

2022 School Committee Candidates

Two to be elected for three years (* indicates incumbent)

Karen Bolognese*

Precinct 6

kmaruyam@umich.edu

Community Activities

Winchester School Committee:

2021 – present: School Committee Chair

2019 – present: Member

Other SC committees: Policy Subcommittee Chair, Curriculum Subcommittee Member, Negotiations, Liaison to Vinson Owen Elementary School, Winchester High School, and Parent Inter-School Council

Vinson Owen Elementary School:

2021 – present: Overall Enrichment Coordinator

2020 – present: Traffic Duty Volunteer

2016 – present: International Night, Co-Chair

2014 – present: Enrichment Coordinator for two grade levels

2013 – present: Science Park & Butterfly Garden, Co-Chair

2012 – 2014: School Council Member

McCall Middle School:

2021 – present: Enrichment Coordinator

2017-19 School Council Member

Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association, Member

Town Meeting

2012 – present: Member

Winchester Community Music School:

2020 – present: Governance Committee, Chair

2021 – present: Equity, Diversion, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee: Member

2018 – present: Board of Trustees, Member

Japanese Language School of Greater Boston:

2013 – 2021: Kimono Club, Culture Festival Volunteer, Parent Association

Professional Memberships:

American Veterinary Medical Association, Member since 2009

American Association of Equine Practitioners, Member since 2009

Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association, Member since 2018

Interests: Family, Japanese language & culture, travel, dressage, sports, music, food

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the School Committee?

I have served on the School Committee the last three years, including as Chair and Vice Chair. I have worked hard to lead a collaborative and thoughtful team and process -- driving sustainable policy, curriculum, and fiscal responsibility. It takes time and effort to build relationships with school and government organizations and to understand the issues and nuances. For two of the last three years of my term, the pandemic has had a profound effect on our community. As we emerge from this, I'm running for reelection to bring consistency, level-headed leadership, and the knowledge I've gained to help our district focus on long-term planning and to enable all our children to reach their full potential.

In addition, I bring my experience from Town Meeting since 2012; international experience in Tokyo, Japan, as an interpreter / translator for a major Japanese life insurer; and as Assistant Vice President of Finance with Ford Motor Company's start-up in the Philippines.

What current issues facing the Winchester Public Schools do you think are most important?

I believe that we must do everything to support students' mental health, especially post-pandemic, and continue our detailed planning efforts for a successful Lynch Elementary School building project.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

None of us could have imagined we would be dealing with a global pandemic that we would need to provide more social emotional support than ever to help our students emerge from this pandemic. I'm proud to have increased student support by hiring a Dean of Student Life, additional nurses, counselors, and programming for our students at all grade levels and development. While we have a lot done to help our students, the work needed to fully recover from this pandemic is not over. We need to ensure that fiscal responsibility, a strong curriculum, and diverse, inclusive schools are the foundation of post-pandemic student life. I will also continue to support and advocate for long-term district planning and responsible budgeting to make sure the needs of our children are met so our community can emerge from these COVID years better than we were before.

What are the long-term challenges facing the Winchester Public Schools?

I believe the new Lynch Elementary School must be built with a fiscally responsible plan to keep the project on time and on budget in order to meet the 2025 timeline. We must also maintain our long-term strategic visioning and planning for the Winchester Public Schools so our community can rely on a transparent, responsible process to ensure a bright future for our school system

Christian (Chris) Nixon*

Precinct 1

nixon01890@gmail.com

Community Activities

23-year Winchester resident - Precinct 1

Transplanted Texan loving New England

Hockey Dad of two girls and an adult son at Massachusetts Maritime Academy

In a medical marriage to a dedicated physician who has met COVID-19 head-on.

Can usually be found at a hockey rink somewhere if not at a Winchester committee meeting

Education

Undergraduate degree in Architecture, Art and Art History - Rice University, 1993

Graduate degree in Architecture - Rice University, 1995

Policy Fellow - Northeastern University, Institute for Educational Leadership - 2011

Community Roles & Tasks

School Committee: 2010-present

Town Meeting Member: 2008-present

Capital Planning Committee: 2014-2018, 2019-present

Educational Facilities Building and Planning Committee: 2010-2014, 2021-present

Audit Advisory Committee: 2012-present

Led Superintendent search process as: 2014-2015 (as School Committee Chair)

Co-authored Lynch and Muraco replacement Statements of Interest to MSBA: 2017, 2018, 2019

McCall Expansion Project Phase I & II Working Group: 2017-2018

Winchester Public Schools Facilities Master Plan Working Group: 2016-2017

Oversight of new Lynch design: 2021-present (as EFPBC member)

Oversight of new WHS Feasibility Study: 2012-2014 (as EFPBC member)

Oversight of new Vinson-Owen design: 2010-2012 (as EFPBC member)

Conceptual and Schematic Design for Muraco reconfiguration and expansion: 2009-2010

Developed district ADA transition plan rubrics and priorities for funding: 2012-13

Created websites for major school/Town initiatives including:

McCall expansion - tinyurl.com/mccallexpansionproject

2019 operating override - tinyurl.com/decision01890

Lynch Replacement Project - www.lynch2025.com

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the School Committee?

My experience as a parent of three kids who either grew up in the Winchester Public Schools (including the Lynch preschool) or my youngest who is at McCall today helps me understand our students' K-12 growth. But it's my experience on the School Committee and other key Town boards or committees that affords me a unique appreciation for how "Winchester works"...and how it doesn't. Beyond my role on the School Committee, where I've negotiated Superintendent and union contracts, I'm a veteran member of Town Meeting, Capital Planning Committee and the EFPBC where we are making exciting progress towards the "New Lynch" Elementary School. I have a hunger for achieving big goals as a district with a corresponding understanding for how to run the railroad. Understanding the basic duties, decisions and schedules of the School Committee are an essential element of high-functioning municipal government and a similar understanding of the workings of other essential Winchester public bodies means a better chance at collaboration and coordination on major shared initiatives,

investments and change. Having programmed, designed or managed over three million square feet of renovation and new construction, I bring helpful perspective and expertise on school capital projects— big and small.

What current issues facing the Winchester Public Schools do you think are most important?

Being a goal-oriented person, I'll address "issues" as "goals", and speak to those that fall outside the School Committee's usual work in the budget and policy realm:

1. Execute a long-term contract for Superintendent of Schools
2. In collaboration with the Superintendent, establish the Strategic Plan framework as discussed in December
3. Constructively negotiate a successor collective-bargaining agreement with the units of the Winchester Education Association
4. Passage of the Lynch Replacement Project Funding Agreement at Fall Town Meeting
5. Passage of the debt-exclusion override in January for construction of the New Lynch
6. Secure funding for much-needed improvements at the Lincoln Elementary School, McCall Middle School and our early work at the Parkhurst School and Carriage House to accommodate swing space for students as we build the "New Lynch"!

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about and what is your position on that issue?

All of the goals above are important individually and many are interdependent. They all have to happen. Thinking less about measurable goals but more broadly about communication, I'd like us to have a broader shared understanding of what we do, how we do it, and why. With the importance and meaning of standardized testing coming under more scrutiny nationally both at the secondary and post-secondary level (think of MCAS 2.0, and major changes from the College Board in the last two years), I'm appreciative of Winchester's emphasis on performance-based assessments, but with this it's important to be data-driven and to have some shared understanding of "what" we collect and "why". What can we and will we do with this information? How can we share it, learn from it and change our practices from it? What's the best way to share this with our parent community, as well? This is a subject that is both wide and deep and good work is already underway but, as I've noted before, it requires the right permanent team in place to challenge each other— and the School Committee!

What are the long-term challenges facing the Winchester Public Schools?

We need to rebuild much of the trust, mutual respect and civility that existed before the pandemic. Nerves are frayed and people are exasperated— I get it. Some measure of regular change is good. Too much is not. I could not have imagined three years ago that today I would be working with an Interim Superintendent, Interim Finance Director, Interim Town Manager, four fifths of a Select Board, and that two School Committee members would serve only one term, leaving in the midst of a public health crisis. Other senior educators have one foot out the door. Key committees like Capital and FinCom have similarly seen significant turnover and— with this— helpful perspective and institutional knowledge can be lost. The longer I've served, the more direct I've become: If elected, I will be the best mentor I can possibly be to School Committee members (particularly newer ones) and will work hard to help develop strong working relationships between the School Committee and other boards, committees and commissions in Winchester.

Above all else, voters should know that I respect— and will continue to respect— each and every member of our community. I do not believe in silencing those with contrary points-of-view. Though we surely do not all agree on everything, respectful public discourse at the School

Committee table is essential to good government. We should celebrate our successes and acknowledge (and learn from) our mistakes!

John F. Dobbins
Precinct 5

Community Activities:

- Coach & Mentor
- Bridget Brigade Foundation (Co-Founder & Treasurer) – Community charity that assists families struggling to care for a critically ill child and also supports Winchester and Boston area hospitals
- Naval Reservist

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the School Committee?

- Lifelong Winchester resident
- Educated three children in Winchester Public Schools
- Graduate of Winchester Public Schools
- Proud Veteran and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD
- Babson MBA
- Program Manager (responsible for cost, schedule and performance of large complex Air Force projects) at Hanscom
- American Airlines Union Member and Commercial Airline Pilot
- A good listener who will give parents a voice
- Will bring a “fresh set of eyes” to all matters before the School Committee

What current issues facing the Winchester Public Schools do you think are most important?

Children’s mental health and development, capital planning and teacher pay (too low)

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

Children’s mental health and development, exacerbated by the pandemic, social media and other pressures is of paramount concern. It can lead to addiction, depression, overdose and suicide. It needs to be addressed at every level of education.

What are the long-term challenges facing the Winchester Public Schools?

Long-term capital planning and teacher pay