



SHEILA MEHTA-GREEN

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Caucus Nominee: Yes

Campaign email: sheila@sheilaforbedford.org

Campaign website: <https://www.sheilaforbedford.org>

Facebook

Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sheilaforbedford>

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

I have been a Bedford resident for the last 21 years and an active volunteer in the Bedford Schools for the last 12 years. My interest in running for School Committee centers around "Advocacy for Education". I believe the value of experience, understanding the components of education, a proven track-record of collaboration within our school district and being an active member of the community will make me a valuable School Committee member.

For over 20 years, I have held leadership positions in education technology companies. My professional experience has given me experience and insight into being an active listener, identifying priorities, putting plans into action, measuring for success and the continued need to innovate to improve outcomes. For the last 12 years, I have had the opportunity to participate in many volunteer and leadership opportunities in our Bedford schools. One of the most impactful and rewarding roles has been serving as a Co-Chair of our Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC). I have been a leader in our community for academic and social support as well as community programming for all the students and families in special education.

I hold a Ph.D. in Sociology and have taught at Middlesex Community College for the last 20 years as an adjunct faculty member and at Northeastern University as an adjunct faculty member for the last 10 years. I see first-hand the importance of academic programming and support, to help students be successful for their post-high school plans. I enjoy teaching Sociology of the Family, Race and Ethnicity and Engaging Differences and Diversity and learning from all of my students.

Collaboration is essential in building consensus to turn ideas into action. Over the last 12 years, I have had many opportunities to work with students, families, teachers, administrators and our community members to help impact the educational experience in Bedford. I served as a room parent ten times through my sons' journeys through Davis and Lane. What a fantastic way to get to know the teachers, students and families in the Davis and Lane schools. I helped brainstorm with Principal Benoit and Principal Ackerman on how to better ensure the success of our Davis students when they moved to Lane, especially navigating their unstructured free time. One of the most significant collaborations was serving on the Back to School Committee

for the District and Back to School Committee for JGMS in the spring of 2020 as well as being part of the search committee for our JGMS Principal in 2021.

To me, being an “active member of the community”, is participating in a variety of activities, to engage with members of our community that support and enhance the culture of Bedford. For the last 21 years, together with my husband and sons, you can find us cheering loudly from the sidelines of the Great Road during Bedford Day and supporting all the groups, throughout the year, that march to help us celebrate our community. I can be found shopping locally to support local business and getting to know all the citizens of our town. I enjoy participating in fundraising events like the Thanksgiving Turkey Trot to support the Bedford Food Bank and the Bedford Education Foundation (BEF) which awards grants to our teachers to fund their innovative teaching ideas. You can always find me in the audience of our performing arts department and on the sidelines of local supporting events, cheering on the student athletes in our town.

I am excited and humbled to offer my service as one of your next School Committee members. I am asking for your vote on March 12. Thank you for your consideration.

REPLIES TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS QUESTIONS

Q1—In other districts and parts of the country, there are controversies about “critical race theory,” the appropriateness of some books, and the extent parents should determine the content of their children’s education. Are these issues in any way relevant in Bedford?

There is lots of buzz about “Critical Race Theory” these days and what it actually means. It is the linking of racism, race and power and how they are interrelated, most commonly taught in undergraduate and graduate education. When bringing the concepts of racism, race and power and understanding history together, these elements are appropriately present and taught in K12 education. In terms of content for our children’s education in Bedford, I have trust in our teachers, curriculum specialists and administrators in choosing age-appropriate content to teach our children about racism, race and power. It would be beneficial for the content provided to our children in school, also be made available to families and our community, so together we can have a common language to understand the relationship between racism, race and power within our community and society. It allows us all to have an open dialog on understanding history and how we all have the power to influence the future. Knowledge is power and continuing to bring in diverse content, fosters acceptance.

Q2—What is your plan regarding climate education?

I believe in climate education from both a scientific and practical perspective across our K12 curriculum. Using the data to explain the changes of global warming and how we as individuals and a collective society can actually make a difference. That the decisions we make, impact our environment. Focusing on the positive impact that sustainable energy, recycling, and

conservation are areas that we as an entire community can continue to improve on in our education and in practice. Currently in all four of our schools, there are curriculum and some extracurricular activities around climate education and protecting our environment, such as sustainable gardens, environmental clubs and science fairs. We should continue to add additional curriculum, teacher resources, extra-curricular and community-based opportunities, which will allow us to further our understanding of positive climate impact practices. .

Q3—Do you identify lingering issues in student academic growth as a result of the impact of Covid that need to be addressed?

I believe there are lingering academic growth issues as a result of COVID. In looking at the MCAS scores from 2019 compared to 2021, the “Meeting Expectations” scores were within 2 percentage points, in the low 50’s for ELA Gr 3 – 8, Math Gr 3-8 and Math Gr 10. For ELA Gr 10, was the difference of 5 percentage points, showing a decline in 2021 from 2019. MCAS is one data point, but it is a benchmark that helps us gauge our student’s comprehension of ELA and math. In speaking with several teachers, many are expecting the gap to be greater with the 2022 MCAS results. This year both teachers and students are working to catchup to get back to grade-level curriculum. There is learning loss on necessary skills that are needed as you advance in content complexity. Our schools anticipated this and have already added additional reading and math support in several areas. We will need to continue to provide proactive additional resources to ensure that successful grade-level performance metrics are achieved.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Being an effective advocate for education requires proven experience and success. For the last 12 years, I have held numerous volunteer and leadership positions in our school district, to help enable change, identify innovative educational opportunities and create a more inclusive educational experience for our students, families, teacher, administrators and our community. I have proven success in our school district with experience, relationship building, collaboration between parties and goals achieved. I would consider it an honor to serve on our School Committee. I humbly ask for your vote on March 12th, thank, you.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[Jenn Bouchard](#)

[Keith Colbath](#)

[Tara Goss](#)

[Ann Guay](#)

[Grace Induni Huberman](#)

[Dr. Richard Kaiser and Elizabeth Peters Kaiser](#)

[Jessica Leavell, Ph.D.](#)

[Holly Munsie](#)

[Erin Sandler-Rathe](#)