METCO program would not solve our capacity problems – there are larger structural issues involved. Over the years we have served our Boston students and we should continue to do so.

5. *What should Lexington do to improve existing programs or to bring new programs to our public schools? How would you fund these changes?*

I believe an innovative approach in curriculum, instruction, and the delivery of content should be integrated into our school system. I believe that a rigorous and exciting curriculum that meets the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills even more is much needed. Quality over quantity is the key. Unfortunately, Lexington is behind on this wave. In my work district, I have already been involved in creating, training, and piloting new methods of study. I have also created lessons by partnering with local companies that provide material and funding for the lessons.

I would work with the superintendant and the rest of the committee to replace quantity with quality and promote inquiry-based learning over rote memorization. Additionally, I will work with the team to bring in learning opportunities from our community and surrounding communities to enhance education for all of our students.

Some of the old domains need to be removed so that we're focused on the quality of education, not the quantity or the massive amounts of work that might be expected from our students. I am happy to learn that our district's homework policy is currently being reviewed.

6. *What are your thoughts on the current efforts to increase the resilience, health and well-being of our students and to decrease their academic and social stress?*

Resilience, health, and well-being of our students rest on the pillars of a solid, interdisciplinary, collaborative learning approach that includes healthy academic challenges that boost critical thinking skills and collective success to promote students owning their learning and taking pride in their meaningful achievements. This methodology results in students' resilience, confidence, and builds good citizenship skills.

7. *Is the School Committee on the right track regarding school construction plans to address overcrowding? What changes, if any, would you like to see in regards to the school construction plans?*

With the rise in our student enrollment, we as a community are in the midst of multiple struggles to address learning spaces, class size and teacher to student ratios, while also addressing other community needs.

Unfortunately, the current school committee and superintendant are playing catch up to a problem that should have been looked at a number of years ago.

We need to work diligently to get the most amount of subsidy from the state and have the plans in place to start the work as soon as funding is available.

From what I have learned, I believe that we are on the right track. Since building schools are quite costly, I would only encourage designs (for renovation and rebuild) that meet the criteria for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. Budget proposal and planning takes ample time. With Hastings MSBA approved funding in the pipeline, we should focus on planning the design of learning spaces at Lexington High School while working on submitting MSBA funding request.

8. *Is the School Committee on the right track in regard to redistricting as a mechanism for optimizing use of elementary and middle school facilities?*

The School Committee is addressing the enrollment issues in the elementary and middle school facilities by working collaboratively with the school administration and the enrollment-working group. Recent annual growth for the last three years has ranged between 2.1-2.6 %; this increase calls for careful and meticulous attention. Through this work, the system has found that growth is variable across schools and that previous trends of increasing enrollments are expected to continue. While redistricting can be a difficult decision for families, our community needs to understand that sometimes buffer zones and redistricting are necessary to address the increased enrollment within a limited budget. At times, redistricting students from higher density areas to lower density areas is needed. Thus far, I have learned that our new superintendent and SC members are carefully studying student enrollment data across the district. The team is working diligently and attentively to address the issues. Their efforts in analyzing quantitative data by transitioning to a central registration system will not only make residency verification easier, but also save time and money in the process. Ongoing monitoring, adjustment, and flexibility are necessary to make the best decisions in order to ensure optimum learning for our students.

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*All candidates are asked to limit the response to each question to at most two or three paragraphs, and to provide the questionnaire responses by end of day Sunday, Feb 19th, 2017. Responses will not be edited, and will run as submitted. They will be posted on [lex-wiki.org](http://lex-wiki.org) in PDF format and announced through other town media. Questionnaire coordinator Andrei Radulescu-Banu ([bitdribble@gmail.com](mailto:bitdribble@gmail.com), 617-216-8509).*

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