

Putting Students First

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I am Jennifer Schaeffner and am running for a third term on the Marblehead School Committee. I was raised in Marblehead, attended Marblehead Public Schools as did my two children. My husband Bob and I moved back here in 2003 when we started our family. I worked for over 20 years in the investment and banking industry and am now a small business owner on the North Shore focused primarily on real estate investing, development and property management.

As an active parent leader in the Marblehead Public Schools for many years, I served as an officer for several Parent Council Organizations and four years as Co-chair of the Marblehead Special Education Parents Advisory Council. While on the School Committee I served on several sub-committees including: Budget, Policy, Wellness, and Facilities.

I co-chaired Selection Committees that successfully hired the Permanent Director of Student Services, Interim Superintendent of Schools, Permanent Superintendent of Schools, and Permanent Assistant Superintendent of Schools. I served on several School Advisory Councils and on several statewide committees which gives me a broad network of colleagues throughout the state with whom I share information, advice and recommendations.

I have listened, learned, applied critical thinking and have knowledge of how the School Committee is supposed to work. I am disciplined and laser focused on process. My main commitment I make to you is accessibility. That means:

- If someone asks me a question, I will answer

- If a member of the community speaks in an open meeting, I will respond and engage

- If the Administration makes a proposal or recommendation I will ask questions before deliberating or voting

- I will make documents available to the public and the press, if the school district does not, in advance of meetings

In short, I will interact with all members of the community in a direct, open and respectful way.

Budget: The most important job of the School Committee is establishing and managing the budget for our school district. We have been level funded for over 15 years; which does not mean level services. We have witnessed, year after year, reductions in certain budget items. Each year we go through this exercise of listing educational priorities and each year they get eliminated.

In the meantime we rely on parents' generosity and volunteers to keep our district going: fundraising for tents, landscaping services, lunch volunteers, uniforms, and technology. I am committed, if elected, to work with the public in creating a zero-based, needs based budget that will tell us exactly how much it will take to provide a high quality education for students in Marblehead. Funding that budget, and securing the resources to do so, will require a combined effort with the Town Government. I commit to work collaboratively and openly with the administrators we have across the town to present a sound, solid and affordable budget plan to the members of Town Meeting in 2022.

Facilities Maintenance: We are about to open the newest and last new school building in our 1999 School Master Plan: The Lucretia and Joseph Brown School. The School Committee is responsible for the maintenance, improvement, and sustainability of all our school buildings. I commit to working with the School Administration and the Finance Committee to build a sound and reasonable funding plan for this so we never find ourselves with decaying, neglected and environmentally wasteful buildings. Our student, staff and community deserve no less.

Curriculum: In a post-pandemic world, we need robust development, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum we are teaching our students. This includes academic and social-emotional programming that meet the changing needs of our students to be prepared for life post-graduation. As we develop a needs-based budget, we must create a structure that allows for constant scrutiny of our curriculum and rigorous oversight of the standards of teaching.

We have a lot of work to do to get our students back to school and on track for grade level achievement. Our teachers and staff are depending on leadership to deliver the resources to maximize student achievement in a post pandemic world.

It is time to put our students first. I promise you, if elected, I will put our students first and respectfully ask for your vote on June 22.

