



City Councilor Survey Responses - Holly Ryan

1. Do you support the Mayor's "Booster Stabilization Fund"? What are its strengths and what should change?

No. While I do want to strengthen operations funding to NPS, this proposal is not structured well enough to be effective at that goal, especially because it is spread over 8 years instead of a shorter timeline. There are alternative, fiscally responsible ways to allocate one-time and short-term funding to close the NPS budget gap during the coming 8 years before pensions pressure is alleviated and to improve public confidence in city services, more broadly. And we need to catch up on deferred maintenance in many areas of the city and our school buildings. I also disagree with linking the plan to pensions in any way.

2. What do you view as the relationship between new development (housing, commercial) and the schools?

New housing will bring more stability to enrollment levels and help spread fixed costs over greater numbers of residents, and new commercial development will strengthen long-term city revenues to pay for our school needs.

3. Please share your thoughts on the national teacher shortage, and how it impacts Newton's ability to attract and retain strong educators. Does a city councilor have a role? What is it?

Two big factors for teacher shortages are low compensation and low morale from a general lack of respect for the work they are doing to teach our kids. At the local level, a City Councilor should advocate for adequate funding for a fair contract and should promote more respect from city officials and the wider community for our hard-working educators. (This is what I strive to do already.)

4. Operating overrides help ensure the health of our schools. What is your plan for and role in ensuring successful overrides?

Overrides pass or fail based most of all on voters' confidence in the direction of the city and the schools. We need to take urgent action and surge our funding to visible improvements to facilities, services, and staffing now in order to persuade voters in the future to consider additional permanent funding in an override referendum.

5. The current contract offers teachers a COLA of 2% or less. NPS Unit C employees report a non-living wage. Do you believe it is reasonable to expect the NTA to accept the current terms? How can you, as a city councilor, advocate for a fair contract?

It is totally unreasonable to expect any of our educators to accept a contract they can't live on. I have always been a vocal supporter of a fair contract with a living wage and COLA, and I will continue to advocate for closing the NPS budget gap.

