

## 2021 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section 1: BACKGROUND

1. What is your name, age, place of birth and present address?

Erin Murphy, 51, Dorchester (St. Margaret's Hospital), 138 Msgr. Lydon Way, Dorchester

2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.

I have been a public school teacher for the past 24 years. I was a kindergarten teacher in Boston Public Schools for most of my teaching and was a Special Education Coordinator (Team Facilitator) the last few years.

3. Please detail your personal educational background and achievements.

I enrolled at UMass Boston in September 1988, right after high school. Before my freshman year was over I became pregnant. As a teenage mother I was scared and knew that I needed to stay in school to make a good life for my small family, but with very few resources to turn to, I had no idea if I could do it.

I waitressed nights and weekends and took classes during the day but it became very difficult and expensive to keep it all together. I cut back to part-time classes so I could pay the rent and care for my son, and it took me nine more years to finally graduate with a degree in Business Management and Education.

By the time I graduated in 1999, eleven years after starting, I was pregnant with Michael, my youngest, and had buried my son Colin. My twenties were a struggle to say the least but I persevered and did what was necessary to become a Boston Public School teacher.

I received my Masters degree in education several years later and am certified in four separate teaching specialties: Special Education English as a Second Language, Early Childhood w/ Disabilities and Elementary Education.

I understand the challenges facing working people, whether young and single or older and planning for our own children's educations. Sometimes I don't

know whether to laugh or cry realizing that I am still paying off my own student loans at the same time that I am applying for student loans for my two college-aged children (both attending MA state colleges!)

If you want a City Councilor who understands the worries and struggles that keep you up at night because they are the exact same worries and struggles I face, I ask you to vote for me.

### **Leadership and Awards**

Mayor Martin J. Walsh's Educational Transitional Team

Political Candidacy Training, Emerge Massachusetts, Class of Spring 2017

Unsung Heroine of Massachusetts 2016, Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Extraordinary Woman of Boston 2016, City of Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh

James F. Gavin Award 2015 for Outstanding Contributions to Recovery Services

Mayor of Dorchester (Honorary) 2014

The Gavin Foundation, Committee Member

South Boston Health Center, Committee Member

Recovery Corps, Chairperson, Mayor's Office of Recovery Services

Committee Member of Dorchester Day Parade

Committee Member of Adams Street Branch Library Project

Dorchester Running Club, Executive Committee

Dorchester Online Times (DOT), founded an online bulletin to promote positive news and events in Dorchester. Viewed by thousands of daily visitors.

Delegate of Ward 16 Democratic Committee

Instructional Leadership Team, Henderson Inclusion School

School Based Management Team, Henderson Inclusion School

Boston Public Schools New Teacher Development Mentor

Boston Public Schools Student Teacher Supervisor

**Education:** Bachelor of Science: Business Management, History, and Elementary Education

Certificate Program, University of Massachusetts at Boston, 1999.

Masters Degree in Media Technology, Fitchburg State College, 2007.

Certifications: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Educator's Certificate Number #359760

Professional License in Early Childhood ~with or without disability: PreK-2

Professional License in Elementary: Grades 1-6

Professional License in English Language Learners

Professional License in Moderate Special Needs

4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations and political groups.

I work closely with the Gavin Foundation supporting their recovery services and outreach to the community. I ran the Boston Marathon three times and raised over

\$50,000. I was most proud of my tireless work fighting the stigma associated with addiction and mental health. I continue to support families in recovery and am on the Gavin Foundation Annual Gala team. I also help on the South Boston Health Center team making sure they have the resources necessary to provide all the resources the community needs.

5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader? I know I will be the most effective at-large city councilor for the same reason I have been an accomplished special education Public School teacher for twenty-four years, because I care about this city, its children, and our shared future.

I have been a mother for the past 32 years, and many of those years as a single mother. I've dealt with a lot of the same issues many of you have: figuring out the public school maze for our kids, dealing with mental health and recovery issues in our families, how to juggle childcare and work, and how to stretch a paycheck in a city that is extremely expensive to live in.

I believe that my experience as...

1: an educator in Boston, where I was fortunate to teach hundreds of Boston children over the last 20+ years, and work closely with their families advocating for and supporting them every step of the way.

2: my experience as a mother for 32 years, raising my children here in the City. I was a teen age mom, a single mom and have struggled through burying one of my children.

3: my lived experiences make me empathetic, approachable and trustworthy. I have dealt with addiction and mental health in my family, like so many across the city do, I am a renter and know first hand how expensive it is to live in the City.

6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?

1: Being a mom, a teacher and mentor to so many.

2. In 2015, after running my first Boston Marathon (at the age of 45) for the Gavin Foundation, I received the James F. Gavin Award for my commitment to helping those in recovery. I went on and ran the marathon in 2016 and 2017 and raised over \$55,000 for recovery services and to help fight the stigma associated with addiction. I have been, and continue to be, a strong advocate for those in recovery, those struggling with mental health, their families, and helping to fight the stigma associated with it.

3: Being brave enough to leave my teaching career, that I loved, after 24 years and put everything on the line to run for Boston City Council At Large. I believe that I will make a difference in the lives of so many, and the City needs a committed, hard working person like myself on the council to help bring us back, together.

7. Are you a member of a union?

Yes. I am a proud union member and true friend to labor. I always say that if it wasn't for my great union job with the Boston Public Schools that I would not have been able to afford to raise my children here in the City.

8. Please list any endorsements to date.

State Representative Dan Hunt  
State Representative Dan Ryan  
State Representative Ed Coppinger  
City Councilor Frank Baker  
Register of Deeds Stephen Murphy  
Former Boston City Councilor Sal LaMattina  
Laborers Union Local 223  
North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters  
IBEW Local 103  
SEIU Local 888  
SEIU NAGE  
Boston EMS  
Boston Firefighters Local 718IAFF  
Massachusetts Nurses Association  
Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts  
Boston Police Superior Officers Federation  
Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus  
Greater Boston Building Trades  
IBEW Local 2222  
Plumbers and Gasfitters Local 12  
Sprinkler Fitters and Apprentices of Boston Local 550  
Ma & No. New England Laborer's District Council  
Boston Carmen's Union Local 589  
Plasterers & Cement Masons Local 534  
Sheet Metal Workers Local 17  
Roofers & Waterproofers Local 33  
Heat & Frost Insulators Local 6  
Floor Coverers Local 2168  
Bricklayers & Allied Craftsmen Local 3

## Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?

I am a registered democrat and find myself aligned with many of their positions, but over the years I have found Identity Politics has stretched the party far left. If there were a party affiliation, or a box I could check, which believed in common sense, hard work, opportunity for all, and working together then label me there!

2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.

I prefer doers not talkers. Although I admire bits and pieces of quite a few politicians, I wouldn't consider many of them role models.

I always respected Jimmy Carter's kindness and how he cared about people and always helped them. He spent 30 years helping build and renovate homes for Habitat for Humanity, and still volunteers at the age of 96.

I appreciated Ronald Reagan's ability to make America proud of itself again.

Locally, I worked very hard to help get Mayor Walsh elected and I appreciated his ability to bring the City together, and his administration's belief in WHAT IS POSSIBLE.

I was inspired by Mayor Menino's understanding of the City and always having a pulse on the neighborhoods. He governed from the coffee shops and ball parks, not just from City Hall. He believed in the nuts and bolts of city government, and making sure that city services were being delivered all across Boston. That is how I will lead. Showing up and working hard for the residents of Boston.

3. Are you in favor of term limits for the seat you are seeking? If so, how many terms?

Yes, I believe in term limits and think five terms, ten years, should be the max.

4. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston? Do you favor same-day voter registration or lowering the voting age to 16? Do you favor mail-in voting?

To increase voter turnout we need to focus on civic engagement. Many people I talk to tell me they do not vote because they feel no one is listening to them, and they have lost hope that things will change. Candidates, and elected officials, need to show up, listen and learn. This means in every neighborhood across the City.

I believe if you give people a reason to vote, they will come out. You need to make government inclusive so everyone feels their voice matters.

I am not in support of lowering the voting age to 16, but strongly support more outreach from our civic leaders and elected officials by visiting middle and high schools and talking about issues that impact the City and how they can become more civically engaged. As a teacher for over 20 years, and a mom who has raised my children, I do not feel that 16 year olds should be given the burden and responsibility to make decisions that will affect our city state and country. They are not informed enough to make these decisions on their own, and I worry that they would be influenced by schools, or other agencies, to vote a certain way. Just because the turnout is so low, single digits in some elections, we should be focusing on getting those who are eligible to get out and vote, and not turn to our youth to make turnout higher.

I favor mail in voting only if we are sure that it is safe and accurate. I prefer in person voting and would love to see an Election Day holiday so people are not rushing around on a Tuesday each Fall trying to get to work, drop kids off at school, and get to the polls to vote. I would also support expanding early voting at different sites across the City starting one month before election day.

5. Do you think that Boston should adopt a rank-choice voting system in upcoming election cycles?

No, I do not think the information and education is there yet.

### **Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES**

1. What is your top priority if elected?

#### **Education**

As an educator in the Boston Public Schools for more than twenty years, I know what is working well and what needs to be addressed. I will make it a priority that all families have access to a high quality public school in every neighborhood. I will advocate for a re-commitment to a comprehensive vocational high school, and I will focus on providing more inclusive options for our special needs students. I will see that we provide trauma training for our teachers and school staff to properly address the social and emotional needs of so many of our students, and streamline the after-school programs so that all students and families have affordable and enriching after-school opportunities.

## 2. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?

As a mom raising my family in Dorchester, public safety matters to me. I want every resident in every neighborhood to know they have a right to safety on our streets no matter what time it is, what street it is, what they look like, or what they're doing.

I believe City Councilors can address the violence in the City in systematic ways by

1. Working with Community and Youth Leaders, especially with the Churches and other established non-profits, to increase trust and hear directly from them what they need.
2. Working with and supporting our Boston Police Department as they face increasing crime and increasingly violent criminal interactions in our streets.
3. Put an emphasis on programs and policies that reduce working stress on our officers and that build on our nationally recognized community policing models.

In 2019, there were 119 new Boston Police cadets sworn in. One year later, in 2020, that number was fewer than 30. We must do better at attracting, training, supporting, improving, and expanding our diverse and professional police force.

I believe community policing works and I support the Boston Police Department's commitment to it, and to continuing the cadet program that allows the police to recruit residents from all neighborhoods. Making sure there are great public schools, activities and jobs for our teens and young adults, and addressing the opioid epidemic will help. Empowering the residents in every neighborhood will offer them hope and have a positive impact on the public safety of our city.

## 3. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.

Our public schools. As an educator in the Boston Public Schools for more than twenty years, I know what is working well and what needs to be addressed. I will make it a priority that all families have access to a high quality public school in every neighborhood. I will advocate for a re-commitment to a comprehensive vocational high school, and I will focus on providing more inclusive options for our special needs students. I will see that we provide trauma training for our teachers and school staff to properly address the social and emotional needs of so many of our students, and streamline the after-school programs so that all students and families have affordable and enriching after-school opportunities.

4. What is your position on residency, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?

I am a big proponent for City jobs for City kids. I am also aware of the high cost of living and the high cost of housing in the City. With that in mind, we need to provide more affordable housing for those in jobs that require residency. We should offer mortgages at discounted rates for City employees.

5. The city of Boston presently owns and manages the historic Strand Theater in Uphams Corner. How would you seek to program, market and utilize this asset?

I have many fond memories of the Strand Theater from when I was a young girl. My mother worked there, and I loved playing on the stage, and handing out brochures on show nights. We should work closer with our local artists. Perhaps, we need to turn this over to artist's and entrepreneurs. We are such a wealthy City that it seems implausible that the Strand is not exploding with artistic energy. I love the idea of the Uphams Corner Artistic District and with COVID, it's hard to see where that might have gone, but maybe through PILOT money we might offer 52 weeks of programming for great community organizations like Urbanity.

6. What is your position on vaccinations? Should students be required to be vaccinated for Covid-19 to attend school in Boston?

I believe vaccinations are critical for the City. I'm worried that some of the rhetoric is only confusing people more and continuing to drive the wedge in the community and putting a spotlight on the inequities that COVID exposed. We should be encouraging everyone to get vaccinated and focusing on getting kids back in schools. As an educator, I am very concerned about the impact this has on our children and young adults. Not just from an educational lens, but also socially and emotionally.

7. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain.

I believe a hybrid model would work best. There is value in having the mayor appoint some of the members, but I also see value in having some be elected. Allowing the residents to have a say in who represents them on the school committee is a good idea. Elected members have to answer to the public more.



8. Do you support the recent decision of the BPS and School Committee to alter the admission plan for the city's three exam schools?

NO. I am running for office to tackle the thorny questions and to help solve the tough problems. I believe that some things are worth "sticking your neck out" over, and as a Boston Public School classroom teacher, I know that public education is something leaders have to take a stand on. Every time.

Improving the quality of our schools and the academic outcomes for ALL of Boston's children, from pre-K through 12th grade, no matter where in Boston they attend school, is perhaps my highest priority. As a candidate for office, as a teacher, and as a Mom. Nothing is more important to me than delivering on our shared promise to our kids that we will educate them well enough to succeed in whatever field, via whatever path, they choose.

That is why I am opposed to altering the admission plan the way they have proposed. We should be strengthening academic opportunities for students, not watering them down. COVID-19 and a year of remote learning for BPS children has been at best very disruptive and at worst a disaster. Truancy, depression, and other mental and physical health problems are skyrocketing for Boston kids. As a City and as a school system we must honestly face the academic, social, and health consequences of this pandemic, but also the consequences of the choices and responses our leaders made.

If our elementary and middle school students are falling behind, our job is not to watch them slide and do nothing. Our job is to PICK THEM UP and guide them back on track -- academically, emotionally, and socially. That will mean more formal assessments, more remedial resources, and more professional interventions, NOT LESS.

I also believe that merit based admission to our three exam schools is the best way to preserve a top-notch college preparatory high school education to the working class and immigrant families of Boston who would otherwise be shut out. I support using a fair and vetted standardized test, along with GPA's, for admission to Boston Latin Academy, the O'Bryant School, and Boston Latin School. I don't believe Zip Codes should be used to divide the City by race or ethnicity for admissions. Every Black, Latinx, white, and Asian child in the Boston Public Schools should be receiving an elementary school education that prepares them to succeed at an exam school if they and their parents want them to attend. Improving our elementary schools should be our focus, not further dividing our neighborhoods and our neighbors.

9. Do you support the citywide ballot question that would hand new budgetary powers to the City Council?

I see value in allowing the council to have more power over the budget, and not just accepting or rejecting the budget in whole. This would take some power away from the mayor, so it needs to be discussed and thought through thoroughly before any big changes like this are made. Many ballot questions are pushed through by the one that has the most money to promote their side. I would make sure that misinformation is not being pushed out there and we are able to fully understand the consequences this would have on our City budget.

10. The city of Boston is presently without a permanent police commissioner. What should the next mayor do to fill the position and what type of person should be selected to lead the BPD?

The next mayor has to be strong and make some tough decisions when it comes to filling the Police Commissioner position. Not rushing to fill it quickly would make the most sense to me. Taking the time to search for qualified candidates who understand the importance of community policing, building trust and morale within the force and working closely with the residents of Boston. I believe we can find a strong candidate within our City, who understands the neighborhoods and the history of Boston. If we need to expand our search nationwide to have a larger pool of qualified candidates to choose from, I am in favor, but I have seen time and time again in the School Department that has not always worked out.

11. Do you support the redevelopment of City Hall and City Hall Plaza?

YES. Making City Hall more accessible and inviting is a win for everyone! Getting people more engaged in local government is important and also having a more functional building to do the work of city government would be great. The small changes they started to make couple years ago, with picnic benches outside on the plaza, made a huge impact. Building spaces for employees, residents and tourists to gather is a positive thing. We need to invest in our buildings, and that should include City Hall on the top of the list.

12. What is your assessment of the Climate Ready Boston initiative conceived and executed to date by the Walsh administration? Is this initiative a sufficient response

to prepare for the anticipated climate change in coming years and decades? What else might you do to build climate resiliency in the city of Boston?

Boston must lead on climate action with a community-based approach to ensure each and every resident in every neighborhood has the opportunity to shape the policy and initiatives to tackle climate change and environmental injustice. We have to invest in a Green Economy and a Green Workforce. In order to realize our carbon neutral goals, we need to ensure our workforce is prepared to take advantage of future job opportunities in clean energy.

Our 2030 Plan was a great first step and in many ways was far ahead of many other cities across the Country, We are acknowledging our shortcomings and planning ahead. Living in Dorchester, I see first hand how Morrissey Blvd. floods when there is a full moon or storm. The cities resiliency team is doing a great job at looking ahead but we need to also look to the Netherlands, and other European countries, and learn from them how they have handled flooding in their cities.

I also would invest in a Climate Change curriculum at the elementary and secondary levels. Teaching our children, at a young age, about global warming and safe and sustainable practices is important for our future.

13. A millionaires tax is expected to be on the statewide ballot in 2022. How do you plan to vote?

I have not decided yet on how I would vote on this ballot question but I do know that this has come up for vote six previous times in Massachusetts and each time it has not passed, most recently in 2018. Increasing the tax from 5% to 9% is an 80% increase and will definitely need more researching on my part.

14. Should gig workers be considered company employees, rather than independent contractors?

I believe that some gig workers should be considered "employees" because that will give them benefits and more job security.

15. A report commissioned by the Walsh administration found that just 1.2 percent of city contracts awarded between 2014-2018 were awarded to Black or Latino-owned businesses. What would you do to change that?

First, I will simplify the paperwork required to submit a bid and also offer support to fill out the forms, that are twenty or more pages long. Setting up informational pop ups around the City, meeting people where they are and presenting them with the

supports and information needed to apply for some of these contracts would be a priority of mine.

Strong unions and good trade jobs are the lifeblood of Boston's neighborhoods and sustain the quality of life for all of us. I received the endorsement of many trade unions because I pledged to expand programs to encourage younger Boston residents to apply for trade union training and apprentice programs. As a City Councilor I will keep that pledge and give Madison Park Technical Vocational High School the attention, tools and support it needs to provide Boston with young and gifted tradesmen and women.

In 2019 the Boston Chamber of Commerce highlighted the critical need for a young skilled work force and pointed to Madison Park as a catalyst for reinvigorating the Boston economy. In less than two years over 24 new partners have joined and the Partnership Advisory Board at Madison Park has taken root.

I believe if we prepare our students for quality jobs in the trades we will have more black and latino owned businesses in the City and that will translate into more applying for city contracts.

16. In 2018, the Walsh administration set a goal of creating 69,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030. What is your assessment of this target — and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods like Dorchester?

My assessment of the target is that we can do better!

Housing insecurity and homelessness is real in Boston and is a catastrophic disrupter in the lives of too many Boston families, including children, the elderly, and those living with substance abuse disorders, mental distress, and family trauma. As a BPS teacher I saw first hand how this impacts our children. I'd take a creative approach to providing affordable housing by better evaluating and using the assets we have. Working with community organizations to explore the smaller in-fill lots and vacant lots across the City and repurposing abandoned and under-used buildings.

I am a renter in Dorchester and know first hand how the rising cost of rent has put pressure on working people and families. It is far more difficult than it should be for my own young adult children to afford rent in the City or to consider buying a home here in the place they grew up.

The City owns around 100 vacant lots, many of them build-able, in Dorchester alone. I would propose a moratorium on private, market-rate development of those parcels in Dorchester and Roxbury. We can be creative, working with the Mayor's office to make more building contracts available to minority and women owned contractors to build 100% affordable housing at these addresses. Our challenges around housing and equal opportunity in Boston are complex, but I see that complexity as an opportunity to multi-task, addressing more than one issue at a time.

The City of Boston looked at some of the non-conforming lots along Blue Hill Avenue with Wentworth Institute of Technology and found opportunities for small (under 12 units) affordable housing solutions which could be partially funded by the Community Preservation Act.

The Fitzgerald Revitalization Project is an initiative led by the City of Detroit. It aims to stabilize and strengthen neighborhoods by transforming publicly owned vacant land and buildings into community assets. The project has pledged to revitalize or build more than 200 homes in the northwest part of the city.

I am a strong supporter of the City's Linkage program and the 42% increase to that program that Mayor Walsh put into place in 2019. More than \$80 million Linkage dollars have been spent since 2014 on affordable housing in Boston and, something I care a lot about, workforce development and job training. The City should be doing all it can so that our younger residents can afford to live securely in Boston.

I also support efforts by (former) Mayor Walsh and City Councilor Michael Flaherty to pass the Jim Brooks Act and the Just Cause Eviction ordinance.

As City Councilor, I will closely monitor evictions and tax-takings by the City and will work with colleagues and State representatives to help provide long term and real housing stability for our families.

17. What is your assessment of the Walsh administration's overall performance?

Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

I would give Walsh a passing grade. It is hard to grade his overall performance seeing that he left before his 2nd term ended and many initiatives he started were not seen through.

18. What is your assessment of the acting Mayor Kim Janey's performance since taking office in March 2021? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

I am paying close attention to her leadership and how she has stepped into this new role as acting mayor. I feel it is too soon to grade her because many things she is not able to do because of her limited powers.

19. Will you seek to expand or change the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, how?

The Zoning Board of Appeals purpose is to hear and decide any appeal or decision and they decide what and where you can build in Boston. I believe that there is value in having the zoning board members have industry knowledge, but not if there is a conflict of interest. We have to carefully appoint our members and I would make sure that the zoning board is more transparent and that the residents and neighborhood associations feel their voices, and concerns, are being heard and also acted on. Many times people feel that development decisions are being decided on without the input from the abutters and neighbors.

20. When not on the campaign trail, how do you unwind?

I spend almost all of my waking hours crisscrossing the City campaigning in every neighborhood and talking to as many residents as I can. I do take time everyday to walk my dog Murphy and find that our walks along the Neponset River bike path, through Cedar Grove Cemetery, or around the streets of Neponset are always my most pleasant part of the day.

21. If you were not a candidate, who would you support in this election for either Mayor or City Council?

I feel very fortunate to be in a race with so many qualified candidates. Many have a wonderful vision, and love for our City, and that inspires me.

I believe that I am the strongest, hardest working and most passionate candidate in the race. I have worked tirelessly for many other candidates over the years and it is finally time for me to support myself, so I get elected and right to work for all of you!