

VOTER GUIDE questions for all candidates:

1. What motivates you to run for this office?
2. What qualifications and skills do you bring to the table?
3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities?

Board of Education District A

- **Godfrey Azima (D/WFP)** [no responses received]
- **Alexandrea Kemeny (R)**

1. My motivation is the children of Norwalk. I want each child to experience success and reach their full potential.

I want to make Norwalk a better place in which to reside. A successful and strong city is only as good as its school system. Having been born and raised here and being a recently retired teacher of 31 years from the Norwalk Public Schools, I'm aware of the system's strengths and weaknesses. I am motivated to be an effective Board member by putting forth my time, effort and energy into making a positive impact on our educational system.

2. Experience. I bring a unique set of qualifications having been a teacher for 31 years in the Norwalk public school system. I understand the diverse needs of our students on a first hand basis. I know the importance of honest communication between teachers, parents and administration and how, all too often, lines of communication breakdown.

Creative Solutions. It is important to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Norwalk, but it is just as important to address the variety of needs our children have. It will be necessary to research and solve problems in creative ways.

Devotion. I was born, raised, taught school and co-founded an educational children's theater school in Norwalk 32 years ago. (Crystal Theatre) I'm dedicated to Norwalk and willing to give my time and energy to help Norwalk meet the challenges of our growing community.

3. If elected, my priority would be addressing the challenge of successfully incorporating our ELL students into our schools and community. I would propose an additional elementary Dual Language School in District A and develop after-school opportunities for our older ELL students.

Equally important is finding an experienced Superintendent who is committed and dedicated to strengthening our diverse school system and making it one of excellence.

An additional priority is to create more choice in our district: choice in schools, choice in curriculum and choice in career for both college and non-college bound students. I would be excited to expand the Public School of Choice Initiative to allow families to send their children to a school of their choosing. Working with local businesses, I would propose to develop apprenticeship programs for those students not wanting to attend college.

I can be reached at KemenyonBoard@gmail.com

Board of Education District B

- Sherelle Harris (D) [no responses received]

Board of Education District C

- Diana Carpio (D/WFP)

1. Being involved in the Norwalk Public School system for over a decade, I've watched and listened, agreed and disagreed, and in doing this, I have learned that first, we need to unite the efforts from all parties to the BOE and second, if we want to succeed in our goals of improvement to our schools, we have to be able to reach all parts of the community, including the non-English speaking parents and families. I have the ability to do this because I am fluent in Latin. Allowing everyone to understand and have a say is extremely important to me.

2. As I mentioned, I am qualified in bringing the Latin community closer to the BOE and to establish an understanding of what the BOE is working on, achieving and planning. I am a familiar face in the Latin community, as well as District C, and I would like to use my presence as a way for parents and families to approach me with ideas and concerns that I can translate to the BOE and help solve.

3. 1. Improve the communication of the BOE to all communities

2. Represent the parents, students, teachers, families and homeowners who depend on our NPS to teach, protect, employ and maintain home values in Norwalk

3. Be a positive member who will look beyond the political parties and work together with all members of the BOE

- **Jason Christopher (R)**

1. I am the father of two children at NPS. As a lifelong resident and product of NPS myself, I am very dedicated to Norwalk. Our students truly are our city's future and I want to be a part of that. The future is bright. I want to improve communication first and foremost. Parents and teachers know the students best and their voices MUST be heard. I hear of more and more parents leaving the system due to lack of communication and shortfalls that simply should not be. I feel strongly parents and kids should not have to leave the system unless they choose to do so. We can do better. I am fueled by the need for improvements in special education. Accountability is everything. If our education system thrives with a quality education that works for all, then residents can feel confident in their investment in our city.

2. I'm dedicated to hard work and determination with a solid corporate background. Accountability and communication is a strength that I would certainly bring to the board. At the same time, listening is a strong quality I possess. I believe in people NOT politics. I'm a great listener and I believe no one knows the students better than the parents and teachers. I would strongly value their input. I have attended many meetings and researched the issues and concerns heavily. Data and numbers are important and I understand both and apply it daily as a successful Business Analyst every single day and would do so as a Board of Education member. My background in business, finance and analytics allows me to research data and apply where necessary to ensure fiscal responsibility to the board. I would bring the perfect balance of accountability, compassion, communication and strength in research and data.

3. -Communication: Norwalk is a city and as a result there are many issues and concerns that we face. Overcrowding, budget concerns, school infrastructure and building improvement needs are great. However, based on my experiences...the biggest challenge is Communication!

-Special Education: Parents are burnt out, frustrated and the resources are spread too thin. Case workers and social workers are overloaded. We need to work to ensure SPED students are receiving the most adequate, consistent and efficient resources they can.

-ELL Student Resources: Once a student enters an NPS building, we must ensure the resources needed to thrive. I will work closely with the Latino community and the entire ELL base as a whole. We are all one! All students who enter the halls are Norwalk's future. Norwalk is wonderfully diverse. We must support ELL students but without homeowners bearing tax burdens. Current student programs and services in place must not be

Board of Education District D

- **Erica DePalma (D/WFP)**

1. Success in a global economy looks different now than it did in the past. As we adopt a digital curriculum moving forward, I believe it's important to have a member of the technology sector on the Board. I'm also both a SPED and General Ed parent, and with that comes an awareness of the opportunities to address the City's achievement gap, while maximizing the potential of all students in the system.

I also felt a perception issue was developing in Norwalk that was driving young families out of town. We are often bogged down with confusion that escalates due to lack of communication. Ineffective communication diverts time and resources away from our core agenda. And as Marketer, I feel strongly that there are opportunities to model positive behavior, more effectively communicate and redirect the conversation to socializing our strengths. And in time, the momentum will shift in a better direction.

2. My career is in the field of Marketing Technology. I'm tasked with using data, technology and workflow systems to deliver results while maximizing profit margins for my clients and my firm. To be successful in my field, it requires a commitment to active listening and collaboration with key stakeholders. As a Senior Vice President with my firm, it's my responsibility to evaluate and distill expected outcomes, as well as the dependencies and the trade-offs, in a concise and digestible manner. I constantly reevaluate the tools, partnerships, talent and the contracts I have in place to affirm they are appropriate for solving tomorrow's challenges.

My strategic leadership has been recognized by my clients and peers in numerous industry awards and I've held several Board positions for both professional and non-profit organizations. AFT Connecticut, representing over 30,000 workers, including teachers, paraprofessionals and higher education faculty and staff, has also endorsed my candidacy.

3. • Hiring a Superintendent with experience closing the achievement gap in a similar District and improving/standardizing communication policies.

- Best-in-class learning environments and equitable education practices across the District (including, but not limited to, facilities, social-emotional culture, academic resources, professional development and appropriate staffing assignments)

- Implementation of a permanent SPED Committee and evaluation of our Tier 1 interventions thru to compliance of individualized education plans.

- **Bryan Meek* (R)**
 1. Building upon the success of the past 4 years that has transformed Norwalk Public Schools into the highest rated urban school district in the state and taking it to the next level. Taking this to the next level. Representing another viewpoint for our citizens who are generally opposed to unilateral control of government by one political party. Watching my children grow and thrive in the same schools that I did. Fixing and improving these schools

 2. 4 years as BOE Finance chair, overseeing dramatic improvements to our financial management systems and internal controls that have achieved \$ millions in savings. Every \$1 we save is a \$1 that we can invest in better programming for our children. This comes naturally with my 20+ years experience working with 100s of multi national corporations from the C level executives who sets the objectives down to the analysts who get the work done. I earned an MBA from Uconn in Technology Management and later completed a Masters in Accounting from Uconn as well. I am a licensed Certified Public Accountant and Project Management Professional.

 3. Most important, in this order:
 - (1) Hiring our next Superintendent after Dr. Adamowski retires. Strong leadership is the single most important thing for our school district. Years ago the revolving door of Superintendents here did tremendous damage to our school system. We can not afford to repeat that mistake.

 - (2) Continuing work on our Facilities masterplan and getting new buildings for our children and modernizing the rest. Children deserve the choice of attending a neighborhood school. Our children need to spend less time on busses and more time in classrooms or enrichment activities.

 - (3) Continued improvement of systems of internal control and financial management that are critical to maximizing our resources and keeping budget requests in line.

Board of Education District E

- **Mike Barbis* (D)**
 1. I am motivated to run for the BOE to continue the work that I began in 2011 when I was first elected. I have been part of a bipartisan coalition to turn Norwalk Public Schools around. We have made a huge progress but the job is not yet done.

 2. My education, professional experience and my 8 years on the board provide the qualifications and skills needed. I have degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton School of Finance and I am a Chartered Financial Analyst. I spent 18 years as an investment analyst on Wall Street and then the last 17 years as a realtor covering Norwalk and the rest of Fairfield County. During my 8 years on the Board of Ed I have been the Chairman of the Board for the last two years and Chair of the Facilities Committee for the last four years. In addition, I served as Chair of the Finance and Negotiations Committees in the past; I formerly sat on the Curriculum Committee and currently sit on the following Committees: Finance, Negotiations, Policy and Facilities. In addition, I have found my foreign language skills (Spanish and French) to be of use.

3. My #1 priority if elected will be to hire the best superintendent candidate following Dr. Adamowski's retirement. I have been on the Board to hire two previous Superintendents and have overseen the start the process to hire the upcoming one. My #2 priority is to continue our work and goals contained in the Strategic Operating Plan. My #3 priority is to continue with the Facilities Master Plan including the construction of two new schools.