

Joanne Santiago - Caucus Statement

It's hard to believe that it was over three years ago that I first volunteered for the Lane School Feasibility Task Force to examine whether the increase in school enrollment was a long term trend, before running for the School Committee.

Serving on the School Committee has been an absolute pleasure. Our community is what we make it, and it is an honor to serve in this role. The work is challenging and interesting. Contributing to the education of the town's children, supporting the educators training them to become independent critical thinkers - is incredibly rewarding. My colleagues on the SC are talented, thoughtful and dedicated. The same is true of those serving on other committees in town.

Omar and I have two daughters who attend Bedford Public Schools, and participated in sports, arts and student government. My professional background is in business and healthcare. I have extensive experience in analysis and budgets. As a School Committee member I have served as liaison to Cap Expenditure Committee for two years, as well as Bedford Youth & Families and the school building committees.

Bedford's schools are a jewel in town, and a driving factor in many families' choice to move here. For that, I thank Jon Sills and his team, as well as past members of the SC, Selectmen, Finance Committee, and town voters who made the decision to support our educational needs.

We have challenges ahead, including:

- Completing the transition to MCAS
- Ensuring the school buildings meet the growing and changing demands
 - Meeting the needs of all students in the system, to help them achieve their personal best
 - Supporting the system's work to change attitudes about race and diversity in our community
- Achieving all of this while balancing expected budgetary challenges

I would be grateful for the opportunity to continue working on these important issues as a member of the School Committee, because a strong education now creates the foundation for a thriving community in the future.

I respectfully request your support at tonight's caucus and your vote in the Town election on Saturday, March 9, 2019.

