

2021 Boston City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Erin Murphy

Office Sought: City Councilor At-Large

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(A) Your Candidacy

1. What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

Investing in 1) Academic success in our public schools, 2) Safer and happier neighborhoods, 3) Healthier Boston in terms of mental health, SUD recovery, homelessness and poverty among our seniors, veterans, and children, especially as we emerge and re-open after the pandemic.

2. What qualifies you to hold this office?

I am a veteran public school teacher and school leader, an experienced and successful advocate in the mental health, family trauma, and recovery spaces, and a dedicated neighbor with decades of experience and commitment to working together for a better city for all.

3. What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to see Boston adopt?

In Cambridge, the Foundations policy means every child in K-5 gets structured literacy instruction. I would like to see a similar policy in Boston.

In Arkansas, Act 1268 ensures all districts screen all students in the areas of foundational reading skills and develop a "structured literacy" curriculum in the early grades. I would like to see a similar policy adopted in Boston.

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4. **Which of the following groups have you chosen to reject / would reject campaign contributions from? (For-profit developers, Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists, Police officers)**

Fossil fuel executives or lobbyists, Charter school advocates and lobbyists.

(B) Racial Equity & Community Engagement

1. **Name three accomplishments you've been able to achieve to advance racial justice or equity.**

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2. **What steps would you take, if elected, to engage all the diverse communities of Boston in policymaking, and what past actions of yours should give voters confidence that you will follow through?**

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(C) Charter Reform & Balance of Power

1. **What do you see as the role of the City Council in our strong-mayor system?**

Budget review, Liaison with the Mayor's office, holding hearings, bringing constituent concerns to appropriate Mayoral and/or City department

2. **The City Council currently has very little ability to influence the budgeting process. Would you support legislation to enable line-item budgetary changes? YES/ NO**

Yes.

3. **Would you support Charter Change to allow for Ranked Choice Voting in Boston? YES/ NO**

No.

4. **Would you support changing the city charter to impose term limits for the office of Mayor in Boston? YES/ NO**

No.

5. **What, if any, other changes to the City Charter would you like to see?**

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(D) Revenue

1. **Do you support the PILOT Action Group's [recommendations](#) for a standing PILOT commission with community representation? YES/ NO**

Yes.

2. **Given state law, Boston is limited in its taxing power. What opportunities do you see for the city to raise revenue?**

PILOT and Linkage improvements

(E) Education

1. **What are your top priorities for reducing persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in the Boston Public Schools?**

1. Investing in successful academic outcomes, with a focus on literacy, assessments, and wrap-around health services for students and families, including housing, nutrition, dental, mental health, special needs, and proximity to violence.

2. Instituting a standardized curriculum across the BPS system, with a special focus on literacy in the early grades.

3. Review of school safety issues and protocols, documenting and tabulating instances of violence in school buildings, on buses, and in students' homes and neighborhoods, in collaboration with school specialists, nurses, and other health and wellness professionals.

2. **Do you oppose the expansion of charter schools in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

3. **Do you support a change in BPS governance to allow Boston voters the right to elect school committee members, like every other city in Massachusetts? YES/ NO If so, what would your ideal structure be? If not, why not?**

Yes. Elected or Hybrid Elected

4. **Do you support removing police from Boston public schools? YES/ NO**

No.

- 5. Do you support making a permanent change to the admissions process for Boston's exam schools? YES/ NO And if so, what would your proposed alternative system be?**

No.

- 6. What steps would you take to make universal pre-K a reality in Boston?**

Advocate with colleagues, the Mayor's office, and the voters and stakeholders in Boston.

(F) Public Safety

- 1. Do you support requiring the police department and other city agencies to get City Council approval before acquiring new surveillance technologies or military equipment? YES/ NO**

No.

- 2. Do you support the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office's do-not-prosecute list and expanded approach to dealing with such low-level offenses? YES/ NO**

No.

- 3. Do you support ending information sharing between the Boston Police Department and ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 4. Do you support closing the loopholes in Boston's Trust Act which allow BPD to inquire about immigration status or pass information along to ICE? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 5. Do you support shuttering the Boston Police gang database? YES/ NO**

No.

- 6. Would you support a hard cap on overtime for individual officers? If so, what percentage of an officer's salary? YES/ NO**

No.

- 7. What changes to the 2017 Boston Police Patrolman's Association (BPPA) contract would you advocate for in the latest round of contract negotiations?**

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- 8. What current functions of the Boston Police Department should be transferred to agencies under civilian control, and what governance would you propose for them?**

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- 9. Would you advocate for the reallocation of money from the Boston Police Department budget to reinvestment in communities? YES/ NO *If so, how much?***

No. Forced overtime because of too few police officers is not a fiscally responsible way to run a police department. Boston should address its police overtime issue by hiring more police officers to ensure personnel safety, lower overtime costs, and safer communities. The serious spike in violent crime in Boston signals a need for more community policing, not less.

- 10. Which of the following would you support banning the use of by the Boston Police Department? (Tear gas and other chemical weapons, Rubber bullets, Attack dogs)**

- 11. Do you believe that affiliation or sympathies with white supremacist organizations among officers is a problem with BPD? YES/ NO *If so, what measures would you take as mayor to combat that issue?***

No.

- 12. Do you support safe consumption sites? YES/ NO**

No.

(G) Environment & Transportation

- 1. Do you believe Boston needs to reduce its dependence on cars, and if so, how would you propose to do so?**

Boston needs the MBTA to be reliable, affordable, and available in every neighborhood. This is the best way to alleviate traffic, safety concerns, and congestion on our roadways.

- 2. What are your top three policy priorities for making Boston a climate-resilient city, and how would you ensure that equity is at the center of any such efforts?**

Environmental Best Practices review at ISD and BPDA for large commercial and government developments and buildings. HVAC reviews and surveys of all City owned buildings in order to address air quality in public buildings and more efficient HVAC systems for heating, ventilating, and cooling our buildings.

- 3. Do you oppose the creation of new fossil fuel infrastructure in Boston? YES/ NO**

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No.

4. **Do you support fare-free public transit? What steps would you take to achieve this goal? YES/ NO**

No,

5. **Do you support the adoption of a curbside composting pickup program? YES/ NO**

No.

(H) Housing

1. **How would you expand affordable housing in Boston and ensure development without displacement?**

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2. **What opportunities do you see for leveraging city-owned land for expanding affordable housing?**

100% affordable units in buildings built on land owned by the City.

3. **Do you support a real estate transfer tax for commercial and residential sales, with the revenue going to an affordable housing trust? YES/ NO What exemption threshold, if any, would you advocate for?**

Yes. \$1.6 million.

4. **Do you support rent control? YES/ NO If so, how would you structure such a policy? If not, why not?**

No.

5. **Do you support the renewal of Boston's condo conversion law, which affords residents of covered properties a notice period, right of first refusal to purchase their unit, relocation assistance, just cause eviction, and relocation benefits if their unit is converted to a condominium? YES/ NO**

No.

6. **Would you support a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase ordinance, enabling tenants to purchase a building if the owner seeks to put it on the market? YES/ NO**

No.

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7. **Boston's inclusionary development policy (IDP) requires that 13 percent of the units in a building need to be affordable. Do you support increasing this number? YES/ NO If so, to what? Please List %**

Yes. 15-20%.

8. **Do you support requiring that a majority of new affordable units be built on-site, in order to ensure communities are diverse and integrated? YES/ NO**

No.

9. **Do you support breaking up the BPDA and creating an independent public office of planning? YES/ NO If so, how will you make it happen?**

No.

10. **Do you support increasing the number of units that are ADA compliant in projects that receive City funds? YES/ NO**

Yes.

(I) Economic Opportunity

1. **What steps would you propose to reduce Boston's income and wealth inequality, especially the racial wealth gap?**

Increased home ownership among Black and Latinx residents with city-supported programs.

2. **Do you support requiring city contractors to give their employees at least two weeks' notice before changing their schedules and to compensate workers for late schedule changes? YES/ NO**

No.

3. **Do you support ending subminimum wages for tipped workers in Boston? YES/ NO**

Yes.

4. **How would you enforce the hiring goals set forth in the Boston Jobs Residency Policy (which requires that least 50 percent of the total work hours in each trade must go to *Boston* residents, at least 25 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to people of color, and at least 10 percent of the total employee work hours in each trade must go to women)?**

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With a dedicated city enforcement department

- 5. What targets in city contracting would you commit to for minority-owned businesses as well as Black-owned businesses in particular, and what steps would you take to realize such targets?**

10%

- a. Will you commit to immediately directing all City departments and quasi-city agencies to unbundle large contracts that are set to become available in 2021 and beyond in order to facilitate this? YES/ NO**

. Many large contracts could be unbundled, and other barriers to entry could be relaxed or removed to increase the number of City contracts to MWBE contractors.

- b. Will you commit to regular reporting to track progress toward and beyond this goal? YES/ NO**

Yes.

- 6. The cannabis industry is expected to be a major source of growth in Boston in the coming years. What steps should the City take to make sure that it grows in an equitable way, in which the communities most impacted by the drug war are able to benefit?**

Current policies appear successful and I support them.

- 7. Would you support the creation of a municipal broadband network? YES/ NO**

No.

(J) Democracy

- 1. Do you support allowing non-citizens with legal status the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

No.

- 2. Do you support allowing 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in municipal elections? YES/ NO**

No.

- 3. In 2022, Boston will engage in redistricting on the municipal level. What would an equitable redistricting process look like to you?**

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- 4. Would you support the redrawing of Boston's wards and precincts ("reprecincting"), which has not happened in more than 100 years -- and which happens decennially in other MA cities and towns? YES/ NO**

No.

(K) Additional Comments