

WaylandeNews Q&A with the School Committee Candidates

WaylandeNews has submitted the following set of questions to each of the candidates. Candidates were given 11 days to respond, and we requested that candidates adhere to a word-limit of 200 words per response, though indicated we would try not to truncate longer responses if the overall document remained of reasonable length. Many responses exceeded this limit, but we have not truncated them.

There are three candidates running for two three year terms: Barb Fletcher, Beth Butler and Alexia Obar. There are two candidates running for a one year term: Louis Jurist and Ellen Grieco.

1. Why did you decide to run for the seat on the School Committee?

THREE YEAR CANDIDATES:



BARB FLETCHER

One of the main reasons I am running for re-election is because the Wayland Public Schools are at a critical juncture with a new Superintendent beginning in July. Dr. Stein knows how to be a Superintendent with his vast experience in Newton, but being new to Wayland, he will need a great deal of support to fully understand our programs, our community, our values and our culture. With my knowledge and experience, I can offer that perspective to Dr. Stein.

Moreover, during the last six years, we have moved our school system forward during one of the most difficult economic times of our generation. There have been many accomplishments, such as conducting a successful Superintendent search, supporting the work of the High School Building Committee to modernize the high school facility, and recommending a budget that addresses the needs of the students, while respecting the fiscal constraints of the Town. Several initiatives have also been started that I would like to see through to their completion, which include acting upon the recommendations of the Abrahams Report after the Operations Review Committee has provided its final report and evaluating the Full Day Kindergarten and Student 1:1 Learning (technology) pilot initiatives. I would like to support the new Superintendent to ensure a smooth transition and to continue to seek ongoing improvement in providing a high quality educational program to our students.



BETH BUTLER

I am running for one of the two 3---year seats in order to build upon the experience I have acquired since my appointment to the School committee last June. My seriousness of my purpose is reflected in the fact that I ran just last Spring and lost narrowly. I then applied (as did two other people) for a seat that became vacant soon thereafter. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a member of the School Committee, and I believe I have made a positive contribution to its work. I ask the voters to keep me on the School Committee so I may continue to serve the students and residents in this district.



ALEXIA OBAR

I am running because I am passionate about public education and about our town’s future. I have experience in state government and strong leadership skills our board requires to navigate both our fiscal issues and changes in administrative leadership. This town is historically proud of its educational product and I want to continue that legacy.

The Abrahams report has shown a complete lack of checks and balances in our accounting systems and numerous efficiencies that are available on the business side of our school system. In recent years, the School Committee has demonstrated a lack of comprehension of our system’s resources, structure and needs before setting priorities and taking action. As a result, our system has suffered.

I believe it is essential that we analyze our schools’ strengths and weaknesses. We must celebrate the schools’ good work and find the courage to acknowledge and address areas for improvement.

I believe I can help us move forward as a community.

ONE YEAR CANDIDATES:



LOUIS JURIST

The Wayland Schools are at an exciting crossroads at this point in time, with new High School nearing completion, the ongoing budgetary and fiscal challenges being well-managed in these difficult times, and, most importantly, with an exciting new superintendent (Dr. Paul Stein) ready to assume office in a few months. I chose to run for an additional term to continue efforts in these areas and to have the opportunity to work with Dr. Stein during his transition and first year.



ELLEN GRIECO

I am running because I believe I can contribute greatly to the Committee and make a real difference. I am a taxpayer in Wayland, a lawyer with 25 years’ experience who has handled very significant administrative, corporate and financial matters, and mom of 2 young children who are at Claypit and Loker. I know how important open and proactive communication between the community and the schools is. Currently there are no School Committee members that have children in the elementary schools, even though our K-5 students makeup 41% of our Wayland school’s students. With the indication of a reconfiguration of the elementary schools and with the pending response to Abrahams group’s report, we need School Committee members who have elementary school children and an interest in long range planning and candid communication with the taxpayers about school finances.

I love our schools and the dedicated, creative teachers that make them so special. I will work to support them in every way that I can. For example:

Integration of New Superintendent. I would like to take advantage of the opportunity we have to build a constructive and open relationship with Dr. Stein, our new Superintendent of Schools. As a new member of the School Committee with legal and corporate background and children in the younger grades, I will contribute a uniquely new perspective and a lack of preconception on the critical issue of evaluating the schools financial position and on any upcoming grade school reconfiguration. (cont.)



ELLEN GRIECO

(continued)

Grade Schools. I believe neighborhood grade schools are the best configuration for Wayland and I would like to initiate discussion and planning on this issue. The current grade school configuration has serious disadvantages. I have reviewed the Superintendent's Staff Deployment and Class Size Report for 2010 - 2011 which reports that in the current year, 20 of 55 grade school classes are over the class size recommended by the School Committee, including 8 of the 9 kindergartens and 7 of the 8 first grades. I would like to develop a long range, careful and fiscally responsible plan for our grade schools and all the students who attend them, and ensure that every interested family and/or taxpayer has an opportunity to weigh in on this issue before any decision is made.

School Finances - Abrahams Draft Report. Last year we, the Wayland taxpayers, paid for a review of the school department finances by independent accountants at the Abrahams Group. The draft final report has found many deficiencies in accounting and budgeting and a serious lack of internal controls:

(1) Failure to employ standard controls in MUNIS, the municipal financial software, occasioning duplicate (and perhaps inaccurate) invoicing, record keeping and budgeting (Part 2, pp 7-12);

(2) Failure to appropriately provide interim budget and financial reports against the approved school budget either to the School Committee or to the public (Part 1, pp 10-11); and

(3) Failure to employ routine internal financial controls; e.g. maintaining unsupervised, illegal bank accounts at all five schools that total more than \$100,000, and employing unsupervised, single person responsibility for all School Department vendor set up, invoice submission and payment processes (Part 2, pp 15-19).

We can manage our schools and our money better than this. If I am elected I will be more rigorous and careful with the school funds whether accumulated through taxes or through donations.

2. Why should a voter choose you over your opponent(s)?

THREE YEAR CANDIDATES:



BARB FLETCHER

With many of the key administrators throughout the District being relatively new to their positions and the two School Committee members who are not up for re-election having only two or fewer years of experience, the incoming Superintendent will need support from other Committee members who have a deep understanding of both the complexity of the system, as well as of the community. With three children currently in the school system, and one recently graduated, with the many volunteer positions I've held over the last 13 years, and with my six years of experience on the School Committee participating in discussions about the programs and practices throughout the District, I can offer that perspective to Dr. Stein.

I understand the varied educational requirements of students throughout the entire pre-K-12 system. I understand how the school system operates and the complicated budget that supports it. I understand the competing priorities both within the district, as well as within the context of the broader community and how to collaborate with other parts of town government in order to balance the many needs throughout Wayland. And finally, having the perspective of how and why decisions were made in the past, I will be able to help the new Superintendent and the Committee make informed and thoughtful decisions during the upcoming three years.



BETH BUTLER

Because experience counts:

School Committee experience: My School Committee experience is relatively brief, but it has been intense, wide-ranging, and well-informed by state-mandated school committee member training. We've accomplished much since last July 1, including:

- The selection of Dr. Paul Stein, currently Deputy Superintendent of the Newton Schools, as our next Superintendent, following a well-planned process that was inclusive and open and took place well ahead of the many other districts in need of a superintendent. (We were fortunate indeed to have a hard-working, representative Search Committee screen more than 24 applicants and present to us three outstanding finalists for day-long visits to Wayland and a formal public interview). With his outstanding professional qualifications, experience and warm intelligence, Dr. Stein will be a great fit for Wayland.
- The signing of a new three-year contract with the teachers, ensuring fiscal predictability and academic stability as we transition from the steady leadership of Dr. Gary Burton to the first year of Dr. Stein's leadership of the schools.
- The continued oversight of the High School Building Committee's outstanding work as the new high school construction approaches completion on time and on budget.
- The creation, implementation and support of policies affecting the health and welfare of students, such as the state-mandated anti-bullying policy (district-wide) and the initiative, jointly approved by the Board of Health and the School Committee, to offer education and prevention of sexually transmitted infections at the high school. (continued ->)



BETH BUTLER

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Community and Professional Experience: I bring extensive experience as a community member and parent involved with the schools (resident since 1988, school volunteer since 1995) and youth (five years on the Youth Advisory Committee to the Wayland Youth & Family Services). I understand the ways in which town departments interact with and affect other town departments, both in terms of budgeting and collaboration on joint initiatives.

I bring legal experience: prosecutor and civil litigator for 15 years, Superior Court judge for 13 years, and mediator and arbitrator after my retirement from the bench in 2003.

These experiences have honed my analytical skills and reinforced my appreciation for the many benefits of collaborative work.



ALEXIA OBAR

Our 1,181 elementary students comprise almost half of the school population. Our elementary students will spend half of their Wayland educational experiences in the elementary schools. Yet, no current School Committee members have young children.

At candidates night everyone agreed that the overcrowding at the elementary level was a priority for the Committee and I would bring an intimate knowledge of the issues large and small in the elementary schools, which would be an asset to the new superintendent.

I have been active in Wayland's schools since 2004, and have volunteered in the schools. I will have children in the elementary and middle schools for years. My youngest child is in second grade, and my oldest is in sixth grade. My engagement in the schools has afforded me in-depth knowledge of the issues facing the elementary and middle school populations. I can represent their needs on the School Committee.

My background in government will help me advocate for Wayland on the state level. I served as chief of staff for Rep. Barbara Gray at the Massachusetts State House. During my tenure at the State House, I dealt with all aspects of the state budget process including the complexity of local aid funding.

ONE YEAR CANDIDATES:



LOUIS JURIST

We need to have an element of stability and experience on the School Committee in general, but with a new superintendent, a set of new administrators, and the many challenges and issues we will be facing, this is more important now than ever. While a constant infusion of new committee members is desirable, we do have 3 members already who are currently in their 1st or 2nd year. If Barb Fletcher and I are not re-elected, the average tenure of all 5 School Committee members will be less than 1 year. Having been a parent with children in the schools for over 13 years, and with over 25 student-years in the system, and many more to go, I have a full perspective on the entire K-12 curriculum and program, and with a continued stake in the future.



ELLEN GRIECO

Integration of New Superintendent. As a new member of the School Committee I will bring an objective and fresh perspective to integrating Dr. Stein and the School Committee on which I serve will have at least three members in their second or third year of service who can provide history and continuity for Dr. Stein. I believe this mix of fresh perspective and continuing service is optimal for the School Committee during the new Superintendent's transition. I do not see how retaining a School Committee of five incumbents can provide a balanced perspective for Dr. Stein. Rather, as a new member with a legal and corporate background and children in the younger grades, I will contribute a uniquely new perspective and a lack of preconception on the critical issue of evaluating the school's financial position and on any upcoming grade school reconfiguration.

Grade Schools Configuration. At School Committee meetings I have heard the incumbents suggest a grade level configuration as an alternative. In Wayland, our schools are spread out through the neighborhoods (not clustered in a school park) and a grade level system would require extensive busing and a significant transition for the children every couple of years.

I am concerned that the incumbent Committee members who were responsible for the 2008 reduction in the grade schools, are telling us that we need to consider reconfiguring the grade schools again. Frankly and completely apart from this campaign, as a mother and a taxpayer, that makes me nervous. Based on the Committee's inappropriate and ineffective communication with the public in 2008 and their complete lack of explanation of any real savings from the 2008 reconfiguration, I don't believe the incumbent School Committee members are qualified to address this issue again.

I would like to take an objective look at what happened in 2008, and develop a long range, careful and fiscally responsible plan for our grade schools with the full participation of all interested parents and taxpayers before any decision is made.

School Finances - Abrahams Draft Report. Last year the taxpayers paid for a review of the school department finances by independent accountants at the Abrahams Group. The draft final report has found many deficiencies in accounting and budgeting and a serious lack of internal controls, some of which are detailed above.

We can manage our schools and our money better than this. Last Thursday night I listened to the incumbents on the School Committee running for reelection state publicly that they would support follow through on the findings in the Abrahams Report. That is nice and if they are elected, I hope they will rigorously do so for all our sakes. But I am left to wonder why they were not aware of the many financial, budgeting and accounting deficiencies and irregularities discovered by Abrahams during the past 6 years that they were responsible for the school administration and the school budget. If I am elected I will be more rigorous and careful with the school funds. At a minimum, I will obtain interim spending reports, and I will rigorously assess the available financial resources before making decisions that impact education.

3. If you are elected, is there anything specific you would like to encourage the Committee to do that is currently not on their agenda?

THREE YEAR CANDIDATES:



BARB FLETCHER

There are two specific efforts I would like the School Committee to explore. First, with the incoming Superintendent, I would like the District to conduct a Long Range Strategic Plan, especially since it has been several years since the last one was completed. I recently read an article that synthesized the goals of public education into 8 broad categories:

- Basic academic skills
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Social skills and work ethic
- Citizenship
- Physical health
- Emotional health
- The arts and literature
- Preparation for skilled employment

As part of this effort, I would like to understand how various constituencies, including the Superintendent, Administrators, teachers, staff, School Committee, parents and community members, feel about the balance between these 8 categories as goals for the District. I believe all are important but there needs to be a conversation about where the priorities should be as we look 1, 5 and 10 years out.

Second, as teachers are the school system's most important asset, I believe teacher evaluation and professional development are critical components of hiring, developing and retaining high quality teachers who have high expectations. I believe we could learn from the incoming Superintendent's work that he has pursued on teacher evaluations in his prior job. We could also explore professional development opportunities for teachers that are directly related to their individual job responsibilities, a form of differentiated instruction for teachers.



BETH BUTLER

As the School Committee has considered many initiatives and proposals in the past, any specific topic I mention here is most likely to have been discussed previously. That said, I would encourage the Committee to have a retreat in late spring, subject to the Open Meeting Law, to review process and protocol for School Committee work. With three current members, including myself, having two years or less experience, it is imperative that all members are fully informed of, and have the opportunity to discuss, best practices as we work for common purposes that are broader than individual interests.

We should also have a meeting with the new superintendent, and other key administrators, to review process and protocols, with a goal of ensuring a smooth start in September.



ALEXIA OBAR

We must effect change in the way our School Committee operates in order to ensure the quality of our schools. We need to be receptive and proactive in order to understand and respond to the needs of our students, parents, teachers and the community at large. We must address the challenging issues facing our schools, including implementation of the recommendations of the Abrahams report, prioritization of spending in order to achieve purposeful planning, and alleviation of current overcrowding in the schools.

ONE YEAR CANDIDATES:



LOUIS JURIST

The School Committee will have a full slate going forward. The budget will always be a challenge, as we need to continue to simultaneously fund a top school system while remaining fiscally responsible to the town. We need to fully integrate the process improvements as will be recommended by the Operations Review Committee that will make the system more accurate, reproducible, and transparent. We will need to evaluate and address the elementary schools organization to make the best use of our facilities and personnel. Also on the agenda for this spring will be to work with the Technology Task Force to find the right balance for integration of educational technology in the classroom.



ELLEN GRIECO

See my response to Questions 1, 2 and 6. I believe that integrating the new superintendent and the new high school facility, as well as addressing the deterioration of our grade schools and the financial deficiencies found by the Abrahams Report are all priorities for the School Committee in the coming year.

4. Should cutting taxes or limiting tax increases be given priority over the preservation of services?

THREE YEAR CANDIDATES:



BARB FLETCHER

From my experience on the School Committee these last six years, I have learned that issues such as this one are very complicated and that there is not a simple yes or no answer to this question. As a School Committee, we have worked hard to provide a high quality educational program to Wayland students while respecting the fiscal constraints facing the Town and its residents. Since I have been on the Committee, the School Committee has met the Finance Committee budget guideline every year. Through its budget process, the School Committee has consolidated classes where possible due to declining enrollment, found cost savings through efficiencies, and looked for additional revenue opportunities. In addition, the Committee negotiated agreements with the school unions, resulting in fair and fiscally responsible settlements and changes to health care. However, when reductions to the budget are needed to meet the Finance Committee guideline, the Committee works with the Administration to understand the impact these reductions will have on the educational program and the students. In this context, priorities are discussed and debated. Only through such conversations can informed decisions be made as to whether it is advisable to meet the Finance Committee guideline, thereby, impacting the level of taxes imposed upon Wayland residents. The School Committee follows a similar process with its capital budgets, such as this year's technology capital request, balancing the needs of the District with the fiscal constraints facing the Town.



BETH BUTLER

I believe our starting point as a school committee is to support the preservation and improvement of the schools. It's also incumbent on us as a committee to consider carefully the fiscal guidelines set by the Finance Committee and to encourage efficiencies within the school system in an effort to limit tax increases.

In every budget cycle, the schools, like all other town departments, face the simultaneous concerns of maintaining or even enhancing services while wrangling costs that are often beyond the town's control. To that end, we five school committee members set budget guidelines and priorities, understanding that there may be trade-offs if, for example, a program is added or subtracted, or class sizes are adjusted up or down. We then look to the school professionals, led by the superintendent, to confer with each other, take into serious consideration the needs of the district as a whole, and present their operating and capital needs for our review and approval. It's a long, painstaking process that seeks to balance competing needs, and ultimately may require making difficult decisions.



ALEXIA OBAR

Recently, the Abrahams Group released its draft final report, which reveals numerous flawed budgeting practices and procedures. At the same time, over the past few years, we have seen an increase in taxes and a loss of services. Specifically, we passed numerous overrides to maintain our services. The taxpayers made sacrifices while at the same time, in the words of Superintendent Gary Burton, he was presiding over the “dismantling of the school system.” Citing fiscal responsibility and claiming a trim budget, the School Committee slashed teaching positions, eliminated a Middle School cluster, increased class sizes, and closed an elementary school.

Had the proper oversight been in place, we might not have had to endure either of these undesirable choices. I believe we owe it to our taxpayers and to our students to search out efficiencies that allow us to decrease costs without directly affecting our students.

Once we get our financial house in order, we will be better equipped to prioritize and make purposeful long-term goals.

ONE YEAR CANDIDATES:



LOUIS JURIST

We must continuously do both. As we have done, we will need to continue to preserve the curriculum and maintain the high quality school program the town expects while being fiscally responsible to the entire town. We have been able to balance this tightrope without the need for an Operational Override since the 2008 vote.



ELLEN GRIECO

Responsibly managing the tax burden and preserving the academic standards and enriching services of our schools are equally important priorities for a member of the School Committee. In my walks around Wayland over the past weeks, I have spoken with many people who are concerned about one or both of these priorities, either because they have children in the schools and want the best education available, or because they are older and are concerned with the extremely high tax rate in Wayland and how they will meet that burden on a fixed income, or they are trying to sell their house and want to pitch the excellent schools but are unable to attract buyers because of the tax rate, or simply because they have lived in Wayland a long time and want the outstanding reputation of the Wayland Public Schools to endure. The members of the School Committee are responsible to all these taxpayers and parents. A question like this raises my thoughts on how we can be truly responsible to both of these priorities. One way is to be very careful and responsible with the school resources we have accumulated through taxing the towns' people and thoughtful donations. The draft final report from the independent accountants at the Abrahams Group has made it clear that at least over the past few years, fiscal responsibility and careful accounting for existing funds have not been priorities for the School Committee. As noted above, Abrahams has reported serious financial, accounting and budgeting deficiencies in the School Department. Abrahams has also suggested \$1.1 million in savings that could be achieved by the Wayland Schools. Why was this savings not achieved under the incumbent School Committee?

5. Is there any elected official or other prominent person inside or outside of Wayland whose qualities you admire that you would like to bring to your role on the Board?

THREE YEAR CANDIDATES:



BARB FLETCHER

There are many exemplary leaders in our society today, so to choose just one is difficult. The qualities of such leaders that I admire and try to emulate in my role as a School Committee member are those that relate to decision making. I believe it is critical as a School Committee member to take the time to listen to all points of view, seek appropriate advice, collect the relevant data, ask probing questions, and conduct meaningful analysis in order to make informed and thoughtful decisions for the District.

It is particularly important to weigh the pros and cons of each decision as it is rare that an answer is a simple one. There are usually multiple perspectives to every issue. As some people may know, I often play devil’s advocate in such discussions. I believe playing devil’s advocate can serve a key role in understanding all sides, providing clarity around the issue at hand and bringing consensus to the group. By fostering such conversations, the decision making process becomes productive rather than confrontational and allows the Committee to move forward, recognizing that sometimes difficult decisions are not always popular.



BETH BUTLER

I admire many, many people in this great town. I am acutely aware that there are hundreds more, whom I have not met, or who lived here long before I came to town in 1988, who have given generously of themselves to make this town such a wonderful place. I will, however, name Lea Anderson as an outstanding town resident/official whom I admire. A longtime, dedicated volunteer in town and in the schools, Lea served on the School Committee from 1994 to 2003. During her three terms, Lea worked tirelessly and cooperatively to improve the schools. She then undertook to shepherd the building of a much-needed new high school. Through almost 120 meetings of the High School Building Committee, Lea has been a steadfast supporter of a new high school in the face of many obstacles. Lea’s patience, openness, tact, diplomacy and quiet determination despite sometimes long odds, have resulted in a high school project that is beautifully managed by the extraordinarily talented High School Building Committee that she chairs. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the new high school will open on time and on budget, by the end of next year.

What I admire most about Lea is her calm professionalism, efficient running of meetings, and collaborative way of getting things done. Lea gives credit to all others first and in so doing, inspires all others to do their best work on behalf of the project at hand



ALEXIA OBAR

I greatly admire Desmond Tutu. Tutu has never shied away from difficult issues. He tackles them straight on. Even with fame and a position of social authority, he openly advocates for justice on behalf of those who do not have power: the oppressed, the poor, and the sick. Not only does he follow his passion for justice, but also he demonstrates to the rest of us, the power of understanding and forgiveness.

While Desmond Tutu is unwavering in his religious beliefs, he attaches great importance to religious inclusiveness and interfaith dialogue. He is willing to listen respectfully to those who hold different beliefs. He has fostered understanding and built bridges between opposing groups.

One of my favorite Tutu quotes is the following: "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." His exceptional leadership has fostered practices, approaches, and tools that we can use to improve society through our own contributions.

I would like to bring his spirit of justice, inclusiveness, communication, forgiveness, and activism to the School Committee. We need to work towards progress together for our children, our schools, and our community.

ONE YEAR CANDIDATES:



LOUIS JURIST

Throughout her work on the High School Building Committee, and before that on the School Committee, Lea Anderson has always conducted herself admirably. She has remained steadfastly focused on the goals at hand while always being considerate of all opinions and working with everyone. Despite the occasional setback, she has maintained a cheerful outlook and remained positive about Wayland and the schools. She and the personnel on her committee are the main reasons we are looking at the completion of the new high school at this point in time and so successfully.





ELLEN GRIECO

Terry Francona, the Sox manager who led the team during that amazing historic post-season run, is a public figure with very admirable qualities.

During that magical season, and the six major league seasons since, Francona has displayed an uncanny ability to steadily, quietly and effectively manage in the face of great challenges and extraordinary pressure. By most accounts, Terry Francona is valued and respected by everyone in spite of the fact that he's constantly required to balance the interests and expectations of diverse and demanding constituencies. Francona is known as an open and honest communicator, with a reputation for confronting problems head-on and not shying away from tough decisions, all while extending loyalty and respect to those around him.

These are impressive qualities to be admired, and to the extent possible emulated by anyone seeking to make a difference.

6. Please take this opportunity to state anything about yourself that you would like voters to know.

THREE YEAR CANDIDATES:	
 <p>BARB FLETCHER</p>	<p>I believe that education is one of the pillars of our society and all children should have access to a high quality public education. We are fortunate to live in a community that values education and cares about its children. I also believe deeply in the value of being an active member of a community. I have worked thousands of hours during these last six years as a School Committee member and as a volunteer in the school system to give back to my community. I believe my strong finance background, having earned a Masters in Business Administration from the Tuck School at Dartmouth College and my work in investment banking and currently in the business office of a tuition-free middle school for low income families in Dorchester, has helped make me a valued member of the School Committee. I would be honored to serve another three years.</p>
 <p>BETH BUTLER</p>	<p>I have followed with great interest the work of the Operational Review Committee (ORC) and the draft reports of the Abrahams Group, which are still being reviewed, corrected where appropriate, and discussed by the ORC. I look forward to seeing the final reports, and hearing the presentation by the ORC of the reports along with its recommendations.</p> <p>As discussed at a recent School Committee meeting, all of the members of the School Committee are interested in this important review of practices and procedures. I look forward to a serious, non-political discussion about the recommendations of the ORC, which was charged to do this work, once the ORC is ready to present its findings to the Board of Selectmen, FinComm and School Committee.</p> <p>Finally, a personal note: thank you for your interest in the Wayland Schools and this election in which three seats are at stake. I respectfully ask for your vote on Tuesday, April 5, so that I can continue to work on behalf of our town and especially its children, by serving on the School Committee for the next three years.</p>



ALEXIA OBAR

My husband Mike and I have three children in the 2nd, 4th and 6th grades in the public schools. We are grateful to live in a community that values and supports education. I am passionate about public education. I am a product of public education. I have seen through my extensive volunteering that the Wayland Public School system deserves its excellent reputation.

In the schools almost every week, for PTO, book groups, or Cultural Enrichment, I see our dedicated teachers at work. To date, my children have attended The Children's Way, Loker, Happy Hollow, and the Middle School. Our teachers consistently go the extra mile. At the same time they are attending to the needs of the class, they strive to meet my children's individual needs. They teach beyond the MCAS, creating rich learning experiences that demand and develop critical thinking skills. We are blessed to have such dedicated professionals working with our children.

For generations our schools have performed well. Our children have flourished. Our reputation has endured. We owe it to our teachers and to our children to create the best environment within our means for them to continue their hard work.

I offer my skills and knowledge of government. I want to continue the legacy.

ONE YEAR CANDIDATES:



LOUIS JURIST

Please see my Candidate's Statement for any additional information, or contact me with any questions. I would appreciate the opportunity to continue working on these many issues and areas, and particularly the opportunity to work with Dr. Stein as he assumes his new position. Thank you for your consideration, and please make sure to vote on April 3 and attend Town Meeting starting on April 7.



ELLEN GRIECO

My husband Bill and I have two young children, one in the 4th grade at Claypit Hill and one in kindergarten at Loker. Both our children have had fantastic teachers in the Wayland Schools, including at the Children's Way. Because of these dedicated and creative people who have encouraged and inspired our children and held them to rigorous standards, they have had a wonderful learning experience so far. To me, this is one of the most important things about living in Wayland. I have very positive and warm feelings about the Wayland schools.

Why do I care about our schools? Because school is where our children are inspired, where they think about themselves out in the world and about what they would like to do or to be. School is where they define their intellectual and creative likes and dislikes, and often where they articulate themselves by themselves for the first time. School is where they try new things and discover all that they do not know. School is where they discover each other and the limits and the limitlessness of their horizons. There are few things so inspiring and moving as watching your child --or any child-- succeed in school. From the kindergartner who is speaking on a public stage for the first time, to the high school senior who is having a paper published or receiving a science prize, few experiences bring greater joy. It is an experience of such hope and satisfaction for parents and more importantly for the children themselves. A dream

come true.

It is for this that I want to work to support the infrastructure of our schools - to provide this outstanding education for Wayland's children.