

1. Please briefly describe why you're running for mayor.

I am running for Mayor because I love Manchester and I believe it's time we have a leader who can bring people together to move the City forward. I was born and raised in Manchester; in fact, I'm fourth generation to be from Manchester and to graduate from Manchester public schools. I'm proud that my three children now attend our public schools. I feel fortunate to live in Manchester and I believe our City has a lot to offer. Unfortunately, we've become a City known more for our struggles than our strengths, and it's time for that to change. Manchester has many potential partners that can play a significant role in making Manchester an innovative city; I plan to establish collaborative opportunities to give voice to those entities and individuals in moving Manchester forward to greatness. My vision for Manchester is that we are known as a community with great schools that families want to move to, that businesses want to operate in, and that has forward thinking and open-minded leaders.

2. How would you assist, model, and facilitate healthy communications with the District leadership team, the MEA and the BOSC? How would you facilitate the communication between the BOSC and the Board of Mayor and Alderman?

The current Mayor's preference for confrontation over collaboration makes it very difficult for the District leadership team, the MEA, and the BoSC to have meaningful debate and discussion on the challenges facing Manchester's schools. As a parent and graduate of Manchester public schools, I know that we have the best teachers in the state and that their voices should be heard whenever the administration and BoSC are discussing policies and procedures in our schools. We need a Mayor who will listen to all parties and who welcomes challenges to her proposals. In my experience as a mother, businessperson, member of the BoSC and Alderman, I know that the best way to solve problems is to have all parties at the table sharing ideas and concerns.

As an Alderman and former member of the BoSC, I have a unique perspective on the workings of both boards not shared by any other candidate for Mayor. The Mayor of this City needs to set a tone of respect and cooperation during meetings. I regularly watch the school board meetings and I see that the current Mayor often plays our boards against each other. This tactic is counter-productive and harmful to the workings of both boards. I believe quality education is the key to our community's success and we must make it a priority. As Mayor, I would bring both boards together so we have a common understanding and vision of what must be done to ensure our children receive the best possible education.

3. Even though it is currently in the City of Manchester's Charter, do you feel that you should serve as the Chairman of the Board of School Committee? If so, why? If no, why not? Do you see the role changing and if so, what would be your recommendation for change.

The Mayor should have an active leadership role on the BoSC, but effective leadership means listening and collaborating, not enforcing one's personal opinions or ideology, especially when our educators and administrators have different opinions. As Mayor, I will foster an environment

at the BoSC where members, educators, administrators and parents know that their voices and opinions are heard and respected. I know that we all must work together to provide our children with the best possible educational opportunities. As mayor, I would model a spirit of cooperation wherein the school administration and BoSC members work together proactively to advance learning opportunities for Manchester's children and celebrate their successes.

4. What is your position on the tax cap? How, if at all, would you propose altering it in the future? Do you believe it is possible to adequately fund education while operating under it?

I believe elected officials should have the flexibility to respond appropriately to address community needs and that we should be held accountable for our actions. For this reason, I did not support the tax cap when it was put on the ballot. Since enacting the tax cap, we have seen a decrease in our bond rating as more money is bonded to meet city needs that do not go away because we have a tax cap. In the face of rising community needs, we have also seen an increased use of one-time funds that harm the long-term financial health of the city.

Recognizing the untenable position the cap places on city budget writers, I voted in favor of putting the tax cap question back on the ballot in 2013. One of my primary opponents, former Alderman Patrick Arnold, voted against this measure. Last year, the BoMA was successful in placing a measure on the ballot that would have altered the tax cap to allow the City to use any increases in assessed valuations. Unfortunately, with little resources available to promote public discussion of this question during the 2014 statewide general election, the measure failed.

Last year, the Mayor presented a budget that contained a \$7.5M deficit. In addition, Alderman Hirschmann proposed an alternative budget that would have taken money from schools and allocated it to city departments, but that budget failed. In response to community demand for more police officers, better schools, and improved infrastructure, I led the effort to create a responsible budget that appropriately funded essential city services that faced devastating cuts under the Mayor's proposed budget. Twelve Aldermen voted in favor of this budget and it passed. This budget responsibly addressed the deficit, balanced the budget and invested in our city. We fully funded schools based on the amount requested by Dr. Livingston. We also enhanced education for our students by funding new projects such as full-day kindergarten, adding new teaching positions, ensuring that all sophomores could take PSATs and decreasing class sizes.

5. What would be your role in addressing the budget process? Do you feel that the process works? If yes, why? If no, why not and how might you facilitate a change in the process?

I do not believe the budgeting process works well for a number of reasons, including timing and, most concerning, the Mayor's refusal to fully support district needs.

Having served on both boards provides me a unique perspective into the budget process. As a school board member, I understand that the district would like to get their appropriation as soon as possible so they can make necessary adjustments and hires. As an Alderman, I understand

the benefit of waiting as long as possible to see if there is additional surplus. I believe the BoMA should be able to take a vote that says, in principal, that the amount the Mayor allocates to the school district in her budget will be the minimum amount that can be appropriated. This will allow the district to move forward with plans and will eliminate the issue of making last minute budget decisions as the school year approaches. Once the final city budget is approved, the final school district budget will be appropriated and would be equal to or greater than the amount indicated in Mayor's budget.

Although timing is an issue, I believe the biggest problem facing our current budget process is the current Mayor's treatment of school district staff. While he projects himself as a supporter of education, his record and the increasing negative reputation of our schools under his watch belies that portrayal. Unfortunately, this Mayor has made it a habit of intimidating and berating school administrators, educators and parents who appear before the BoMA or BoSC to express concerns about our schools, particularly when discussing financial matters. Much of the budget writing process consists of working with interests across the City to reach compromises that benefit all. This process must include treating all interested parties with respect and listening even when one disagrees. The Mayor's refusal to listen to opposing parties inhibits his ability to craft a budget that reflects the varied needs of Manchester's citizens. In crafting several budgets that gained the support of the majority of my colleagues on the BoMA, I know that this process works best when all concerned parties have an equal voice at the table. As Mayor, I will continue to work collaboratively with everyone who is committed to moving Manchester forward.

6. As their number within the city grows, what is your position on charter schools, specifically as pertains to the funds and resources they draw from our public schools?

As a parent of three children, I understand that it is my responsibility to find a school that best meets the needs of my children. Thankfully, for my family, Manchester public schools have worked well. However, this isn't the case for all children. I understand there must be options such as private, parochial and public charter schools to meet the individual needs of each child.

I believe that public charter schools can offer alternative educational opportunities for certain students; however, I do not believe that supporting charter schools in our community should be done at the expense of progress for the nearly 15,000 students in our public schools. I would not support measures to provide additional funding to charter schools that undermine the work being done by our educators, administrators and parents in our public schools.

7. There is an overwhelming amount of Federal and District-level mandated testing. What is your position on mandated testing at all levels? How would you include educators and the MEA in the discussions?

As Mayor, the MEA and educators will always have a seat at the table when the city discusses significant issues relative to education. I believe that our students are capable and able to excel when evaluated, but we should not base their success solely on the outcomes of mandated testing. We know that Manchester has a student population unique in our otherwise small, wealthy, and largely rural state; our classrooms are representative of the diversity that makes

this city special. Manchester educators are up for this challenge and demonstrate this commitment day after day. Our goal should be to teach our students the skills that will make them successful adults, not to simply create a generation of talented test takers. However, assessments are part of the teaching and instructional process and I believe our teachers and administrators must be part of the conversation on which tests matter in the classroom and how to best evaluate what is working and the areas that need improvement. The conversation needs to be solely about children and their learning; it should not be about politics. I will work cooperatively with the Superintendent, BoSC and the state to seek positive solutions for Manchester public schools.

8. Morale among the educational community in the Manchester School District is very low at this time due to a variety of issues, including the lack of a renewed contract and past lay-offs that have impacted numerous programs. What would you do to improve staff morale?

Our educators have great ability and commitment, but our school district struggles due to a lack of resources and top-down leadership in the Mayor's Office. As a product of our public schools and the mother of three students in our public school system, I know that Manchester's educators go above and beyond every day in spite of numerous obstacles.

There are a number of factors that negatively affect morale, and here are my thoughts on how to improve staff morale:

- We must bring consistency to the district. The BoSC asked Dr. Livingston to develop a five year plan for the district. When she presented it, the current Mayor was dismissive. I strongly believe that we need to plan more than one year out at a time so our educators will have job security and we can begin to articulate a consistent and achievable vision for the district.
- Principals and Vice Principals have very demanding jobs. I believe school administrators should have teaching experience and that potential candidates should be hired from within whenever possible. If a potential internal candidate does not get a job, they should be told why and the district should help that person move to the next level. Promoting capable and deserving educators from within will ensure that future administrators understand our system at all levels.
- The fact that teachers have been working without contracts for over two years is troubling. I believe teachers feel the bargaining process is unfair and they lack confidence and trust in the current Mayor. Competitive compensation is important and I would work hard to bring resolution to the contracts.
- I believe professional development is a key component to teacher satisfaction and improving our schools. As Mayor, I would support providing teachers with meaningful and effective professional development as a method to improve morale.
- Teacher evaluations must be clearly documented with expectations and opportunities for professional development in areas the teachers and administrators agree serve critical needs. We must also work to ensure that teachers and administrators can work together on the evaluation process and that this discussion is ongoing and not based on a single interaction. Administrators should be provided with clear guidelines and professional development in how to create systems that support educators in their classrooms to promote quality learning experiences for Manchester's children.

9. How important do you believe it is to keep class sizes at or below the state recommendation? How would you address this within your budgeting for the school district?

I believe it is critical to keep class sizes at or below the state recommendation. Many studies have shown that students who are in smaller classes score higher on tests, receive better grades and have better attendance. There are even studies that show that a reduction in class size can help narrow the achievement gap among poor and minority students.

Having class sizes above state standards is the main reason why so many students from Hooksett left. What Hooksett parents were asking for was consistent with what Manchester parents wanted as well. In the 2016 budget, the school district is down \$1.2M in revenues (which equates to approximately 24 teachers) because of the decrease in Hooksett students coming to Manchester. That's \$1.2M in revenues we cannot use next year to hire teachers or decrease class sizes. Hooksett left because the current Mayor would not commit to making education better in Manchester. I will work to repair the relationship with Hooksett so more parents feel comfortable sending their kids to Manchester. Our schools will benefit with the addition of a great student body and we can use the associated revenue to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes.

10. What is your vision, and role, in reshaping the public's perceptions of the Manchester School District and educators and education in general in Manchester?

As a product of Manchester public schools and a parent of children in Manchester public schools, I understand that we have great things happening in the Manchester School District. We have always had educators who have gone above and beyond to give our students an excellent education despite being under-resourced and underappreciated. Unfortunately, our dedicated educators and administrators have too often had their opinions and recommendations ignored or dismissed by our current Mayor. Our current Mayor prefers to draw a line in the sand and then publicly battle with members of the BoSC, the administration and our educators rather than to work together to find compromise and reach solutions.

As Mayor, I will work collaboratively with our educators and administrators to implement policies that we all believe are in the best interest of our students. I will convene community members, educators, parents, students and businesses to talk about their concerns, review the School District Five Year Plan and talk about how to achieve the designed road map. Community leaders, businesses and community organizations want to see Manchester perceived as a great place to live, work and have a family. I love my City and will make every effort to listen, respect and cooperate with all stakeholders to find solutions and focus on ways to truly make Manchester the place where people want to be and families want to raise their children.