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**COMPLETE**

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PAGE 1: Introduction

Q1: What is your first name?	Ray
Q2: What is your last name?	Gomes

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**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Ray Gomes - I believe that the Pre-Kindergarten program is important and has been very successful in preparing students for success as they enter elementary school. Through screening and subsequent intervention that is undertaken as a result of these screenings children that would have entered elementary school well behind their peers are provided with structured programming guided by the RI Early Learners Standards. The program gives the children a boost that helps them to enter kindergarten closer to the level of their classmates and is even more important as the Newport Public Schools work toward their goal of having all children being able to read at grade level by the end of third grade. I would support continued support and resources of this successful program.

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**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Ray Gomes - The following issues should be addressed over the next three years. Low scores on the recent PARCC testing, the lack of classroom space promised during the building of Pell School and increases to stem/steam programming. To address the low PARCC testing we will need to evaluate, adjust and revise our curriculum and professional development for teachers to ensure that we are providing the kids with the skills to ensure they can meet the standards. As for the lack of promised classroom space at Pell School. Pell school was sold as being able to provide for all the needs of the students from designated art/music classrooms to the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs under the same roof to benefit from shared collaborative education. As the student population has exceeded expected growth and will continue to grow these promises have been broken. The pre-k programs have been moved to space rented from Middletown and the designated art/music rooms are shared. We will need to plan for the continued growth of the Newport Schools so that we can provide for the programs that the families of Newport expect and deserve from their schools. While there has been some implementation of Stem/Steam initiatives and more coming to the schools. We need to continue increase stem/steam programming throughout the curriculum. This will be beneficial as we continue to add the P-Tech program and work to attract high tech business to the North End of our city. I have used an open, honest and collaborative approach over the past 15 -20 years while serving on PTO's, school improvement teams, teacher interviews, various school subcommittee's, Roger's Boosters and numerous sports leagues. I believe this approach has allowed me to serve these groups well and would benefit our children as I serve as a member of the Newport School Committee.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Ray Gomes - Teacher performance should be evaluated through a process that ensures our teachers have the ability and utilize the tools necessary to grow student learning and achievement. The process should include all stakeholders and should clearly indicate how the information in the evaluation will be used and should include both the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher as well as the supports and resources that are available to the teacher in order to improve

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Ray Gomes - As I said earlier I believe strongly in an open, honest collaborative approach when serving on boards and committees. I think there should always be open and honest dialogue between the members of the School Committee and the Superintendent.

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**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Ray Gomes - I'm not sure which trial balloons you are referring to, however I believe that there is a long history of Federal and State regulations/mandates imposed on school districts that have burdened their budgets with only menial results for the cost. I believe that districts should have more freedom to be flexible with regulations. The teachers and staffs know their students and should have the flexibility to go outside of the box to get the desired result. All districts have similar student populations and issues but district to district there will be slightly different issues with their students. Staff should have the ability and flexibility to try things that may work for a specific population with in a district without the fear that it may not fit the regulation but it does improve the students learning/achievement.

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**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Ray Gomes - Unfortunately, as you point out in the next question and we all know from living here there is the misconception that Newport is all wealth. We do have a very large proportion of economically disadvantaged students and families that do require increased services on many levels as well as a significant special education budget due to the cost of some students that must be sent out of district to get the specialized educational services that they require. I believe this is a significant reason for the high cost per student on the educations side of the issue. On the business side of the cost per student the School Committee must continually work with the teachers and staff to ensure that the contracts that are negotiated are fair and equitable to all involved

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Ray Gomes - As I acknowledged in the previous question this has a huge impact on the Newport Schools on many levels and in many different ways. Newport Schools have tried for several years to reach out to families to identify/provide the resources needed to improve the learning of the children impacted from being economical disadvantaged. For many families there is a level of trust that must be built between the family and Newport School Department that the interest of the student is the most important. The School Committee must continually monitor the various programs in place to ensure they are reaching the intended goal. Programs that fail to achieve their goals should either be replaced or changed to ensure that the goals of the plan are met. The School committee must also seek to build partnerships with local agencies that can also team with them in order to provide the many services needed by these families. This is important because if successful I believe that many of problems (absenteeism, truancy) that have plague Newport Schools can be overcome and lead to positive educational gains for all students. Simply because a child cannot learn if they are not in school.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Ray Gomes - I do agree with the recent changes as I have always felt that the issues related to Charter Schools should be handled and decided by local School Committees and City Councils.

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Ray Gomes - I plan to make my decisions based on what is best for our students, based on this I believe that my performance and that of the schools will be outstanding

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#2

**COMPLETE****Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)**Started:** Friday, September 09, 2016 3:46:40 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 12:52:26 PM**Time Spent:** Over a day**IP Address:** 68.99.168.62**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

Thomas

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Phelan

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Thomas Phelan - I would not support any new resources or funding for an expansion of the pre-kindergarten program in the Newport Public Schools at this time. Newport currently provides pre-k for children from low income families. To increase funding for this program now would divert funds from our school system's other more immediate needs.

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**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Thomas Phelan - The first and most fundamental deficiency I would like to see addressed is ensuring that our elementary school students are reading at grade level by the time they leave third grade. This has been recognized as a problem for many years, but little to nothing has been accomplished in fixing it. To address this issue I believe we need to have an open dialogue with elementary school teachers. They are on the ground each day and I believe have the expertise and first hand knowledge to help us address this issue and weigh in on how resources would be best utilized.

Another area where we need improvement would be low test scores. When examining this issue I too often hear the excuse that our student population is diverse and mobile. If is a factor, the we must mitigate it by having an idea of our average scores among students who have been in the Newport Public Schools through their formative years. This will provide us with a baseline to evaluate our ongoing performance. We must also examine why scores have consistently been highest at Pell and possibly implement successful methods across the district. To solve this problem we must have the active involvement of both administrators and teacher alike.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Thomas Phelan - A teacher's performance should be evaluated by the principle in each school. This is one of their most important and crucial responsibilities. During the observation phase, I believe it would be helpful to include a teacher from that grade or subject who can provide more specific feedback to new teachers.

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**PAGE 5****Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Thomas Phelan - Although the school committee and the superintendent do not always agree, I believe there is effective communication. Members of the Newport School Committee and the superintendent communicate often and as needed. Communication is an important tool but consensus is not always driven by understanding. There are sometimes differences of opinion on the merits of each argument even when both parties understand the other.

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**PAGE 6****Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Thomas Phelan - This may be beneficial for Newport. It is possible that RIDE can sometimes get in the way of educating our children. It is important to hold off judgement until the final plan is released.

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**PAGE 7****Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Thomas Phelan - A major contributing factor to high cost is retiree benefits. The ongoing cost of past retiree benefits is set, but future costs will be reduced due to recent negotiations. Another cost would be the Newport Area Career & Technical Center, which not all districts have.

The issue now is that over the past several years, Newport Public Schools has been adding staff. We must remember that 85% of the budget goes to salary and benefits. It is critical that we keep this in mind and act accordingly. We also need to cut programs that have under performed before new initiatives can move forward

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Thomas Phelan - Newport having a large population of economically disadvantaged children is not new. Newport Public Schools has been dealing with this reality for over 20 years. During that time, the measures that have been put in place have had little success. What I believe now is what I have always believed, We must concentrate our efforts on students at the elementary school level. As I mentioned previously, we must make grade level reading a top priority and aim to have all students achieve this by the time they leave third grade. If this educational foundation is not in place they cannot be expected to succeed.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Thomas Phelan - I do not agree with legislation that restricts charter school. I think that charter schools encourage the Newport Public Schools to be the best they can be. When our schools reach their full potential I believe the demand for charter schools will wane.

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Thomas Phelan - I have served on the Newport School Committee for many years. In that time, I have seen many individuals serve their community. They do not always agree or see everything in the same terms but one thing I can say is that I have never seen any member not handle their position responsibly. You do not run for this office unless you have a deep and sincere interest in making our community's schools better.

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#3

**COMPLETE****Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)**Started:** Friday, September 09, 2016 2:49:42 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 1:04:48 PM**Time Spent:** Over a day**IP Address:** 68.14.1.184**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

David

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Hanos

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, "Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students." What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

David Hanos - I feel that the earlier a child is learning (being challenged) the better chances they'll have to succeed. Much data shows early learning is very helpful. I do support early learning for these reasons. The issue here is the funding or lack thereof. We do have many groups who assist in this area to offset the funding but there's room for improvement. I also feel the parents must be involved for any of these goals to be a success.

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**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

David Hanos - I feel we need to better our image in the public's eye and I think we are on the right track with our strategic planning team. I know we need to improve dramatically in math and reading skills. This will prove to be a more difficult task as the groupings of our students range from one end of the "spectrum" to the other. Diversity in our schools is a huge challenge when compiling the data on test scores and makes it hard to compare our district to others. We need to do a better job working together with our families to ensure our graduates are prepared for the real world upon graduation.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

David Hanos - This needs to be assessed through the success of the students. I feel the evaluations are a tool not used well enough and we need to get all of our staff believing in the student body and the success of our youngsters. This needs to be done from the top down such as more professional development and mentoring.

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

David Hanos - Too broad a question but I know there needs to be more clarity from the perspective I have as to what the Superintendent wants to achieve from some of here goals and actions. I trust in the professionalism of our top person but that we as a committee (I can only speak for myself) need to have more transparency .An example i will give is when the Superintendent evaluates and recommends contract extensions and raises for our management team we (the committee) are entitled to see how each one is doing and not be told to distribute these contracts and raises in a "blanket style" approach. Doing so will send a bad message to all that no matter how you're performing, you all get the same. When it comes to supervisors and management, you must reward based on results and job performance.

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**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

David Hanos - I think it will because we are very unique in many ways and need to tailor our system to our students and I feel this will allow us the flexibility to to so.

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**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

David Hanos - We have as we have already negotiated savings with our groups of employees both active and retired and I thank them all for sitting at the table and making those concessions. As for the future, add more students and that cost goes down.

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

David Hanos - I touched on this in a previous response. Economically disadvantaged is not an automatic educational disadvantage therefore we need to find better ways to help[ educate our parents on how to help there children succeed. The support needs to go into the homes and not just solely relying on our system to make this happen.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

David Hanos - Yes. It just divides up the ones and also creates a lottery for kids to go to school. I am on the committee because the folks deserve better public schools so that all students do well . This response does not remotely state that charters are betted but does state that charters are filled by lottery rather than come one ,come all. We as a public school system owe it to you the taxpayers and parents and especially the students the best education possible.

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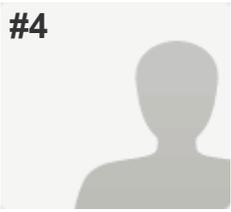
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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

David Hanos - My record and my integrity

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#4

**COMPLETE****Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)**Started:** Wednesday, September 07, 2016 8:06:54 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 1:08:58 PM**Time Spent:** Over a day**IP Address:** 71.161.230.254**PAGE 1: Introduction**

<b>Q1: What is your first name?</b>	Jennifer
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<b>Q2: What is your last name?</b>	Jackson
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**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, "Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students." What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Jennifer Jackson - I think that early education is important. Pre-Kindergarten is the foundation of a child's educational career, It can set them on the correct path for a great education. I would support the funding of Pre-Kindergarten if it is provided to all of the children in Newport.

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**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Jennifer Jackson - 1.) Open up communication between staff, parents, students and the community. How can we make positive changes if we don't truly talk about and listen to each other, as well as, not have the person feel there will be consequences.

2.) Empower our teachers and staff with the tools they need to teach our children for a lifetime. And talking with/listening to the teachers and staff, who see first hand what works and doesn't. Research the need of our teachers and children and find a way to give them what they need to succeed in teaching and in life.

3.) A school system that allows our children to be independent thinkers and confident in their abilities. Knowing that not all children learn the same way. Allowing our teachers to teach how they see it will be beneficial for the children, and allow parents to voice their ideas ie. being open-minded to alternative teaching methods.

What I bring is a parents view and being open-minded. I will listen and have the courage to think outside of the box to make a positive change. Having a school environment that is open-minded and listen to our children, teachers, parents and community's needs will bring great success. These are just some of the stepping stones to a positive change.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Jennifer Jackson - It should be done by their performance in the classroom and how well the students perform. Even asking parents and students about how they feel about the way that they are being taught, as well as, if they are learning.

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**PAGE 5****Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Jennifer Jackson - The actions that I will promote is being courtesy to each other. Always using Robert's Rules of order during meetings. Treating others how I would like them to treat me. And hoping that through my positive actions, it will set a structure.

Example: During a meeting when a co-chair or superintendent is talking and I may not agree with them. I wait until they are done talking and then respectfully state my objection or opinion.

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**PAGE 6****Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Jennifer Jackson - I think this would be a great benefit for Newport. It could allow us more freedom to teach our children the way that they need to be taught. Not every community is the same. We could have a better idea of where we are doing well and what we need to change.

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**PAGE 7****Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Jennifer Jackson - Let's look at the budget for school year 2016-2017 from npsri.net. Total revenue:\$38,613,304; salaries and benefits:\$31,941,072; Prof and tech:\$936,260; purchased property services:\$710,747; other purchased services:\$3,796,055 (which included transportation contracts:\$1,323,753 that does not include Field-trips or game/band transportation); Supplies:\$1,107,720; Property:\$43,977; Misc: \$77,473. I have been told we have about 2,500 students. Divide budget by the number of students equal \$15,445.32. Teachers and staff deserve their salaries and benefits. All of the other services are needed. Need to find ways to cut back on some of our budget items. Find a way to bring in money, maybe grants and donations. This is a never ending battle. Our teachers and staff deserve to be paid right and receive their benefits for all their work. Our children deserve to have the tools they need to receive the best education. Teachers shouldn't have to depend on parents to bring in basic supplies/snakes for the classroom, I will sit down with the superintendent and discuss my ideas.

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Jennifer Jackson - As a fourth generation Newporter, I have seen our city change. I don't think that it should affect the committees actions and planning efforts. We should keep our goals on track in order to move forward. We have the services available to help children, ( IEP, Social etc.), that need it . This way we are not pointing out one group of students over another. Goals, actions and plans should be up to standards and the standards should be universal, so all of our children have the same opportunity to learn.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Jennifer Jackson - No, I don't think that Charter schools are not bad. It offers children alternative learning or another place to receive their education. Image if we were limited to colleges and could only go to a select few in state only. Not to say our teachers or schools are bad because they are not. My children go to Pell and Thompson. Not every child learns the same way and, if sending them to a local charter school will allow them to be successful then why stop a child from that chance.

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Jennifer Jackson - I believe that I am always accountable for my action. I believe in treating people with respect. I will have an open door to listen to teachers, staff, students, parents, and our community. I am willing to stand up for What's right.

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#5



**COMPLETE**

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PAGE 1: Introduction

Q1: What is your first name? Sandra

Q2: What is your last name? Flowers

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**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Sandra Flowers - Ideally early childhood education should begin in infancy as parents communicate verbally, visually, and tactically. As various factors impede some youngsters' progress, I do support continuing the present Pre-K program and seek to expand it to all children in that age range. I understand that there are a number of private programs and other sites funded alternatively; however, for those who cannot, or choose not to send their children to those sites, it is incumbent upon communities to provide resources necessary to fill the gaps. I believe that Newport can and should be in the vanguard of assuring that all children arrive at Kindergarten with the social, emotional, and academic skills that will allow them to work toward success, regardless of their economic status. For this to occur, the public has to be cognizant of facts: parents and caregivers must carry out their roles as first teachers by example; taxpayers must see the expansion of these opportunities not as a burden, but as an investment in our city's future; elected officials must see this as a long-range process in guaranteeing Newport's successful workforce. We ask our students to think creatively; we who are responsible for their future must do the same—not by cutting programs, upkeep, personnel, and infrastructure, but by educating the people about the importance of this movement through civil discussion and well-researched data.

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**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Sandra Flowers - Assurance that teaching and learning are aligned with the standards set by RIDE and evaluated through some formal testing: For years I have seen the continual re-prioritizing of academic goals and the resulting frustration among the educators, students, parents, and public when some test scores are dismal. I hear complaints and misinterpretation of test preparation as "teaching to the test," with many adults publicly advocating against the standardization of goals and testing. Younger students are upset; some older ones feel that these efforts are purposeless. Therefore, we need frank and open discussion about the importance of student evaluation via many methods; also, students must learn from the earliest years to have pride in their work and to aim for the highest goals.

- Poor attendance and tardiness among a significant number of students with limited cooperation from parents/caretakers: Support the NPS' tireless efforts to convince parents that attendance and punctuality are necessary for student achievement.

- Need for increased diversity among the educators: For many years, efforts have been made to entice teachers of color to apply for employment in Newport Public Schools. We need continued collaboration with area and regional organizations and teacher education departments in universities, while encouraging our students of all cultures to think seriously about this career.

My skills and qualifications: Thirty years as a NPS teacher, Salve Regina University instructor, NPS volunteer and mentor, 50+ years involvement in education support my ability to listen to all sides of issues, giving credence to my contributions to the process.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Sandra Flowers - I call this "teacher effectiveness," as the end results are as important than the presentation, in my mind. A few of the key points to be evaluated are: classroom discipline (which extends beyond the four walls); teacher attitude regarding the task at hand (so that the students comprehend and appreciate the value of learning); demonstrated progress in student achievement (noting the growth from the student's entry into a grade to the various measurable steps along the way during the year); professional demeanor and appearance; participation in professional development opportunities. All of this must be handled as objectively, equitably, and empathetically as possible so that all teachers will attain the highest possible professional standards. Where there are areas in need of remediation, evidence of improvement should be determined in a timely fashion.

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Sandra Flowers - Personally, the Superintendent and I communicate very well. I am quite comfortable sharing concerns with her and always get the information I need to make informed and well-thought-out decisions. This has been my experience throughout my time on the School Committee. I am well aware that some of my colleagues on the committee do not share my opinion. I strongly recommend that every School Committee member fulfill his/her responsibility to earn the mandated six credits of professional development that would, in part, teach the members how to work with superintendents. Sufficient opportunities are provided to this end. I encourage the state legislators to put some teeth into this mandate and propose some consequences for those who not show evidence of professional development acquisition. Furthermore, every School Committee member must understand the limited rights and responsibilities afforded to us. These are written very clearly in the RI General Laws and in School Committee policy. I refer the reader to Newport Public Schools No. 1400 Code of Governance—Principles and Ethical School Standards, which stresses governance that emphasizes “organizational vision rather than interpersonal issues of the Committee... strategic leadership rather than administrative detail...clear distinction between Committee and Superintendent roles... collective rather than individual decisions,” all while governing “proactively rather than reactively.” Additional training and commitment are needed for all of us who serve on the School Committee to function in a more collegial and professional fashion. We are here for the Newport students, not for our own egos.

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**PAGE 6****Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Sandra Flowers - This concept is not entirely new for Newport Public Schools. When I was still teaching, my colleagues and I were excited at the chance to exercise some influence and control over what was going on academically in our school via “site based management.” It fizzled. However, this plan could be beneficial for Newport with our many talented teachers making decisions that will provide challenging and enjoyable learning. Accountability is key and I believe that present faculty, staff, and administrators can accomplish that. While the teachers certainly have the ability to make prudent decisions, management rights should not be eroded. I am confident that present administration could make it work in Newport; however, everyone—teachers, administrators, and elected officials—must buy into it. Otherwise it will just fade away.

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**PAGE 7****Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Sandra Flowers - First, we should re-examine our demographics and find which RI communities have similar data (easy to find through RIDE, KidsCount, and other sources, noting the unique mobility of our population). Then, extract among the many lines in the Uniform Chart of Accounts data relative to these commonalities. Next, eliminate the Newport Public Schools’ costs attributed to retirees’ health and other expenses that are not common in other public school systems. Then determine according to specific line items how much money is spent on supplies, technology, special services, transportation, other ancillary services (especially for special needs, English Language Learners, etc.). Attention must be given to out-of-district placement costs, also. Factor in grants, state and federal aid to see just what the real cost per student is. Finally, determine just which programs and practices Newport Public Schools offer to our students that other systems do not. With the Superintendent and her team, we can look at these factors for the real ranking of Newport Public Schools in the cost-per-student issue. Admittedly, this would be a daunting task; however, it should answer the ultimate question: Is our money being spent wisely and productively?

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**PAGE 8**

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Sandra Flowers - The data acquired through the task delineated in Question 8 will address this. Regarding our transient and economically-challenged population, we must understand the many differences that affect student learning; certain difficulties often are remedied through the work of our family outreach personnel. As seen in Question 3, cutting costs through elimination of programs and personnel just does not work in the long run. Programs have been established to care for those who do not have sufficient food and clothing. Summer activities for learning in creative environments help the youngsters to overcome the loss of reading and math skills. High school students are provided with similar opportunities, some affording them the ability to earn modest stipends while going into on-the-job training. NPS's Strategic Plan focuses on the concept of "One Newport." The Committee, with everyone who has a role in education and care of our young people, must see this as an investment in Newport's future. I, for one, want our students from less than affluent families to have the same chances in life for success that the rest of us have enjoyed. The innate abilities and interests are there. It is up to us to support the teachers in their daily efforts to bring out those natural talents, while helping the youngsters to overcome any academic, social, or emotional challenges. Of course, this is a huge commitment. However, we must remember about all of our children: Where they live and how much their families earn should never limit their ambitions.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Sandra Flowers - I do agree with the legislature's decision, as sending a sizable number of students to charters represents a significant cut in the sending districts' budgets. As presumably all the students would not be from the same grades, this loss would not lessen the numbers of the sending districts' classroom teachers and other faculty members. Thus the "per pupil costs" referenced elsewhere in this questionnaire would be increased noticeably. Some of the unintended consequences include separating some students from the diversity that makes up our historically significant city. Segregating the remaining youngsters whose parents or caretakers may not be fully involved or capable of increased commitment in their children's schooling will not solve their problems. This will be one factor that will exacerbate the situation.

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PAGE 10

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Sandra Flowers - I will continue to carry out my responsibilities and visit all sides of the many issues we encounter. I will continue to use my academic and professional skills and training, as well as my interpersonal skills in expressing my opinions respectfully and effectively. My presence and involvement in all regular and special School Committee sessions, as well as participation in well over the required professional development opportunities, give evidence of my commitment. Public service of this sort is not to be taken lightly, nor is my work on the committee for my own edification. Education has always been a vital part of my life and I intend to do all I can to keep Newport Public Schools a major investment in the future of the City of Newport.

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#6

**COMPLETE****Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)**Started:** Thursday, September 01, 2016 8:46:12 AM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 1:14:30 PM**Time Spent:** Over a week**IP Address:** 68.0.218.177**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

Robert

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Leary

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, "Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students." What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Robert Leary - The Rhode Island Department of Education has not even made Kindergarten mandatory, not to mention all day "k" is not required. So now we are going to do pre-k in Newport, that is not required by the state except for those who qualify for special services. That being said I do know that our at risk population test results are dismal at best, and I get poor preparation in early years equates to poor test results. However, there are questions that must be answered.

Who is responsible for paying for this expansion?

If not mandated by the state what will preschool student's attendance be? The state mandates grade 1 through grade 12 and Newport schools had 27,576 incidents of absences this year. Remember "K" is not mandated, nor is Pre-K (except for those who qualify for special services).

What does "provide access to free pre-kindergarten" mean? It already is offered for free by the East Bay Community Action and income based by others such as MLK Center, Head Start, etc.

Are we trying to put them out of business or are we?

Where is the \$600,000 coming from that is projected cost? Next year along you need \$536,997 just for teacher raises. Those two alone are over your 4% cap. As you can see lots of complex questions with complex answers.

**PAGE 3**

**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Robert Leary -

1. Test results
2. Absenteeism and tardiness
3. Professional development

1. Test results must come up. The only we can do as board member is hammer away at how dismal these results are and do not let the school administration give excuses or try to spin it. Start holding people accountable. You are what your test results are. \$40,000,000 budget and this is what we get. Shame on us.

For one thing we need to take a look at our non-repeat of students. We need to stop promotion of every student. For example, a 3rd teacher spoke at a school committee meeting that she had a student who was out over 1/3 of the school year and that student was absent that much each of previous 3 years. So that student from K-3 has missed over whole year of school in those years and we promoted him/her each year. I have put this on our agenda for September discussion.

A later start time particularly at Rogers ( 45 minutes later ) will help with better test results as research shows high school students do better with later class start times.

2. Absent / tardy must improve. We are starting this year with new start times. Hopefully, with a 45 minute later start at Rogers we will get better results.

I have on the agenda for our September meeting that our Supt. arrange a meeting with "all the players" including the Judge in a workshop with the school committee. We must demand better than over 50,000 tardy and absent students.

3. Professional development must be given to our teachers. That line item money must not be cut or reduced. Grants can be received for this. If we are to move forward and expect better test results this must happen. Last years professional development was just about non-existent.

I will require monthly reports on professional development be given to the school committee. I will ask teachers to respond to how useful this professional development was.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Robert Leary - Good luck with that!

This is regulated by the Department of Education. The prior Commissioner of Education tried to do something with this. She even tried to eliminate seniority as a bases for lay offs, and placement and what happened to her ---she's gone. You must remember the Rhode Island Legislators control Department of Education and School Committees.

A few years back Dr. Shoemaker Chairmen of the Newport School Committee tried to put in place merit base pay. It was killed ! No one has even tried anything since.

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Robert Leary - Communication by the Supt. to the school committee is definitely not her strength. It seems at times we get surprises. Surprises is not what I want as a member of the board. This was discussed during her evaluation .

For example, recently bills went out for retiree health care. Last year the school committee and retirees agreed that all retirees will go to Blue Cross Plan 65 at age 65. Of the 250 retirees in that age group those that retired before 2012 get reimbursed for Medicare Part B ( mostly around \$1259 a year). Somehow that \$1259 gets put into their plan ( because they don't give them an itemized bill ) and they pay their cost share percentage cost of health care including that \$1259. This never happened before 2015. So you ask yourself what happened? What about the perception of this to the retirees? I have put this on our agenda for our September meeting as a discussion item and our lawyers will give advise before the meeting in executive session.

To promote good communication, the Supt. must not hold back any information from her board of directors. It is that simple.

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**PAGE 6**

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**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Robert Leary - What controls?

School based budgeting is one we have a lot of work to do on this. Last year we had the principals of each school submit a budget with a 3% across the board cut. It was ridiculous what they produced. It was quite obvious they need help doing this.

The only principal that showed any cuts was the high school principal and he cut busing for sports. Interesting choice! A lot more training is needed if we are going to do this. In fairness to the principals they have never done this before, so professional development is a must.

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**PAGE 7**

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**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Robert Leary - Our high school is the highest priced high school in Rhode Island 6 years running according to Rhode Island Monthly magazine September issues. It cost about \$20,000 per pupil a year. That's crazy! To boot with horrible results. We must reduce that!

So how do we reduce that number. I put on the agenda for September school committee meeting an RFP ( request for proposal ) to see how we could do the ALP ( alternate learning program ) with an outside vendor. Presently it cost us over \$600,000 to run that program. I am confident an outside vendor can do it for 1/2 that cost.

Our ALP class size are extremely low. In fact, last year English and Social Studies had only 5 students per class. That is if they all showed up, the absentee rate is very high. Imagine that!

I have also put on the September agenda ( RFP ) to have an outside agency come in and look at our schedule at both the high school and the middle school. I'm confident we can get reduction in per pupil cost with this evaluation of our scheduling. Just take Rogers we have 9 science, 9 English, 9 math ,and 8 social studies and they service 550 students. Class size is 25 students per class, do the math and we could service over 1000 students. I wish I could say our small size resulted in great test results but its the opposite we have dismal test results.

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PAGE 8

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Robert Leary - The only thing it can't mean is more money. Obviously, \$40,000,000 has not had results. Take our 2100 students and divide that into the \$40,000,000 it is over \$19,000 per pupil. The money we spend does not equate to results we get. In fact, it begs us to do something different.

This is a whole cultural thing that is way out of the school committee hands.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Robert Leary - It 's a long debate whether charter schools are public or private schools ( corporations ). They are in my opinion and the courts in NY and PA private corporations. The court ruling says charter schools are like private corporations that receive taxpayers dollars. Charter schools are not accountable to public officials or to the voters.

Charter schools are not the same as public schools in every aspect. They are exempt from many of the rules and regulations that govern traditional public schools. For example, in Washington DC they are exempt from open-records and open- meetings laws.

All that being said, I don't believe the state should restrict charter schools. The city or town voters should decide whether they want a charter school. To me, we have a charter school in the Met School in Newport.

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PAGE 10

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Robert Leary - To me you have a three legged stool responsibility, the students / parents, the taxpayer , and the unions. You have balance that stool, while being on it. My record of 14 years on the school committee speaks for itself.

It is quite clear I am considered the voice for the taxpayers money to be spent effectively and efficiently. Our total budget is almost \$40,000,000, let that sink in. It is also clear that by demanding that I want the students to get the best education with results. It is not about more money  
, to me, because more money does not equate to better results.

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#7

**COMPLETE***Answers Entered Manually***Collector:** Web Link - Manual Entry 1 (Web Link)**Started:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 1:53:54 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 2:00:39 PM**Time Spent:** 00:06:45**IP Address:** 70.188.137.90**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

Hank

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Kniskern

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Hank Kniskern - The research is very clear: If a school's goal is to improve its students' achievement level, reduce tangential expenses, and give all students the opportunity for success after graduation, then we need to expand the availability of qualified pre-kindergarten programs. Why should we invest in early childhood education? It is necessary to significantly raise our district's reading and math achievement levels. More importantly, it is morally the right thing to do.

Today, qualified pre-K programs are offered by an array of professional organizations: Newport Public Schools, Head Start, Martin Luther King Center, and several other community and private groups. This model works well and should be expanded. How do we finance additional pre-K programs? Develop a plan for gradual expansion. The plan will include additional capacity, measurable learning objectives and the projected incremental and life cycle costs. Newport will use this plan to apply for grants, donations, subsidies and reallocate resources within the existing budget. A credible plan, objectives and community collaboration position Newport to acquire additional resources. The more intelligent our plan and the sooner we get started ... the better.

**PAGE 3**

**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Hank Kniskern - Education is a complex system. Complex systems are defined as having many interconnected factors. It's very hard to achieve or sustain high academic performance without having all parts of the system working together in unison.

My perspective is that Newport Schools are doing many things well. However, achievements are buried beneath the narrative of high costs and low achievement scores.

My sense is that Newport's three primary deficiencies are:

1. Absence of a Long-Term Strategy and Measurable Goals
2. A Lack of Teamwork and Trust
3. Fragmentation of Effort

To address these deficiencies, the School Committee should approve the proposed Newport Public Schools (NPS) Strategic Plan. The School Committee could be significantly more effective by concentrating its efforts on the Strategic Plan's educational goals. Finally, by truly collaborating, the School Committee could be a unifying influence, bringing together the Superintendent, union, teachers and community by focusing on the important goals and the resources necessary to implement the Strategic Plan's initiatives.

The proposed NPS Strategic Plan confronts these deficiencies with initiatives for increasing our community's capacity for pre-school and early education, technology in the classroom, individual student learning plans, professional development, curriculum flexibility, and supportive school culture.

As a member of the School Committee, I can contribute my business and college teaching knowledge and experiences. I am skilled in the areas of leadership, strategy, planning, financials, organizational change, project implementation, processes, and measurement systems. I believe in the power of teams and innovative thinking. Since moving to Newport in 2000, I have served as chairman of the Waterfront Commission, participated on the Financial Review Committee, served as board president of Literacy Volunteers of East Bay, and assisted the City Council and Schools with strategic planning.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Hank Kniskern - The purpose of a performance measurement and evaluation system is to serve as a guide for achieving the goals of the schools and teachers.

For Newport Schools, a performance evaluation plan should start with the goals of the Newport Public Schools Strategic Plan. If the Strategic Plan sets a goal of higher student achievement in reading and math, then that goal needs to also be included in the teachers' evaluation plan. We would also need to look at the existing teacher performance measurements and see which metrics are aligned with the Strategic Plan and which ones are not. Obviously, it's not quite that simple with contracts and other requirements.

An evaluation plan should focus on educating Newport students exceptionally well – that is our primary goal and responsibility. Teachers have a profound commitment to students and learning. Therefore, it is essential to include teachers in identifying what measures best reflect student learning and achievement.

One of the initiatives in the Newport Public Schools Strategic Plan is "Individual Student Learning Plans". The Learning Plan would have each student's current achievement level and the targeted improvement level, as well as other goals and interests. Additionally, having computers for every student permits teachers to use supplemental qualified tests (e.g. STAR) and subject-specific on-line programs. These supplemental tools not only are teaching aids, they can be used to measure incremental gains. These tools can quickly provide the teacher with student assessment results and helpful diagnostic feedback. The Individual Student Learning Plan is periodically reviewed and discussed with the teacher, student and parents. The Learning Plan could potentially be an element in the evaluation system.

A measurement and evaluation system is also essential for tracking progress, making adjustments, motivating and celebrating accomplishments. I feel we should set high performance and achievement goals for Newport Schools. Students, teachers and staff should all be working towards the same goals. Student achievement is a team effort.

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Hank Kniskern - As a member of the School Committee, I would encourage the School Committee to work closely with each other and collaborate so we speak as one voice with the Superintendent, guided by the Committee's mission and responsibilities – the educational achievement and welfare of the students.

Also, as a team member, I will encourage approval of the Newport Public Schools Strategic Plan. I would promote discussions and interactions that support the Superintendent, her teachers and staff, in order to provide high quality education to the students. We are one part of a larger team.

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**PAGE 6****Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Hank Kniskern - The problem is that "mandated controls or guidelines," even those that are well designed and researched, frequently become ineffective in complex environments like public schools. Mandated controls originate from rational and beneficial intentions, but rigid standardization is not adaptive or flexible enough to respond to a rapidly changing world, or an individual school district's unique situation.

Dr. Wagner's notion of empowering school districts is good for Newport. The Newport Public Schools Strategic Plan, proposed by the Superintendent, is largely based on empowering teachers with flexibility, technology in the classroom and professional development. When Newport Schools' administration and teachers have mutual meaningful goals, autonomy and boundaries, there is far greater probability of integrity, accountability and creativity. Empowered professionals can achieve remarkable results. Leadership and collaborative teamwork are critical elements of an empowered environment.

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**PAGE 7****Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Hank Kniskern - The costs that contribute to this equation (salary and benefits) are largely fixed by contract. However, by refocusing on initiatives that will make an impact on learning, there is an opportunity to reallocate expense dollars more productively.

The metric of cost per student is probably not where we should start; it's the student achievement levels that deserve attention. High per student cost with consistently improving achievement levels presents a very different framing of the situation.

The Superintendent's strategy (Newport Public Schools Strategic Plan) calls for controlling expenses and reinvesting in areas that contribute more directly to student achievement, engagement and graduation.

Having the School Committee, Superintendent, administration, union, teaching staff and community working together as one team is essential for smarter and more productive use of resources. The good news is that most the pieces are in place to make this happen. Newport Schools have a good data system for analysis and measuring, and we have gained valuable experience through grants and pilot projects such as the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) program at Pell. We know what works. We know where to invest our teaching and financial resources to obtain higher student achievement.

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**PAGE 8**

**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Hank Kniskern - No two children are the same. The world we live in is hugely diverse. Many companies are increasing the diversity of their employees because it gives them a competitive advantage. In the Newport community, the diversity of families and students presents us with great opportunities and some challenges. It is our job to educate all our students and prepare them to be successful adults.

Educational research indicates that some students can benefit extraordinarily by participating in pre-kindergarten. The Newport pre-K experience validates this approach. Within the Newport community programs, we need to expand pre-K, summer learning and family involvement capacity.

The Individual Student Learning Plans, I mentioned earlier, help capture student achievement progress and areas for specific attention. This information provides planning continuity from one year to the next. For challenged students, having consistent goals, evidence of progress, and adult interaction are significantly beneficial.

As students enter middle and high school, curriculum that is rigorous and elicits high expectations is important. The Newport Public Schools Strategic Plan calls for expanding effective teaching techniques that are more interactive and emphasize student exploration, collaboration, relationship-building, learning behaviors and trust. Technology in the classroom, out-of-school activities, independent learning and integrated programming (e.g. STEM + Arts) are part of bringing better education to all students. Research shows that a more interactive classroom benefits all students, especially those that have traditionally struggled.

I think the School Committee could take a more leading role in pursuing higher student achievement levels by working as a team with the Superintendent, union, teachers and community to ensure adequate funding and grant support. The schools' data system would be utilized to monitor progress.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Hank Kniskern - My preference is for Rhode Island to invest in high-quality public education. Charter schools, like private schools, offer alternative choices. The data on the effectiveness of charter schools is mixed. That being said, legislation restricting charter schools seems a bit defensive.

Some charter schools have been successful because they were flexible and adaptive to the needs of its community.

The irony here is that the Newport schools are adapting to our future challenges by offering a school-within-a-school programs such as the technology and vocational pathways (AOIT, PTECH, NAVTC), Accelerated/Alternative Learning, Advanced Course Network, computer coding, Maker-Space and career-business partnering.

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PAGE 10

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Hank Kniskern - The School Committee has legal responsibilities and obligations. The Superintendent has proposed a Newport Public Schools Strategic Plan. The Rhode Island Department of Education has goals and priority initiatives. Newport cares deeply about its children and their education. Newport is future-oriented, persistently pursuing a vibrant economy and community.

My responsibility as a School Committee member would be to accomplish the goals of the NPS Strategic Plan and assist with the goals of the broader educational community stakeholders. My performance will be measured by how effectively the School Committee and I provide leadership, allocate resources and accomplish Newport's educational goals and objectives.

My responsibility would be to contribute in a way that makes the School Committee a very effective part of a team that includes the Superintendent, union, teachers and community organizations. More specifically, I will encourage implementing the Newport Schools Strategic Plan, unifying our efforts, monitoring progress towards our goals and objectives, and actively promoting teamwork, professionalism, transparency, and trust.

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#8

**COMPLETE***Answers Entered Manually***Collector:** Web Link - Manual Entry 2 (Web Link)**Started:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 2:09:16 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 2:19:30 PM**Time Spent:** 00:10:14**IP Address:** 70.188.137.90**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

Jo Eva

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Gaines

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Jo Eva Gaines - Empirical data and reliable research prove that early intervention is essential to the academic success for students entering school with deficiencies in vocabulary and language development. Pre-Kindergarten programs provide this intervention.

Improving opportunities for academic success for these students becomes the responsibility of the public schools when they enroll. If deficiencies are not addressed early, the achievement gaps widen in progressive grades. Consequences are great: Children who are not reading on grade level by the end of grade 3 are not able to learn at grade level. Frustration builds; interest in learning declines; school disconnect prevails and dropping out becomes reality.

I strongly support Universal Pre-Kindergarten as the preferred method of intervention to level the playing field for ALL students. There are several private pre-kindergarten opportunities for families who can afford to pay. Operation HeadStart provides opportunity on a sliding scale and subsidizes where appropriate. However, HeadStart has a waiting list of families and finding space for classes is problematic.

I support Federal and State funding for free, high quality Pre-K programs for all students. Early intervention is the best remedy for closing achievement gaps.

**PAGE 3**

**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Jo Eva Gaines - 1st - Professional Development (PD) for School Committee members

Highly functioning school districts are led by school committees that focus on the needs of students.

RI General Laws, §16-2-9. General powers and duties of school committees, and §16-2-9.1. Code of basic management principles and ethical school standards provide the guiding principles of conduct for school committee members. One would think that any person who decides to serve in the management of the district would not take the oath to obey the Constitution and Laws of Rhode Island if not in agreement with the intent of the law.

The RI Association of School Committees provides opportunities for school committee PD, in order for members to earn a minimum of 6 hours annually as required by law.

I am willing to share the experience and knowledge gained at all three levels, local, state and national levels of governance with anyone who asks.

2nd – Truancy

This is a national concern and considered a crisis in American education. Even though we have seen some decrease, Newport should continue the work with community partners and grant funders. This issue is not one-dimensional, therefore one-faceted strategies will not be universally successful. I will continue to solicit community partners to decrease incidents and break the family cycles of truancy.

3rd- Maintenance of facilities-

This issue is currently being addressed. Now that the City and the school department are sharing services, there will no longer be the problem of deferred maintenance. The Director of Facilities has pointed out the hazards and expense of emergency repairs and will arrange for scheduled maintenance going forward.

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**PAGE 4**

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Jo Eva Gaines - Teachers should be evaluated annually by the building principal or vice-principal. A written assessment should include results of observations and evidence of exceptional or sub-standard practice. These assessments should become part of the teachers' personnel file.

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**PAGE 5**

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Jo Eva Gaines - Good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee is an essential element of good management, and no matter how appropriate the existing standard, there is always room for improvement.

Weekly activity reports, telephone accessibility and immediate notice of incidents deemed critical are routine practice and should continue. All schools' list servers should include school committee members.

School Committee members are encouraged to speak directly with the Superintendent when they have questions or concerns. I encourage and support continuing this practice.

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**PAGE 6**

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**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Jo Eva Gaines - School empowerment is the 21st century version of site-based management. I have always supported the contention that the best decisions for students are made by those closest to those students. School empowerment makes that possible by making the principal of the school the principle employment official, the principle budget officer and, in fact, the person responsible for everything that happens in his/her building. Empowerment means freedom to make decisions, but also the responsibility to get it right!

I believe it would be good for Newport, in that we would not have to deal with competition between schools since our schools are all different levels. It would give teachers a more powerful voice in the delivery of instruction. They are more likely to rely on their own leadership skills.

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PAGE 7

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**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Jo Eva Gaines - The School Committee addressed the primary factor of impact on cost-per-student, Retiree Benefits, during the last two years. With the cooperation of retirees, who accepted changes in benefit provisions, the district will realize savings in future years that will lower the cost per student. Another factor, Special Education, is being addressed by providing more in-district services, thereby lowering out-of-district expenses. However, many of these decisions for placement is controlled not by the district but rather State placements by DCYF and the Individual Educational Plans (IEP) according to Federal guidelines.

I will continue to encourage pursuit of local initiatives to keep students in-district, and seek to avoid incurring and or increasing long term cost during contract negotiations.

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PAGE 8

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Jo Eva Gaines - There is nothing the public schools can do but accept the students who appear. Our residents are our clients and we have no options to weigh economic status.

I am aware of the mission of education in a free society to provide a free and appropriate education for every child, age 6 to 18, and in certain case to age 21. This is what we must do by law, Federal and State.

Data shows that poverty does indeed impact learning. We must continue to provide professional development for differentiated instruction in order to close the developmental and achievement gaps that result from instances of poverty. We, the adults, must dedicate ourselves to overcome the effects of poverty and we must believe that every child CAN and is EXPECTED TO SUCCEED. This work is not easy, but it can happen with patience and fortitude.

Newport is an anomaly, In districts where the poverty levels are high, not only is there high poverty, but no healthy tax base. That is not the case in Newport. Any informed observer sees "two Newports."

In a City issued survey, education was identified as a priority. The City Council and City Administrators have worked to allocate more funds for the schools.

It is the hope of the school committee that efforts to convey the One Newport theme through our 5-year Strategic Plan will foster the practice of caring for each other and recognize that wherever they live, they all are our kids!

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Jo Eva Gaines - Yes. If "restricting" legislation refers to the legislation that would require a new charter public school, or the expansion of an existing charter public school to gain approval from the city or town council of each sending school district that would be affected by the charter school, I support the legislation.

This legislation moves to establishing equity between the traditional public school and the charters in the area of accountability. Before this legislation, the public had no voice in management of a charter school. The board members (trustees) are selected by the school, not the voters; citizens were told of, not asked to approve, spending levels; the role of voters was limited to paying. I believe local citizens contributing to the cost of education should have a voice.

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Jo Eva Gaines - There is a singular purpose in my running for school committee: To work to provide the best educational opportunities for the children of Newport that the citizens of Newport can reasonably afford.

I will continue, as I have for 15 years, to avail myself of every opportunity to represent Newport and the Public Schools respectfully, professionally, and appropriately. I will adhere to the Laws of Rhode Island: RI General Laws, §16-2-9. General powers and duties of school committees, and §16-2-9.1. Code of basic management principles and ethical school standards for school committee members, provide the guiding principles of conduct for school committee members. I will take steps to continue learning and listening, observing my role as an advocate for the students, first and foremost.

I believe there is potential for Newport public schools to be the best in the State. All elements are in place for that to become a reality: we have a lot of talent among our teachers; the school administration is forward thinking, highly professional, dedicated and capable of interpreting the data that leads to good decision-making; our community is showing renewed interest in the schools; community service agencies are onboard for collaboration to assist with social issues and culture change; and the City Council and City Administrators, have a new attitude toward responsibility, funding and collaboration, sharing services and taking ownership in the success of our schools.

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#9

**COMPLETE***Answers Entered Manually***Collector:** Web Link - Manual Entry 3 (Web Link)**Started:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 2:39:25 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 2:44:54 PM**Time Spent:** 00:05:28**IP Address:** 70.188.137.90**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

Adrienne

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Haylor

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Adrienne Haylor - Early Education is the cornerstone of any child's foundation to be successful throughout their school career and beyond. The earlier a child is introduced to learning strategies and begins their education, the process gives them a firmer hold on how to address the challenges of reading, numeracy and socialization they will meet as they proceed. Early literacy education helps mold a child's ability to be proficient at grade level by grade three in reading and math.

Attention to Pre K and Early Education instruction helps to identify those students with learning disabilities at an earlier age, allowing their needs to be addressed. I would support resources and funding to infuse these early education programs through collaboration with the multi-agencies throughout our district and community addressing our youngest students today.

**PAGE 3**

**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Adrienne Haylor - 1. Technology and access by all students appears limited for student success in our world today, as computer literacy is essential. Once student leaves Pell (a state of the art school) they meet a deficient technology program at TMS, which needs upgrading. Funding realized through investigation of grants and monetary awards that support the purchase and maintenance of computer labs, computers and individual iPads.

2. If we are having high school students unable to read, do math and intellectually process, we must keep the Focus on K-5 literacy, numeracy and development of critical thinking skills. Addressing individual needs and responding with interventions at the time, teaching to individual needs academically and behaviorally.

3. Facility maintenance and repair. Our students need updated, safe, clean environments in which to thrive. The continual addressing of any deficiencies of any school campus, grounds and buildings. The ongoing implementation of a maintenance plan, working closely with the city and co-partnering.

Past educational experience has provided me an understanding of the importance of implementing a technology plan, with a 4-year cycle of use, tracking and maintenance.

As a literacy and intervention teacher I understand the necessity to address educational issues a early. I have overseen maintenance of small commercial properties in my function as a General Manager and assistant manager in the hospitality industry.

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Adrienne Haylor - The evaluation process for a teacher would be a two part evaluation system with self evaluation and supervisor, dept. head, or administrator (as the case may be) evaluation. Evaluation based on classroom observations of class performance and interactions with students. Oversight and use of approved curriculum that challenges students on a daily basis, review of lesson plans, how they work with and advance success of students. Use of assessments for student performance, use as benchmarks for students learning plan, not as barometer of teachers methods. Overall classroom management.

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Adrienne Haylor - A through understanding of the "rolls" of each entity, the Superintendent and the committee as a whole. Knowledge of the RI laws and RIDE policies pertaining to these rolls and responsibilities. Continual open dialogue with respect of each others positions and opinions built on trust.

A school committee "interviews" their prospective employee, the Superintendent, after the vetting process, with interview committees recommendation of a qualified individual individual and their choice is made, this should constitute that the SC has given their approval of, allowing and supporting the Superintendent administrative authority.

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**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Adrienne Haylor - Empowering districts with "local" control allows each district to address their needs and gaps, educationally and financially, based on the district environment, with built in assessments of set goals and performance benchmarks, for the measurement of success. Still held to a criteria of high standards and excellence. Empowerment schools, give individual school administrators more autonomy in decision making, allowing the building of a strong leadership team and staff in the environment they are most familiar with, with definite goals-identifying gaps and ways to implement strategies for success with measurements and review, monthly, quarterly-how team determines best practice.

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**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Adrienne Haylor - Continual oversight of costs, what benefits students and student performance. Oversight of financial aspects of all programs, " are they working? not working?" identifying students needs, necessary measures and availability. Developing curriculum and setting policy to address these costs. The Superintendent has the over all in depth knowledge of student cost, the how, the why. Individually supporting these evaluations and recommendations, with proven facts and research

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Adrienne Haylor - A population of this definition presents challenges for meeting ALL students needs, while it presents opportunities for growth, individually and for the community as a whole. The state and federal support through grants for districts that are identified and eligible for said monies, allows expanded programs for students and families. Greater collaboration with our community partners addressing the student needs, gives flexibility and cost saving measures at the district and community's disposal. "Current Actions" and planning efforts must address this economic factor openly, as a contributor to the future, how we view our neighbor and the community. This issue is part of our community, diversity is part of our community, these students are "Our" students and they deserve all the same opportunities provided for the more fortunate.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Adrienne Haylor - Charter schools in my opinion are fulfilling a need that has resulted from the "gaps" and inability to address the needs pro actively of public education, not just in RI, but across the nation.

Charter schools have developed curriculum with more emphasis on STEM & Steam educational pathways-appearing more focused on todays challenges for emerging students into the world outside of school.

I do not feel a charter school should be replacing public education and mirroring the same K-12 structure. Our tax dollars support free public education, why pay twice.

A public education system enhanced by specifics at charter schools, should enhance and support each other, not be in competition.

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**PAGE 10****Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Adrienne Haylor - I would do my due diligence, with fact finding, questioning and understanding on all issues and matters facing the NPS today. Being prepared when in public forum. Continuing to educate myself on the challenges before us, seek advice of more knowledgeable individuals and research educational resources.

Our students education and success is my mission, acknowledging the needs of all students, developing curriculum with adherence to the implementation process, fiscal review and oversight. Understanding school finance, state and federal grants, and contributing to the budget process working with SC members, the Superintendent and City of Newport.

Knowledgeable ideas and opinions on school business is necessary, lively, open discussions with respect for colleagues, a must. Conduct myself in a professional manner. Show Support of board decisions, whether the decision is pro or con from mine, as I would be one of seven.

Personal agendas must be put aside to assure a functional school committee dedicated to the future success and education of all students.

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#10

**COMPLETE***Answers Entered Manually***Collector:** Web Link - Manual Entry 4 (Web Link)**Started:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 3:02:54 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 3:08:24 PM**Time Spent:** 00:05:30**IP Address:** 70.188.137.90**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

Rebecca

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Bolan

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, "Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students." What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Rebecca Bolan - I am 100% behind Early education for all students entering Newport Public Schools. We currently have 6 preschool classes in NPS. We legally have to provide this for our preschoolers with IEPs ( individual education plans). We also offer " peer model" spaces to an equal number of normally developing preschoolers. This program has space for a total of 90 Children and currently 67 Are enrolled. There are also a number of free preschools run through the state here in Newport that are not income dependent and enrollment is determined by a lottery. Options such as Martin Luther King center, and Head Start also exist , which are either free or on a sliding scale. There are many other private high quality programs such as Shining Star, Silveria's and Tora kids. Whether public or private , these programs are all held to very high standards (see the states Bright stars program).

We have anywhere between 170 - 190 kindergarteners enroll each year. The school department is in the process of collating the data this week of our incoming class of Kindergarteners. How many children went to a formal preschool ? Where did they go? The information will not be available as of the due date for submitting the answers to these questions. It is my contention that most likely there are plenty of free and sliding scale spots for any family who wants to access them. Some parents will choose private even when offered free options. Do we really want to only offer universal pre-k through the school system? Do we want to put our private Pre-K's out of business? Unless we make Pre-k mandatory for all children ( by the way kindergarten is not mandatory in Rhode Island) we are not going to get 100% compliance. We have 19% of our students in NPS move in and out each year . This is a huge mobility rate! We can do everything we can to try and locate and enroll all preschoolers, but in the end you cannot control every parent to enroll in non-mandatory programs. Some parents for whatever reason do not take advantage of the many high quality programs Available to them.

In a perfect world if the school system had unlimited money we could offer more early education, but with education dollars as tight as they are we must prioritize . First of all I am not even convinced that we do not have enough affordable/ free options available to all of our 4 year olds. Our district needs to focus its efforts on having all children proficient in Math and reading and science!

**PAGE 3**

**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Rebecca Bolan - Our main deficiencies are

- 1) our students are not proficient in Math and reading.
  - 2) Our students are not proficient in science and technology.
  - 3) We have a truancy problem. You cannot teach them if they are not there. You cannot hold teachers accountable if we cannot get them to school . Fixing these deficiencies is not going to happen overnight, but we have to start making consistent forward progress. Over the last year I have been on the core team revamping our strategic plan. Our plan addresses these issues. It is still being tweaked but hopefully will be ready soon for adoption by the school committee. It is then the school committee's Job to hold our superintendent responsible for meeting these goals. All of the School Committee's financial decisions need to be in keeping with this strategic plan.
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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Rebecca Bolan - The Teacher evaluation process is clearly laid out through guidance from RIDE ( Rhode Island Department of Education ) and in the TAN ( Teacher association of Newport) contract. Every three years we have the opportunity to address adjustments to this process. I was on the negotiations committee during this last go around and we were able to make adjustments to this process.

The biggest problem I have found is that it is the responsibility of administrators to document problems/ deficiencies . When they do not do this it makes it much more difficult to take action further down the road. This has come back to bite us this year.

All teachers need to be engaged in making academic progress for every student!

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Rebecca Bolan - The very first thing that comes to mind is avoid surprises . This works both ways. As a School Committee member it is of the utmost importance that you prepare for meetings by reading all of the provided backup material in detail so that you can have your questions answered by the Superintendent and her staff before the meeting. It is also important that the Superintendent keeps the school committee informed . It is easy for her to fall into the trap of just informing the Chairwoman and than the information often does not get filtered down. This all gets very tricky in light of the open meeting laws to include rolling quorums .

I have always made it a point to speak directly to the Superintendent on controversial issues or when I have ideas of how we might compromise to get committee buy-in . I communicate with her often when I hear things out in the community that she needs to be aware of. Number 7 Our superintendent is aware of and is in favor of the Commissioners plan to move more decisions to the local level . We as a district are trying to incorporate this strategy into our strategic plan. Teachers are being encouraged to be bold in their teaching strategies. Principals are being encouraged to make financial/ educational decisions that will effect their buildings. It's not going to happen over night. This is a huge approach change. The first attempt at passing on control to administrators did not go well. When the financial advisory committee asked them to make cuts to their school budgets they could not do it. Making decisions on what to cut involved potential personnel cuts at their schools and they could not do it. It is going to be a work in progress.

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**PAGE 6**

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**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Rebecca Bolan - Our superintendent is aware of and is in favor of the Commissioners plan to move more decisions to the local level . We as a district are trying to incorporate this strategy into our strategic plan. Teachers are being encouraged to be bold in their teaching strategies. Principals are being encouraged to make financial/ educational decisions that will effect their buildings. It's not going to happen over night. This is a huge approach change. The first attempt at passing on control to administrators did not go well. When the financial advisory committee asked them to make cuts to their school budgets they could not do it. Making decisions on what to cut involved potential personnel cuts at their schools and they could not do it. It is going to be a work in progress.

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PAGE 7

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**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Rebecca Bolan - One reason for this disparity is our retiree health benefit commitment which the present School Committee has worked diligently to reduce. We have had a great deal of success but we are not going to realize all of these savings for years to come. Something that not everyone is aware of is all of the outside grants and state money such as our new PTEC program go into the calculation of per pupil cost. We are penalized for being aggressive and proactive in accessing outside funding. When you add in our NACTAC program the per student cost goes way up. Our other program that adds significantly to the per pupil high school cost is our ALP program. It has been highly successful in increasing our graduation rate, the trade off is it is very expensive to operate. Our per pupil cost is not likely to go down in the near future , especially as we continue to pursue outside funding. One potential area to save money is to bring in an outside agency to look at how we can balance the teacher pupil ratio at the high school to make it more cost effective. This would be much like what Portsmouth did last Spring. They were able to cut Four positions without negatively impacting offerings. This has been asked to be put on the next agenda.

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Rebecca Bolan - no school committee member is more on top of this than I am. The Federal Government recognizes that there are additional costs associated with educating Economically disadvantaged children. There is federal title one money, and federal impact aid that we receive. On the state level we get additional money to feed kids and the state funding formula gives us close to 1600 \$ extra per identified student. I just recently advocated with success to hire a part time position to make sure we identify all of our students who qualify. The rewards are two fold. Students who need food are provided it, and our district reaps the benefit of the extra funding. Our Free and Reduced population in our district hovers around 64% . With this high percentage comes many challenges. First as I mentioned earlier 19% of our district moves in and out each year. Making the tracking of students even more difficult. Last year I asked for data on our senior class. Of the 171 4th grade students in the class of 2016 only 55 remained in the senior class . The data on these 55 students was not statistically better than the rest of the senior class which confirms we have to do a better job! Our new strategic plan addresses these issues. It will be up to the School Committee to make sure we follow and track our progress and hold administration accountable .

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Rebecca Bolan - I agree with the the current moratorium on Charter schools in Rhode Island. Until the state figures out an equitable funding formula for charter versus public schools we need to hold off adding more in the state

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PAGE 10

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Rebecca Bolan - I have always and will continue to be accountable for all my decisions. I take this responsibility very seriously . My decisions are always made with The best interests of our children as the determining factor. I take pride in my record and know that I have helped bring about many significant changes to Newport Public School. I am always prepared for meetings by doing the necessary research into issues, I pride myself on my knowledge and understanding of the budget. I am a watchdog and have caught more than one potentially damaging mistake we were about to make. I have worked diligently to lead the Newport Wellness Committee which has made huge improvements for the children of Newport. If I am reelected I will bring to the table my experience and commitment to the children, parents, staff and community of Newport

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#11

**COMPLETE****Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)**Started:** Friday, September 09, 2016 1:44:09 PM**Last Modified:** Sunday, September 11, 2016 3:12:32 PM**Time Spent:** Over a day**IP Address:** 68.224.207.129**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

Kathleen

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Silvia

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

Kathleen Silvia - Early education is extremely important for every child. It leads them down the road toward future success in school and the paths they are to follow for life. Attendance in a Pre-K program prepares a child for entering kindergarten by addressing social, emotional, and cognitive development so that he or she is kindergarten-ready by age five. Records from the child’s progress in a Pre-K setting also provides information to the School District that allows the teacher to be aware of any issues that need to be addressed at the beginning of the school year. I would support resources and funding for Pre-K in the Newport public schools to ensure that all children are afforded early and equal education opportunities.

**PAGE 3**

**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

Kathleen Silvia - State grant that would have provided free pre-K education for more of our young children. A shortage of classroom space at the Pell School has occurred because of the ever-increasing population of elementary school-aged children. This has resulted in the elimination of a much-needed Art room. I will continue to explore with the School Administration and Committee possible sites for Pre-K, and the feasibility of restructuring the schools; e.g., the possibility of moving the fourth grade to Thompson Middle School and the eighth grade to Rogers High School.

**PAGE 4**

**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

Kathleen Silvia - In-person evaluations of the teacher with his/her department head or principal should be conducted to allow for discussion and an exchange of information. Informal observation of classrooms and a review of student grades (not national testing) should be considered. If students in a class are performing better than the previous year, it most likely is a reflection on the teacher's abilities; however, if there are significant declines in the grades of the overall class, there needs to be a review and evaluation of why that is happening.

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## PAGE 5

**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

Kathleen Silvia - Since elected to the School Committee in 2014, I have found communication with the Superintendent to be very good. She is very responsive to telephone calls and e-mails, and updates are sent almost weekly to the Committee to ensure that the members are kept well informed on all matters involving the schools and students.

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## PAGE 6

**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

Kathleen Silvia - On its surface, I believe the proposal would be beneficial for Newport because it is our teachers and administrators who know best how to meet the needs of the students and the district. Newport has a very diverse population and this empowerment would allow for the use of innovative methods of teaching. Accountability will ensure that the goal of a quality education for every student is being addressed. However, until the exact empowerment parameters and exact accountability are known, I cannot take a firm position on the topic.

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## PAGE 7

**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

Kathleen Silvia - The education of our youth is the first and foremost responsibility of the School Committee. We cannot short-change our students by cutting essential staff and/or programs. Some ways in which we have been addressing (and will continue to do) the high per-pupil costs are: (1) bringing back to our schools many out-of-district student placements, which has resulted in very significant savings; (2) working with the City Council and City/School Administrations in exploring areas in addition to those already implemented (accounting, purchasing, and facilities maintenance) for shared services, such as Internet Technology; (3) as a member of the negotiating teams for the Tan and Council 94 contracts and renegotiation of post-employment benefits for retirees, we were able to realize both current and future savings, while recognizing the valuable contributions of our present and past staffs.

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## PAGE 8

**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

Kathleen Silvia - There is always a need for additional resources to assist economically disadvantaged students. During the past two year, the City Council and the School Committee have worked together in addressing the needs of the schools. The School Department has also been very successful in obtaining grants to support initiatives directed towards student achievement, and currently works collaboratively with many agencies and private businesses to provide more support and opportunities for our students; naming just a few of the very many: CEATRI (truancy), the Boys and Girls Clubs (after school and The Summer Program), Fab Newport (technology), and private businesses that work with and support our Newport Area Career and Technical School. I also support family service coordinated efforts by each school to foster parent interaction.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

Kathleen Silvia - I support the legislation, which I don't see as restricting charter schools. Rather than having the State-appointed Council on Elementary and Secondary Education make the decision for local municipalities, it requires that approval be given by the locally-elected city and town councils following a public hearing to solicit input from the citizens.

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PAGE 10

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

Kathleen Silvia - As I have done during my first term, I will continue to attend all regular (once absence because of illness), special, executive, and workshop meetings; serve on subcommittees (currently, Pre-K Co-chair, School/City Council Liaison Committee, Public Relations, Strategic Planning, and the Nellie Mae Foundation Planning Team (a Newport School Community Engagement Initiative). I will continue to stay informed and consider all information and recommendations submitted to the Committee for consideration by the Administration, my peers on the Committee, the teachers and all employees, the parents and students, and the public at large.

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#12

**COMPLETE***Answers Entered Manually***Collector:** Web Link - Manual Entry 5 (Web Link)**Started:** Tuesday, September 13, 2016 8:49:11 PM**Last Modified:** Tuesday, September 13, 2016 8:54:20 PM**Time Spent:** 00:05:08**IP Address:** 70.188.137.90**PAGE 1: Introduction****Q1: What is your first name?**

David

**Q2: What is your last name?**

Carlin, III

**PAGE 2: Start**

**Q3: According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Providing access to voluntary, free, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs is a strategy proven to help close the achievement gaps that are noticeable even before children enter school and to provide increased educational opportunities for all students.” What is your view on the importance of Early Education, and why? Would you support resources and funding for Pre-Kindergarten in the Newport Public Schools?**

David Carlin, III - Many studies have shown and most experts agree, that early education (anything from reading to a child to advanced learning) is critical. That said, early education opportunities and assistance in paying for such opportunities, are readily available throughout Newport from non- Newport School Department resources. The taxpayers of Newport cannot afford pre-Kindergarten at this point. If the state government or the federal government wish to have pre-K in Newport, let the state and/or the federal government pay for it. Otherwise, I favor retaining the pre-K we already have, that is, a pre-K for kids with special needs.

**PAGE 3**

**Q4: What are the three main deficiencies you see with the Newport Public Schools that need to be addressed over the next three years? What needs to be done to address them, and what are the skills and qualifications you have to contribute to the process?**

David Carlin, III - 1.) Far too many graduates of the Newport Public School System (12th grade) are unprepared academically and otherwise to succeed in post secondary schooling, (2 year schools, 4 year schools, technical/other schools) the workforce, apprenticeships, military service and more. Indicators of this unpreparedness include results of state instituted test scores, a lack of serious and appropriate STEM/STEAM coursework in the schools and a failure by the school system to parter with the business community on a continual basis in order to determine what "teachable skills/coursework" are needed by employers.

2.) A dismal attendance and tardy rate at the high school and a less than acceptable attendance and tardy rate at the elementary school. Along with this, no serious consequence at the high school level regarding said problem, and the fact that "social promotion" exists within the system -all the way to the high school diploma level.

3.) A lack of appropriate information technology resources for students, teachers and staff.

Addressing these issues requires instituting STEM/STEAM (serious) programs and education in all schools, ending social promotion, changing state law regarding [certain] mandatory school attendance and consequences for non-attendance, prohibiting graduation for students with more than a certain amount of unexcused absences, appropriately allocating financial resources toward technology and career education needs and lobbying the General Assembly to revise the state aid to education law. I have already advocated for all of this as a current member of the school committee and will continue to do so as well as continue to "lobby" the Newport legislative delegation as well as key legislative committees and members of the legislature along with RI Department of Education officials.

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**PAGE 4**

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**Q5: How should teacher performance be evaluated?**

David Carlin, III - As state law and RI Department of Education extensive guidelines and regulations dictate now. Also, as is the case now, the evaluations should be done by principals, who themselves are not members of the teachers' union and report only to the superintendent.

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**PAGE 5**

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**Q6: What actions will you promote to ensure good communications between the Superintendent and the School Committee? Give specific examples.**

David Carlin, III - I have been concerned about this issue for more than a year now. I do not believe communication between the superintendent and school committee is at the level it should be at now. I will continue to share with the superintendent, the members of the school committee and the public, when I believe that the superintendent has not appropriately communicated what I believe to be a matter or matters of importance that the members of the NSC should be aware of. I will encourage the superintendent to do the same with regard to any perceived lack of communication on the part of members of the NSC. I will also continue to point out to the members of the NSC and the superintendent (as well as NSC legal counsel and the press where appropriate) specific state law that exists with respect to duties and responsibilities of school committees, as I believe there have been far too many examples where the superintendent has moved forward with action (naturally, without communication with and approval by the NSC) that can only be instituted with approval by the NSC. I also believe that the development of the last two fiscal year budgets has been entirely too exclusive. By that I mean the superintendent has not appropriately expressed budgetary priorities or appropriately listened to NSC members budgetary priorities. The two budgets have been developed in a vacuum. I have suggested and will continue to advocate for, a minimum of six public budget sessions with the type of detail that is necessary (line item specifics) for NSC members to make effective decisions regarding budgeting. A potential model I have highlighted that the NSC should use, is the "open meeting" process that the RI House Finance Committee uses when developing the state's fiscal year budgets. I will also continue to recommend to my colleagues that the NSC meet weekly (in open or executive sessions, where appropriate) -or at least every two weeks- with the superintendent. This practice should not be limited -as it is now- to the superintendent meeting with the chair and vice chair. There is also clearly a lack of communication between the chair and certain members of the school committee. I certainly do not want to assess blame "on" the administration if the superintendent expects the chair and/or the vice chair, to share with the remaining members of the NSC, updates, etc., provided by the superintendent.

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**Q7: RIDE Commissioner Dr. Ken Wagner has floated several trial balloons during 2016 about empowering districts and schools with more freedom from State control in return for greater accountability. Would this be beneficial for Newport? Why or why not?**

David Carlin, III - It depends on which proposal is being addressed. Greater independence for school principals (control of curriculum, school times, etc.) would not be beneficial for the district. There is a difficult enough challenge in the district that exists now with regard to meeting standards (tests and more) and dealing with school start/end times. Creating so-called "empowerment schools," would be a benefit for the district. This idea could not move forward without a buy-in by most of the faculty and staff as well as the superintendent and a majority of the school committee. Establishing such an empowerment school in the district would only lead to tougher expectations of all and better results from all; never a bad thing. I do not believe that inter-district school choice would be good for the Newport public schools. This model would lead to a loss of much needed federal, state and local dollars at a time when we must first use the dollars that are available to strengthen our district. I am also concerned about the potential "cherry picking" of certain students (lets face it, schools will be proactive in seeking students) by empowerment school administrators and their districts.

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**Q8: The Newport Public Schools have one of the highest cost per student in Rhode Island. What steps would you promote to evaluate and address this situation? Explain how you would work with the NPS Superintendent on this.**

David Carlin, III - The NPS must have quarterly open meetings with the RI Department of Education to keep up to date on spending statistics by RI school districts, (Aquidneck Island in particular) trends in out of district placements in the state as compared to our district, consolidation of certain resources by RI districts and the potential for Newport to partner with other districts in doing the same, (buying consortiums, etc.) and more. We must also advocate (as I mentioned earlier) for changes to the state aid to education law and changes to (whether included in the aid law or not) how courts, DCYF and other entities are allowed to assign students to the district thereby obligating the district to pay for the students without appropriate reimbursement -namely, 100%- by the state, changes to regulations and laws regarding IEP standards, (IEPs are necessary and valuable resources for students and families, but again, what about appropriate state reimbursement to the district, because the standards are also very expensive for the system) changes to group home reimbursement rates for districts, (Newport has high costs related to this) a total restructuring of the ALP program at the high school, an end to social promotion of high school students, (if you dont want to be in school, even though we have to keep a student until age 18, the district should not be expending resources for "the sake" of making sure non-interested students graduate so the district can increase its graduation rates) careful contract negotiations with labor unions, a reduction in exorbitant benefits and certain reductions in salaries (depending on position) salaries for administrators, a takeover by the city of the NPS business office, and more. (This is what I consider a partial list. Time and space considerations exist.)

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**Q9: The Newport Public Schools are impacted by a large proportion of economically disadvantaged students. What does this mean to you as a member of the School Committee and how does it affect the Committee's current actions and planning efforts for the future?**

David Carlin, III - Economically disadvantaged students can be found in virtually every public school district in America. In Newport, than 60% of our student population is entitled to free or reduced lunches. This is a common statistic used by districts to determine poverty rates and levels of economic disadvantages. For me, not just as a school committee members, but as a human being and a person who has chaired my parish's (St. Augustin's Church) Catholic Charity Appeal (which is a significant source in RI for those in economic distress) for about 10 years, any poverty, especially poverty experienced by children, is very sad. Poverty is the ultimate economic disadvantage in society. The Newport Public Schools also has a high number of homeless students at any given time. Poverty (homelessness in particular) has an extraordinary negative affect on a student's ability to learn and excel in school. I favor efforts (underway and TBD by anyone who has an interest in helping) by the district to go "above and beyond" to help students and families who are experiencing poverty (especially homelessness) by providing resources like before and after school student learning assistance, assistance with housing, nutrition and food assistance, social aid assistance, mentoring, frequent progress evaluations, and much more. (Resources that I am not even aware of.) I also strongly support the NPS partnership with our much needed and very valuable social service (non-government as well as government) agencies. A person (and I have been very fortunate in my life to have been blessed with good health care, housing, financial resources, etc.) who has not experienced poverty, is likely not to be able to fully comprehend what it is like to be economically disadvantaged. There is no silver bullet solution to this problem. Along with the many other points I mentioned, the NSC must be sure that the residents of Newport, the teachers, staff, administration and even students in the system, fully understand that such poverty does exist in Newport. It is not easy to face or talk about, but the school committee must continue to receive and publicize reports like the monthly homelessness (district) statistics.

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**Q10: Do you agree with recent Rhode Island Legislation restricting charter schools? Please explain your response.**

David Carlin, III - Yes. As many witnesses from a variety of educational organizations testified to at the RI State House, it has become increasingly clear that charter schools are siphoning money from traditional public schools in many cities and towns throughout RI. Local taxpayers (voters) have also never had a say in how and when charter schools will be established or expanded in municipalities. Further, I believe there is too much actual and potential "cherry picking" of the highest performing students from traditional public schools to the charters, and there is no effective requirement that charters must accept and keep the students who often require the most attention and financial resources.

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**Q11: You are seeking a two-year term as a member of the School Committee, a very responsible and important position. What steps will you take, if you are elected, to assure that you handle your position responsibly and that you are accountable for your performance?**

David Carlin, III - I have been and will continue to be accessible and accountable to the residents, taxpayers and voters of the City of Newport. My belief is that I work for you, the residents and taxpayers. I do not work for the school committee chair, the superintendent or my colleagues. As I have done in the past 18 months or so, I will continue to deliver updates to the citizens of Newport about NSC activities and my actions on the NSC, via mail, email, social media, in-person forums, letters to the editor and opinion pieces in local press, postings on website and information sharing venues like Newport Nextdoor, Knowing Newport and others, and of course, by way of public access to Newport School Committee meetings. I take pride in returning all communication that I receive. I also educate myself about state law related to school committee roles and responsibilities, the actions of the Newport City Council related to the school system, legislative activity related to the district (and all districts) and the City of Newport, the "comings and goings" of the RI Association of School Committees, the RI Association of Superintendents, the Teachers Association of Newport, AFSCME, federal education updates to the degree appropriate, court rulings and more. I believe I am a responsible and accountable member of the NSC. It has been one of the great pleasures and privileges of my life to serve the citizens of the City of Newport on the school committee, and I have treated and will continue to treat the position of school committee member with the highest respect and in the highest regard. I hope to earn your vote for my re-election. Thank you.

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