



**school committee**

Dear Sharon Resident:

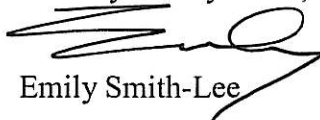
I am writing to ask for your support for my candidacy for School Committee in the Town election on May 18. I am running because I believe the people of Sharon need and deserve an open, accountable, and responsive School Committee as we face the dual challenges of: (i) maintaining a high quality school system in the face of increasing fiscal restraints; and (ii) delivering a well-rounded and child-centered educational experience while meeting our responsibilities under state and federal standards.

I have lived in Sharon with my family since 2001. I have two children in the Sharon Public Schools, a daughter in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and a son in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the Alternative School. I have served as a regular parent aide in the classroom for several years, and as Co-Chair of the Alternative School Board and School Council. Professionally, after years of practicing law for a firm in Boston, I have recently opened up a law practice here in Sharon, allowing me an even greater opportunity to be involved in community affairs.

I believe I have a unique perspective to bring to the School Committee table. I have participated as a parent in the classroom and in school governance. As a regular observer of School Committee meetings I have gained familiarity with the often complicated issues confronting school administration and elected decision-makers. Finally, I have seen the schools from the perspective of an Alternative School parent and an advocate for choice and diversity in our schools, but also through the perspective of my husband, who analyzes MCAS data and school performance for the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. I believe that these perspectives can be reconciled, and that our schools can meet state and federal standards and still exercise independent choices about how to approach learning and what to value in the classroom and school communities. Though it is not the School Committee's role to dictate how principals and teachers make those choices, I believe it can set a tone that encourages a more inclusive view of how we judge our own success as a district.

I have attached a one page mission statement summarizing my vision for the Sharon Public Schools, and encourage you to visit the campaign website for more information ([www.electemily.com](http://www.electemily.com)). I hope you will consider supporting me on May 18. Feel free to write, email, or call if you have questions or want more information about me or the campaign (contact information is below).

Thank you very much,



Emily Smith-Lee

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[www.electemily.com](http://www.electemily.com)

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My vision for the Sharon Public Schools is a school district committed to the following principles:

★ *Collaboration and Communication with Stakeholders*

- Encourage input and participation in School Committee process by community members and school staff.
- Strengthen and deepen School Councils, and communications between Councils and the School Committee, so parent and teacher voices at the building level are included in district wide decision making.

★ *Appropriate and Transparent Decision Making*

- Substantive discussions should occur in the public eye, at the regularly scheduled and televised School Committee meetings.
- Materials being discussed should be available before School Committee meetings; members should be willing to engage in meaningful discussion and debate on the merits of issues in the public forum.
- Limit subcommittee work to carrying out tasks first discussed and decided at full School Committee meetings.
- Need to be guided by a better understanding of School Committee's authority and role under Massachusetts law.

★ *Recognizing and Valuing Each Child's Potential*

- Our performance as a district may be measured by whether all children reach a certain metric of achievement, but we should judge our success as a district by whether we are giving each child the opportunity to reach his or her own potential.
- School Committee does not have the authority to dictate educational practices, but can encourage a vision and culture that supports an alternative view of success in the district, and that places the federal and state metrics in the appropriate perspective.

★ *Economic Fairness*

- Review of Kindergarten and bus fees to make sure they are reflective of actual costs and consistent with legal requirements; implement sliding scale fee structure.
- Review availability and extent of financial assistance for all fee-based activities.

★ *Stewardship of the Budget*

- Earlier public discussion of key budget issues to include all interested community members.
- Ongoing public discussion of budget priorities and how they relate to District goals and priorities.