



TOWN OF  
**AMHERST**  
MASSACHUSETTS

To: Town Council Members and Remaining Amherst School Committee Members

From: Lynn Griesemer, President, Amherst Town Council

Re: Proposed DRAFT Questions

Date: September 6, 2023

Consistent with our agreement at our meeting on August 23, 2023, I have called a Special Meeting of the Town Council and the remaining Amherst School Committee Members for 5:30 PM on September 11, 2023. The meeting may be attended in person in the Town Room or by Zoom.

Attached are two documents:

Attachment A: Suggested Questions for School Committee Candidates (without mark ups).  
*Please note that this is still lengthy.*

Attachment B: Suggested Questions for School Committee Candidates (with mark-ups)  
(Compilation of all questions into categories.) *Please note that this is rough. I started with the questions we used in 2020 and then placed questions I received into categories. I received suggested questions from 7 Councilors; 1 School Committee Member; and 1 member of the public.*

Cc: Amherst Town Manager  
Amherst School Superintendent



Attachment A: Suggested Questions for School Committee Candidates (without mark ups)

*(Based upon combined feedback from the Amherst Town Council, the remaining Amherst School Committee members, and the public)*

*For Review by the Amherst Town Council and the remaining Amherst School Committee members on 09-11-2023*

*All Candidates will be asked to prepare for the interview by writing down key points for themselves in advance of the interviews. In the event of technological difficulty, we will ask candidates to submit their answers in writing by September 28, 2023 by 2:00 PM.*

**Opening Remarks [2 minutes]:**

Provide Answers to these questions [1-2 minutes each]:

**Reason for application:**

1. Based upon your opening statement and the description of the responsibilities and expectations of School Committee members, is there anything else you would like to add that additionally describes your ability to fulfill these responsibilities and expectations. Please include any experience you have with the Amherst Elementary or Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools?
2. Similarly, based upon your opening statement, is there anything else you would like to add to the reasons you are interested in serving on the Amherst and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committees and why should we select you?

**Strengths of and Areas for Improvement in the Amherst Public Schools:**

3. What do you think is one strength and one area for improvement in Amherst Elementary and Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools?

**Understanding the Role of the School Committee:**

4. The public often has a limited understanding of the role the School Committee plays in school or district decisions such as curriculum, hiring of principals, or in addressing parent complaints about an individual teacher. What is your understanding of the role you as a School Committee member should play in these types of decisions?
5. What do you understand about the role of a school superintendent?



6. The committee is expected to collaborate with and hold the Superintendent accountable at the same time. How would you approach this dual role to achieve the best outcomes for students?
7. Tell us about an experience you have had collaborating with a group, particularly where opinions were in conflict or the decision was controversial?
8. Please share an example of a time you received feedback that was negative, and how you dealt with it.
9. Discuss the value of process and procedure, and the value of advocacy and action. As a School Committee member, how would you balance process with advocacy? What weight would you give to each? What experience have you had negotiating or navigating this balance?

**Current and Upcoming issues facing the School Committee:**

10. What are the 2-3 most important items that need to be on the School Committee's agenda from now until New Year's Day? Although you addressed your experience earlier, what are the relevant skills, knowledge and experience you will bring to the School Committee that will help the committee address these matters? Have you ever been involved in a search process for a high-level person in education or otherwise?
11. How will you help to make sure that the school committee's practices, processes, and decisions, are anti-racist?
12. What do you consider are the most important qualities, qualifications, and experience in the next superintendent? And, how will you help to ensure that the superintendent search is set up to identify, recruit, and hire a high-quality candidate who understands the needs of our districts?
13. What is your understanding of the legal constraints about what school committee members can and can't do in situations involving Title IX investigation?
14. Please describe the considerations and objectives you'll use in approaching the upcoming budget cycle and the loss of the use of ESSR funds.

**Concluding Remarks [2 minutes]:**



**Attachment B: Suggested Questions for School Committee Candidates (with mark-ups) (Compilation of all questions into categories.)**

*(Based upon combined feedback from the Amherst Town Council, the remaining Amherst School Committee members, and the public)*

*For Review by the Amherst Town Council and the remaining Amherst School Committee members on 09-11-2023*

*All Candidates will be asked to prepare for the interview by writing down key points for themselves in advance of the interviews. In the event of technological difficulty, we will ask candidates to submit their answers in writing by September 28, 2023 by 2:00 PM.*

**Opening Remarks [2 minutes]:**

**Provide Answers to this questions [1-2 minutes each]:**

**Reason for application:**

2. Based upon your opening statement and the description of the responsibilities and expectations of School Committee members, is there anything else you would like to add that additionally describes your ability to fulfill these responsibilities and expectations. Please include any experience you have with the Amherst Elementary or Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools?
2. Similarly, based upon your opening statement, is there anything else you would like to add to the reasons you are interested in serving on the Amherst and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committees and why should we select you?

**Experience with Strengths of and Areas for Improvement in the Amherst Public Schools:**

- ~~What is your past or present experience or connection with the Amherst Elementary or Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools?~~
3. What do you think is one strength and one area for improvement in Amherst Elementary and Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools?



### Understanding the Role of the School Committee:

4. The public often has a limited understanding of the role the School Committee plays in school or district decisions such as ~~math~~-curriculum, hiring of principals, or in addressing parent complaints about an individual teacher. What is your understanding of the role you as a School Committee member should play in these types of decisions?

6. What do you understand about the role of a school superintendent?

6. The committee is expected to collaborate with and hold the Superintendent accountable at the same time. How would you approach this dual role to achieve the best outcomes for students?

7. How do you deal with differing views when engaging in a committee decision-making process? Tell us about an experience you have had collaborating with a group, particularly where opinions were in conflict or the decision was controversial?

8. Please share an example of a time you received feedback that was negative, and how you dealt with it.

9. Discuss the value of process and procedure, and the value of advocacy and action. As a School Committee member, how would you balance process with advocacy? What weight would you give to each? What experience have you had negotiating or navigating this balance?

### MSBA and New Building

1. The school building project that was accepted by the MSBA in December is one-building for K through 5 or 6 that would replace Fort River and Wildwood schools, with the location of the project as yet to be determined. As a member of the School Committee, what will you contribute to the work of this project?

2. What challenges do you foresee in moving the school project forward? What are your ideas to meet those challenges?

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**Current and Upcoming issues facing the School Committee:**

- ~~1. What is one important issue you believe the Amherst Elementary School Committee will need to address over the next 21 months?~~
- ~~15. What is one important issue you believe the Amherst Regional School Committee will need to address over the next 21 months? What are the 2-3 most important items that need to be on the School Committee's agenda from now until New Year's Day? Although you addressed your experience earlier, what are the relevant skills, knowledge and experience you will bring to the School Committee that will help the committee address these matters? Have you ever been involved in a search process for a high-level person in education or otherwise?~~
- ~~16. How will you help to make sure that the school committee's practices, processes, and decisions, are anti-racist?~~
- ~~17. What do you consider are the most important qualities, qualifications, and experience in the next superintendent? And, how will you help to ensure that the superintendent search is set up to identify, recruit, and hire a high-quality candidate who understands the needs of our districts?~~
- ~~18. What is your understanding of the legal constraints about what school committee members can and can't do in situations involving Title IX investigation?~~
- ~~15, 19. Please describe the considerations and objectives you'll use in approaching the upcoming budget cycle and the loss of the use of ESSR funds.~~

**Community Engagement**

- ~~3. In what ways could the School Committee increase engagement and input from more residents and a more diverse mix of residents with important upcoming School Committee decisions?~~

**Concluding Remarks [2 minutes]:**