

What is your position on Charter Schools?

It is my goal to make public schools more desirable than any other options. I'm not opposed to charter school and home school education, but as elected mayor I would be in favor of conducting financial reviews on the drawing of resources from public schools.

Parents have difficult choices regarding their child's education. Do they send their child to a school that receives inadequate attention, resources and support from policy-makers, or do they seek educational opportunities for their child elsewhere? Efforts that divert resources – financial or otherwise – from public education represent the beginning of the end for public education; I will oppose such efforts.

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.

What is your position of mandated testing?

There is a role for testing in the school system and I will rely on feedback from MEA and educators for student's performance. However, if federal funds are involved I will also review with appropriate federal agencies to protect the interests of the city.

Mandated testing has resulted in many unintended consequences. Teachers are now spending less time teaching. Let teachers and education professionals do their job. Educators and the MEA must be not only involved in policy-level discussions; they must play a vocal and active role, providing regular communications with the corner office at City Hall; not merely during election time, but throughout the usual course of policy discussions at City Hall.

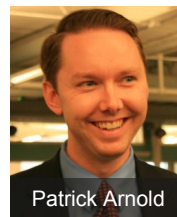
I believe that our students are capable and able to excel when evaluated, but we should not base their success solely on the outcomes of mandated testing. Our goal should be to teach our students the skills that will make them successful adults, not to simply create a generation of talented test takers. 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.

What is your vision to improve morale, class size, and the public's perception of the MSD and the professional educators who work there?



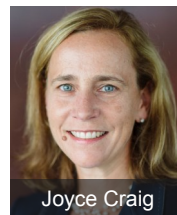
Jawed Alibaba Shaihk

If educators are performing well they will be back each year. I'm in favor of negotiating a contract that retains teachers long term so students and families can rely on consistent support from the mayor's office. If this requires increased funding I will find the resources. Small class sizes are preferable and all options will be examined to increase the number of educators. I want a culture that promotes the good things Manchester educators do every day, to create a community where education is considered the most important service offered to the citizens of Manchester.



Patrick Arnold

Every voice matters in this city, and workers deserve to be treated fairly and with respect. The Gatsas administration has consistently treated educators, unfairly and with disrespect. I believe class size to be an important factor in a student's opportunity to learn. Keeping class sizes at or below the state standards is imperative if Manchester schools are to be the best in the state. Budget proposals must reflect this priority. Manchester schools can and should be the very best in New Hampshire. Communication efforts targeting those who no longer have children in the public school system should strongly be considered. Manchester deserves a mayor who will recognize that very real challenges exist, who is willing to discuss what works and what doesn't, and who will prioritize making Manchester schools the best in the state.



Joyce Craig

We have always had educators who have gone above and beyond to give our students an excellent education despite being under-resourced and underappreciated. 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. I believe school administrators should have teaching experience. Competitive compensation is important and I would work hard to bring resolution to the contracts. Teacher evaluations must be clearly documented with expectations and opportunities for professional development. I believe it is critical to keep class sizes at or below the state recommendation. 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.

This brochure contains summaries of the candidate's responses to questions submitted by the MEA-PAC Committee.

Complete responses can be found at www.neanh.org/mea-snapshot

SNAPSHOT OF THE 2016 MANCHESTER MAYORAL RACE

Where the candidates stand on the issues

“Speaking with one voice, we can drive the issues that shape public education. It's up to us to stand up for our students and our communities.”

- NEA President Lily Eskelsen García

MEA-PAC Committee

Tom Lynch and Shane Rozamus
Co-Chair

Why are you running for mayor?



Jawed Alibaba Shaikh

I plan to give every citizen quality of life and improve the state of the city such as: safety, education, development and youth empowerment.

How would you improve communications with the District leadership team, MEA and the BOSC?

I will be the liaison between mayor office, MEA and BOSC. One of my roles as mayor will be to be the voice for their concerns at the board of Mayor and Alderman.

Do you feel that, as Mayor, you should serve as the chairman of the School Board?

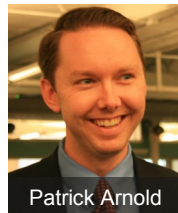
As long as the charter is not changed, I'm expected to serve as chair. One benefit to serving as board chair to organizations such as MEA is that they can hold me accountable for my participation at the school committee level.

What is your position on the tax cap? Is it possible to fund education under such a cap?

I will have a complete review of all city departments and services initiated on the first day of my term as mayor. Funding education will be one of my top priorities.

What is your role in the budget process? How might you facilitate a change in the process?

I will be engaged in proposing the city budget. However, I will propose the public, and organizations such as MEA to comment on the budget before it goes to the board of alderman.



Patrick Arnold

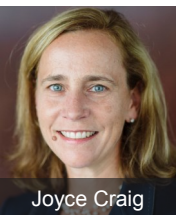
I'm running this year for the same reasons I ran in 2013 – because it's a fight worth fighting, and because our city deserves better than the status quo and business as usual. I have always believed Manchester to be a city of potential, and opportunities. As the largest city in the state, we can and should have the best schools, best jobs, and be the best place to live and raise a family in New Hampshire.

The competing nature of the BoSC and Board of Aldermen represents a structural deficiency in our community's ability to provide the best public educational opportunities to students. Political leaders – both on the School Board and the Board of Aldermen -- must be held accountable for their decisions regarding the challenges we face as a community. Restoring civility to meetings and discussions is imperative.

I personally value adding more voices to the conversation, not less. It's okay to disagree sometimes. Regardless of whether he is the chair or even a member of the School Board, a mayor's chief responsibility is to present a vision for the city. I am open to charter revisions, but remain committed to restoring civility and respect to the management of meetings in the interim.

The tax cap is the law in Manchester, regardless of whether an individual agrees or disagrees with its merits. We must work within this framework so long as it remains the law. Personally, I do not believe that public education in Manchester receives adequate resources. It is, however, possible to adequately fund education under this tax cap. It's a matter of priorities.

The budget process in Manchester is broken. The competing nature of the Board of School Committee and Board of Aldermen represents a structural deficiency in our community's ability to provide the best public educational opportunities to students. I will consider any options to remedy this problem, including allowing Manchester voters to decide whether the Manchester School Board should have direct appropriating authority for school budgets.



Joyce Craig

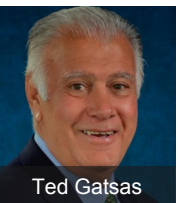
I am running for Mayor because I love Manchester and I believe it's time we have a leader who can bring people together. My vision for Manchester is that we are known as a community with great schools that families want to move to, that businesses want to operate in, and that has forward thinking and open-minded leaders.

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. 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.

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 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. 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.

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 Mayor, I will continue to work collaboratively with everyone who is committed to moving Manchester forward. This process must include treating all interested parties with respect and listening even when one disagrees.



Ted Gatsas

Thank you very much for reaching out to me and for the opportunity to respond. As a former State Senator, Alderman, a current member of the Board of School Committee and Mayor of Manchester I have, many times, outlined my stance on issues relative to education through my voting record and ideas I have brought forward.

At this time I would respectfully request that you refer back to my record for positions on the various issues outlined in the survey. I certainly welcome the opportunity to sit down with the PAC leadership to discuss issues concerning your membership as we have done in all of the previous elections.