



Boston Coalition for Education Equity 2019 City Council Candidate Questionnaire

DISTRICT SIX: Matt O'Malley

Candidate background in public education and educational advocacy

What's your experience with BPS? Please select all that apply.

Student, Family Member

Have you BEEN EMPLOYED BY any organizations that are involved in education, including educational advocacy, education reform, or on issues related to education equity in the city of Boston?

NO

Have you been involved in ANY VOLUNTEER OR ADVOCACY WORK any organizations that are involved in education, including educational advocacy, education reform, or on issues related to education equity in the city of Boston?

NO

Equity in Boston Public Schools

DO YOU SUPPORT CHANGES TO THE CURRENT WEIGHTED STUDENT FUNDING FORMULA that would provide all schools a "floor" of basic services provided to all?

YES

How would you suggest we address the inequity in school funding within BPS?

While WSF has addressed certain issues around transparency, equity and predictability around school budgets; I see enormous value in establishing a baseline or foundation budget for all schools from which to build a more robust and effective funding stream. This would include a myriad funded positions in every school, regardless of enrollment (a nurse in every school, for example, for which I was proud to have played a role). We ought to establish a baseline of a strong foundation and build our school budgets from that.

A recent report found that the current "home-based" student assignment system has increased segregation in our schools. DO YOU BELIEVE SEGREGATION IS A CRITICAL PROBLEM FACING BPS?

YES

If yes, what changes would you propose to the current assignment system to make it more equitable? NO RESPONSE

Do you believe that the student population of each of Boston's exam schools should more closely reflect the diversity of Boston's population of children in grades 7-12?

YES



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If yes, what changes would you suggest BPS take to reach this goal?

I support administering the ISEE for BPS 6th and 8th graders in their classrooms (set to begin this year) as well as efforts to bring the BPS grading rubric in line with non-BPS schools. I helped facilitate the expansion of both the Exam School Initiative to more BPS students as well as increased access to AWC coursework, which is already showing some early positive outcomes. Additionally, our focus must remain on equity for every child in the district, beginning in Kindergarten. Increased access of opportunity ought to be part of maintaining a true meritocracy and I believe that we should strive for both.

DO YOU SUPPORT CHANGING THE CURRENT ADMISSIONS SYSTEM FOR BOSTON'S EXAM SCHOOLS (current system is based on grades and the ISEE test)?

NO

Some BPS elementary schools raise hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, and Boston Latin School recently raised \$53 million in its capital campaign. Schools with more affluent families and access to private funding use these funds to supplement the money that they get from the state and city, widening the equity gap among BPS schools. WOULD YOU SUPPORT CHANGING CURRENT PRIVATE FUNDRAISING PRACTICES IN BPS SCHOOLS TO MAKE THEM MORE EQUITABLE?

NO

BPS Governance

The Mayor currently appoints all members of the school committee, who are then responsible for making policy decisions for Boston Public Schools. DO YOU SUPPORT A CHANGE IN BPS GOVERNANCE TO ALLOW BOSTON VOTERS THE RIGHT TO ELECT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, LIKE EVERY OTHER CITY IN MASSACHUSETTS?

YES

IF YES, please describe the model you would suggest.

I have long since advocated for a hybrid elected and appointed school committee model.

Currently there is one member of the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) on the School Committee, but they are the only member of the school committee that cannot vote. DO YOU SUPPORT THE STUDENT/BSAC REPRESENTATIVE HAVING THE RIGHT TO VOTE?

YES



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Legislative, Policy and Campaign

Have you been involved in any legislative efforts or ballot campaigns related to charter school growth or regulation?

YES

IF YES, please provide more detail below.

I was an early surrogate to the No On 2 campaign in 2016 and led canvasses alongside the MTA's Ann Clark. Additionally, I was the lead author (along with former Councilor Tito Jackson) in passing a resolution urging Bostonians to vote No on 2. We were the first city in the commonwealth to pass such a resolution and I believe helped spur dozens of other municipalities to follow our lead.

How did you vote on Ballot Question 2 in 2016, regarding raising charter cap?

NO

Please explain your reasoning for supporting either side of that question.

Until and unless the flawed funding formula is fixed, an increase in charter school seats would have negatively impacted the budgets of traditional public schools. This would have been acutely felt not only in Boston, but even more so in gateway cities. Question 2 was flawed and I was gratified that a substantial majority of the commonwealth voted against it.

Have you accepted or would you accept campaign contributions from charter school lobbyists, advocates, or activists?

YES

Please explain your reasoning for this position.

While I don't take corporate donations or PAC checks from groups like DFER, I can't answer No to this question as it is written. I am sure that I have received donations from some people who might consider themselves Charter school proponents over the last 9 years. That said, my record on standing up for traditional public schools and calling out the flawed charter reimbursement system is unassailable.

Briefly list any involvement you have had in legislative efforts or ballot campaigns related to other aspects of education, particularly around funding and/or equity.

In addition to my work on the No On 2 campaign in 2016, I was proud to have played a leadership role on supporting the Education Promise Act. Councilor Annissa Essaibi George and I were the lead sponsors of a Council resolution in support of the initiative by Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz and I have testified in support of it and several other similar bills.