

Q1. Why are you running for mayor?

I have always believed Manchester to be a city of potential, a city of opportunities. As the largest city in the state, we can and we should have the best schools, the best jobs, and be the best place to live and raise a family in New Hampshire. In 2013, we ran an aggressive, issues-based campaign on this vision, and gave Mayor Gatsas the closest race in New Hampshire that year (472 voters left to be persuaded). Since then, our city's challenges have worsened. Families continue to look elsewhere to live and raise a family. 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.

Q2. 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 BOSC and the BMA?

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. 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.

Q3. Even though it is currently in the City of Manchester's Charter, do you feel that you should serve as the chairman of the School Board? If so, why? If no, why not?

We have observed in Manchester these last six years how an autocratic, *my way or the highway* style can be an obstacle to progress. Personality and management style of executives can have a tremendous impact on the success or failure of an organization. The approach taken by the Gatsas administration has cost us countless relationships with individual and organizational stakeholders, including our city's educators. It has cost city taxpayers and residents millions in botched proposals and millions more in lost opportunities. 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.

Q4. 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?

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. The challenges we face in our city are not merely financial – they’re not simply numbers on a budget sheet. Lack of vision, lack of long-term goals, complacency with the status quo and band-aide solutions, and lack of leadership at City Hall all worsen the quality of educational opportunities in Manchester. 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.

Q5. What is your role in the budget process? Does the process work? If not, why not and how might you facilitate a change in the process?

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.

Q6. What is your position on charter schools, specifically as pertains to the funds and resources they draw from our public school?

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 policymakers, or do they seek educational opportunities for their child elsewhere? Manchester’s public schools should be the very best in the state. Efforts that divert resources – financial or otherwise – from public education represent the beginning of the end for public education; I will oppose such efforts.

Q7. 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?

Mandated testing over recent years has resulted in many unintended consequences. Generally, teachers are now spending less time actually 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. If elected mayor, I would expect from educators and the MEA regular communications and a normalized relationship with the corner office at City Hall; not merely during election time, but throughout the usual course of policy discussions at City Hall.

Q8. 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?

For starters, I'm running for mayor. Every voice matters in this city, and workers deserve to be treated fairly and with respect. The Gatsas administration has consistently treated educators, and many others, unfairly and with disrespect. That's one of the many reasons our campaign worked so hard to unseat him in 2013, and a strong motivation to bring authentically new leadership to City Hall in 2015.

Q9. 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 class size to be an important factor in a student's opportunity to learn. Thus, keeping class sizes at or below the state standards is imperative if Manchester schools are to be the best in the state. Budget discussions and proposals must reflect this priority.

Q10. 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?

Manchester schools can and should be the very best in New Hampshire. There exist countless opportunities to improve the public perception of the Manchester School District and of our educators. Communication efforts targeting those who no longer have children in the public school system should strongly be considered, as such individuals often feel disconnected from the value of a strong educational system.

To start, however, we should address the very real challenges of our city and our district. That will only happen with new political leadership. This year's race for mayor will be about which candidate is likeliest to move beyond failed policies of the status quo. Who will offer authentic change from the last six years, rather than merely the illusion of change? 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.