

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Lynnfield needs Brian and Kate for school committee

To The Editor:

To start, we would like to acknowledge and express appreciation for the hard work the School Committee has put in this year. It was a very tough year to be a School Committee member in any community, and likely not a year anyone on the committee could have anticipated or bargained for when they ran for election.

Although we do not personally know the incumbent running for re-election, we are aware of and appreciate his education experience and the positive initiatives he has accomplished during his tenure.

However, we do not believe (as some of his supporters have advocated) that being an educator automatically earns a person a spot on the School Committee or makes them the best candidate for the job. We have watched every School Committee meeting over the last year, and feel there are other important qualities in a School Committee member that very much matter too.

When Mr. McQueen ran the first time, we voted for him based on his education experience. This time around, however, we will be voting for Kate DePrizio and Brian Charville for the two open seats on the School Committee.

Kate and Brian will bring collaboration, communication, a positive change in tone and attitude, and a fresh start to the School Committee after a very difficult year for all stakeholders, including Lynnfield's families.

For example, we do not foresee Kate or Brian signing on to a public statement as the current School Committee members did last month, in which they reprimanded parents in reaction to their valid questions raised and constructive criticism. The same parents who elected them, and only wished to better understand the decision-making and outcomes deeply affecting the well-being of their children who have genuinely struggled with remote learning for one whole year.

We are confident Kate and Brian will instead be solutions-oriented with their "can do" attitudes, pushing the district to be the very best version of itself. Over the last year, we, like many parents in the district, have reached out to the entire School Committee detailing our family's challenges with remote learning, proposing solutions, sharing research on other districts and studies showing little to no COVID transmission in schools, and inquiring about the specifics of the district's plan to increase in-person learning.

Only two current members of the School Committee engaged

with us and responded to our communications, and neither of these members are up for re-election in April. Communication, compassion, transparency, and collaboration with their

constituents are qualities we wish to see in our elected School Committee representatives.

A criticism of Kate and Brian we have heard is that they are a "package deal" and "running as a team." We believe this perception is precipitated by the fact that both Kate and Brian are the "new" candidates in comparison to the incumbent candidate, and with only two seats open this inevitably gives the impression they are running as a team. They are not, and while they may share in the desire to effectuate much-needed change on the School Committee, each has unique backgrounds, qualities and characteristics that will serve our district well.

Brian is a consummate professional who gets to the core of problems to find solutions. He has demonstrated his dedication to Lynnfield through his actions and leadership on the Planning Board, including encouragement of public participation to better processes and outcomes. He is not afraid to ask hard questions or engage in professional discourse for the greater good of the district.

We were discouraged that nearly every School Committee vote this year was unanimous, with little debate or deep discussion about very important issues. How can we grow as a district without meaningful and respectful debate on matters of great importance?

The lack of details shared and "out-of-the-box" problem-solving during this year's School Committee meetings left many parents to wonder what was happening and to

ask the hard questions themselves instead of through their elected representatives. That is not representative of Lynnfield as a community, which holds diverse opinions on matters of public importance, particularly when these matters directly affect their children.

Kate is a dedicated member of our community who has already improved every school she has touched. From Tower Day preschool to Huckleberry Hill School to being instrumental in the school expansion project, we as a town would be so fortunate to have her dedication and perspective on the School Committee.

Moreover, she is compassionate and genuinely cares about Lynnfield's families and

educators, as we have witnessed firsthand through our work with her at Tower Day. I know her door will "always be open" and she,

like Brian, will bring a welcome voice of elementary-aged parents and students to the committee, which is a perspective we believe was lacking this year.

We are appreciative of Kate and Brian's energy and willingness to serve our great town during a time when elected office can be thankless and all consuming. They are putting in tremendous effort and time to understand the educational challenges facing our district, our educators, and Lynnfield's families through outreach including question and answer sessions, school visits, emails, and phone calls.

We have no doubt they will be instrumental in healing our district and propelling it forward as we return our students to full in-person schooling.

As lifelong Lynnfield residents, proud graduates of the Lynnfield public school system, and parents of three elementary-aged students in the Lynnfield Public Schools now, we both care deeply about the future of our district.

Voting is personal, and we respect those who may be content with the status quo. But for our family, we are looking for a different path. Lynnfield will be picking up the pieces and dealing with the aftermath of this past year for a very long time.

We need leaders on the School Committee who are not afraid to ask tough questions, engage in meaningful discussion, communicate, and collaborate to achieve the very best for Lynnfield. We are confident Kate and Brian will be the change we want to see on Lynnfield's School Committee and ask that you vote for Kate and Brian on April 13.

*Dave and Amie Geary
Lynnfield*

JORDAN HEGEDUS AVOIDING UNNECESSARY LOSSES

When you go, who gets the dough?

Unless you want the state to dictate who will receive your assets when you die, you should have a will and, depending your circumstances, other legal documents (e.g. trusts and powers of attorney).

In Massachusetts, certain assets of people who die without a valid will are distributed under the Intestacy Laws Chapter 190B Article II.

Many assets can override wills. Consolidated under the term non-probate property, these include those titled: joint with right of survivorship (JWROS); payable on death accounts (POD); property titled in the name of trusts; or accounts with named beneficiaries such as IRAs and other qualified plans, life insurance and annuities.

It's very important that the beneficiaries on assets that can pass directly without a will are current. For example, often people list family members on IRAs prior to getting married and then neglect to update them to list their spouse. The opposite can occur in a divorce when the former spouse remains the beneficiary. (Note: updating beneficiaries excluding the former spouse may be prevented until the divorce is finalized).

Without updates, if the primary beneficiary dies before the account owner (donor), the assets will be distributed to the contingent beneficiaries, if named. If a beneficiary is receiving government disability benefits such as Medicaid, the benefits may go to the state. Since non-probate assets are often the largest part of an estate, they can have a large impact not only on the beneficiaries but also on the level of taxation.

How are assets distributed when

the person dies intestate (without a will)? For simplicity, we'll assume the person was a Massachusetts resident and held all assets in this state. Based on the situation, distributing intestate assets can become very complex! Below are three examples:

One. If one partner (the decedent) in a married couple with no children died, the decedent's living parents would be in line to receive part of the estate. Under Section 2-102 (2), the spouse gets \$200,000 plus $\frac{3}{4}$ of the intestate estate balance. So, if the decedent had a \$1,000,000 intestate estate after taxes. \$800,000 goes to the spouse and \$200,000 to the surviving parents.

Two. If a couple wasn't legally married, the whole amount could go to the decedent's parents.

Three. If the couple were legally married and the decedent's parents were both dead, then the spouse would get the entire estate even if they had children. But if at least one of the children (descendants) wasn't a child of both the decedent and spouse, different rules apply.

Bottom line: People can avoid many inheritance issues if they have a valid will and pay attention to who they name as beneficiary on all their assets. Because of the complexity of estate distribution laws, you are encouraged to seek the advice and periodic review of legal, tax and financial planning professionals.

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