



Progressive Newton 2023 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

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- 1. Did you support the three override votes on the ballot this past spring? If not, why?**

Yes. I voted for all three override votes, and encouraged others to do the same.

- 2. Following the Override votes, what concrete actions will you take to ensure that NPS students have the greatest opportunities to succeed? Additionally, how do you define “academic excellence”?**

Teachers need to be supported (educational opportunities that include time to create or learn innovative teaching approaches or tools) so they can do their best teaching. Students arrive with different learning styles, different backgrounds, and different abilities. Classroom Aides are an important enhancement to classroom management and student learning, and help provide all-important individual attention to new or struggling students. Newton needs to continue support for Aides in the classrooms. In the wake of the failure of the Override, I support efforts to scrutinize the City budget to make sure funds to support NPS are identified.

“Academic excellence” incorporates skills for learning and for leading a fulfilling life: the ability to think and read critically, understand math and science concepts, learn a second language, speak and write persuasively, as well as how to work ethically, constructively, and responsibly in a group.

3. On March 29th, the School Committee voted against the creation of a “NPS Academic Principles Advisory Committee.” What is your stance on this vote and the proposed committee?

I support the School Committee vote. Since there is already an elected School Committee, and a PTO structure in place, an Academic Principles Advisory Committee seems superfluous.

4. What does “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” mean to you, and how will you ensure and protect the wellbeing of all students?

Diversity refers to the fact that students come to school with a wide variety of backgrounds, languages, ethnicities, races, and physical and mental abilities. Inclusion means that students are not excluded because of these characteristics, and, in fact, are welcomed. My perception of DEI is colored by my husband’s experience. He lost most of his sight in an accident at the age of five and his parents were told that he must attend a school for the blind. This meant living apart from his family and, at that young age, he was very unhappy with separation from both his family and his community. When he reached middle school age, his parents succeeded in enrolling him in the local public school system. He was given accommodations (a reader, and use of a typewriter for exams) and thrived. This was long before ADA and requirements for accommodations existed. It is well established now that most children with differences benefit from inclusion in regular classrooms. My view is that every child deserves a chance for the best education possible. Furthermore, all children benefit from a diversity of classmates that will prepare them to be successful in communities, higher education, and workplaces that are themselves, becoming ever more diverse.

5. What does “Black Lives Matter” mean to you?

The reality is that Black people and other people of color continue to face discrimination, despite laws meant to prohibit discrimination. Worse yet, violence against Black people is not just a thing of the past. “Black Lives Matter” is a reminder to the entire community of that fact.

6. How would you improve access to affordable transportation in Newton?

NewMo, at \$2.00 per ride, offers good access to affordable automobile transit within Newton, and is used by all ages. More NewMo vehicles would improve wait times, and a planned switch to electric vehicles will also support Newton's Climate Action Plan.

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

Publicizing rebates available for various means of combating global climate change might induce more households to adopt them: insulation, solar panels, heat pumps, electric water heaters, and induction stovetops, for example. I notice that electric charging stations are increasingly available in Newton, but upping the availability throughout the city will assure potential buyers of electric vehicles that charging will be convenient, and likely increase the number of residents who use electric vehicles. The convenience factor is important. Plenty of people bike, rather than drive a car, and making well-marked bike lanes with perimeter posts is important to safety for bikers.

I know that the City already encourages composting and I see Black Earth composting containers out on curbs every week. I compost with a container in my backyard that I bought from the City some years ago. If these are not currently offered for sale, perhaps they should be.

More multifamily housing in the City, especially near public transit is another way to reduce carbon emissions. Multifamily housing exposes fewer surfaces to the weather than the same number of housing units built separately would, and if housing is built near transit, residents would not need to drive cars as much. As for parking, builders have traditionally matched the number of parking spaces to the number of units in a housing project, but studies show that those parking lots often have large percentages of unused spaces, even during peak times. Accordingly, less parking is being required by the City for new projects, a move I support because it means less paved-over land. Generally speaking, I look to Green Newton for current information on measures that Newton residents can adopt to be greener.

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

As a founding member of Engine 6, I place a very high value on affordable housing, and have been advocating for ten years for more housing, and especially for more affordable housing. As a City Councilor, I would carry that

concern and value with me, and would actually be able to participate in discussions of housing proposals as well as in the decisions on approvals. Current City Council Rezoning plans will allow “by right” construction of smaller multi-family projects, a move I support. The permitting process can be long and expensive for developers and contractors, which makes the “by right” option very important as a measure to increase housing production.

9. What is your definition of public safety? What actions will you take to further this definition in Newton?

Public safety can include everything from making sure road markings for auto, bike, and pedestrian traffic are highly visible and clear, to promptly tending to depressions, holes, cracks, bumps, and obstructions in roads and sidewalks, to providing crossing guards near schools. In addition, Police officers at large events provide public safety by directing auto and pedestrian traffic. An emergency telephone number for the Police Department allows quick response in an urgent situation. If citizens report scams to the Police Department, alerts can go out to the public. As we have seen recently, the Police Department also has the tough job of investigating major crimes, including murder, that occur in the City of Newton, identifying perpetrators, and making sure they are isolated from the public. The Police Department also does outreach to the schools to establish a relationship that will make students comfortable in their presence.

The Fire Department responds promptly to many kinds of emergencies, and also carries out inspections of new buildings and major renovations, for safety purposes. City Social Services staff also play a role, assisting families in a variety of precarious situations to get the kinds of support and services they need. In the rare case of some disastrous event, such as the Marathon bombing or widespread and heavy flooding, residents would be dependent on the Police and Fire Departments assessing the situation and advising residents on what safety measures to take. I consider all of the above activities to be within the realm of public safety.

Councilors can, and certainly should have conversations with Police, Fire Department, and Social Services leaders and staff. Talking about issues and possible solutions with safety officials should ideally happen on a regular basis.

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

Drawing on local experiences, needs, assessments, and accomplishments or failures, local elected leaders have valuable insights to contribute to conversations on the state and national level.

11. Use this space to add anything you have not mentioned and that you would like us to know about your experience, vision for Newton, etc.

Athletic fields, playgrounds, and green spaces in Newton are very important for the health and enjoyment of everyone in the City. These must be well maintained. I personally feel lucky to have easy access to the Flowed Meadow Conservation Area in Auburndale for walks with our family dog, Kahlo. More accessibility for people with mobility issues would make these types of spaces even better.

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

1. Do you support lowering the municipal voting age to 16?

YES.

2. If the MBTA is unable to expand service, would you be in favor of having the MWRTA (MetroWest Regional Transit Authority) expand service instead?

YES.

3. Do you support the “Real Estate Transfer Fee”? (S.1771/H.2747)

YES.

4. Do you support the “HERO bill”? (S.1799/ H.2894)

YES.

5. Do you support “An Act to Promote Yes in My Backyard”? (S.858/ H.1379)

YES.

6. Do you support raising the minimum wage to \$20? (S.1200/ H.1925)

YES.

**7. Do you support “Preventing Fair Share Amendment Tax Avoidance”?
(S.1866/H.2909)**

YES.

[*Read about the aforementioned bills here*](#)