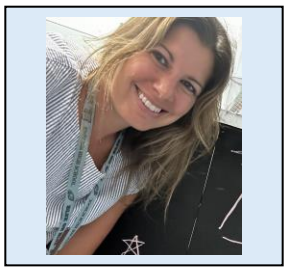
MEDFIELD INSIDER

Medfield 2025 School Committee Candidates -- Responses to Questions

(Listed in alphabetical order. Responses verbatim from candidate e-mail responses – no editing except when needed to achieve consistent formatting, and/or to avoid confusion with reading guides in parentheses. Candidates asked to adhere to word limits for each question. Campaign sign images and links to campaign websites were not allowed. Photos provided by candidates and cropped/resized for consistency.)



Michelle Kirkby



Sophia Viglas



Caroline Waisberg



Roseli Weiss

1. **How long have you been in Medfield? How many children do you have & what grade(s)? Do you have any children in private school (not including PreK or K)?** (40)

Michelle Kirkby:
I moved to Medfield in 2015. I have three children, all of whom have attended Medfield Public Schools since kindergarten. I appreciate the interest, but prefer not to disclose personal details about their grades here.

Sophia Viglas:
I have lived in Medfield with my husband for 15 years. We have a 2nd grader at Wheelock and a 5th grader at Dale.

Caroline Waisberg:
My family moved to Medfield in 2023 and felt instantly welcomed. We love it here! I have two children -- a junior in a private high school and a seventh grader who thrives at Blake. We're grateful for this wonderful community.

Roseli Weiss:
My husband and I have lived in Medfield since 1990. We have two children who graduated from Medfield High School.

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2. **What <u>two</u> knowledge areas or skills will you need to learn to better prepare yourself or improve your effectiveness for Medfield School Committee?** (75)

Michelle Kirkby:
Serving on the School Committee requires continuous learning. As a current member, I have spent the past three years actively navigating evolving education policies and implementing best practices in school governance. I remain committed to fostering productive community engagement, ensuring diverse perspectives are valued, and keeping Medfield students at the center of every decision.

Sophia Viglas:
Budget: I will need to gain a better understanding of the complexity of the Medfield School System budget and the various needs of each school. Policies: I will need to increase my understanding of the nuanced policies and structures regarding the school committee. I look forward to the handbook and training available to better understand these. I am a quick learner and comfortable asking questions so I am confident I will acquire this knowledge.

Caroline Waisberg:
There is so much to learn. Knowledge of school funding sources and more granular details about the school budgets, expenditures, and financial planning. I would also have to familiarize myself with school district policies, state laws, and regulations. Additionally, understanding Medfield's specific district goals and priorities is essential to making informed decisions that support students, teachers, and the community. I am committed to listening, learning, and collaborating to ensure our schools continue to thrive.

Roseli Weiss:
I will need to learn more about the: inner workings of Medfield's School Committee's current/past curriculum decisions to which I have not been privy (and) latest thoughts and decisions of the Building and School Committees regarding the Dale Street School. These committees and the Select Board advise on the design and construction of a school as they work with the Massachusetts School Building Authority and communicate with citizens and school personnel.

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3. **Beyond a Dale Street School building project and budget constraints, what do you believe are Medfield School Committee's <u>top two</u> challenges moving forward, and how might you begin to tackle them?** (125)

Michelle Kirkby:
I think it's important to emphasize that the Dale Street School project and budget constraints are the **<u>top two</u>** challenges the School Committee will face over the next few years. Ensuring the project's successful completion while maintaining fiscal responsibility requires careful oversight and community collaboration. Additionally, balancing the district's budget amid rising costs and uncertain state and federal funding demands creative solutions and strong advocacy to keep Medfield schools well-supported. While these are the most pressing issues, another important challenge will be navigating the evolving role of mobile technology in schools. I'm encouraged by the Mobile Tech Task Force's proactive approach, but as this landscape shifts, supporting students, parents, and educators in adapting remains a priority. Equally important is ensuring Medfield's robust strategic plan stays on schedule to drive long-term success.

Sophia Viglas:
Engagement in our schools: How do we engage parents and the town and when there are so many demands on everyone's time. I would prioritize looking at ways to increase transparency and communication regarding policies and happenings in concise, consistent and clear ways amongst all schools and the school committee. Graduation Requirements: What will the adjustments to graduation requirements be moving forward? What data do we have, what is our vision of a graduate? I'd embrace looking into our performance data, conversations about what graduation requirements should be, and the impact of how the schools operationalize those decisions.

Caroline Waisberg:
One challenge is ensuring that we maintain and enhance the quality of education amid financial pressures. The current administration and the ongoing changes create unpredictable risks including a possible reduction in budgets and external interference in policies and programs that support after school and Special Education programs. It is all so uncertain and things are changing very fast. We need to be thoughtful in budgeting to keep our schools well-resourced while being fiscally responsible. Another key challenge is addressing the diverse needs of our students, ensuring that every child—regardless of their learning style or background—feels supported. Finally, as education science evolves, we need to continue adapting our curriculum, technology, and teaching strategies to better prepare students for a changing world.

Roseli Weiss:
Education -- Keep a strong **curriculum** inclusive of strong civics education to learn about a representative democracy; Provide **hands-on critical and creative thinking** experiences. We will need to adopt a competency determination policy that offers opportunities for students to share their fundamental knowledge and stresses critical and creative thinking skills that are vital to life/work challenges. Keeping a strong **Pre-K and Kindergarten program** sets the groundwork to enhance academic and social emotional growth. Communication -- Communication facilitates relationships and if there is connection between school and community, then people are more likely to listen to one another. Conflicts may be resolved more effectively when there is trust and connection though communication can be challenging given laws to protect individual rights.

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4. **Mass. Association of School Committees and Mass Association of School Superintendents have identified governance areas between School Committees and Superintendents that sometimes create conflict. How might you approach a conflict if it were to arise? (**Examples include use of legal counsel for non-routine matters, non-personnel contract approvals, and creation of task forces that operate out of the public eye.) (125)

Michelle Kirkby:
If a governance-related conflict were to arise, I would approach it with openness, respectful dialogue, and adherence to best practices. It's essential that the School Committee and Superintendent work together within clearly defined roles to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of students. When questions arise about legal counsel, contracts, or task forces, I believe in seeking clarity, following proper procedures, and keeping the community informed whenever possible.

Sophia Viglas:
I have a lot of experience managing conflict as part of my workday being on the leadership team as a social worker at The English High School. I often am asked to support navigating conflicts amongst different stakeholders. As a trained clinical social worker I have the ability to understand different perspectives, hold opposing viewpoints, and find value in multiple perspectives. I try to assume best intentions when walking into a difficult situation and approach with a lens of curiosity. I am willing to have direct conversations with people and am comfortable sitting in disagreement with others but still working together to move forward towards solutions.

Caroline Waisberg
Collaboration and clear communication are key to addressing potential conflicts between the School Committee and the Superintendent. If a governance issue arises -- whether it's the use of legal counsel, contract approvals, or task force transparency -- I would first seek to understand all perspectives, ensuring that decisions align with policy, best practices, and the district's mission. Open dialogue, adherence to established procedures, and a commitment to transparency and accountability help build trust and prevent unnecessary conflict. Ultimately, the goal should be to work constructively and professionally to find solutions that serve the best interests of our students, educators, and community.

Roseli Weiss:
The School Committee establishes educational goals and policies for the School District consistent with state laws and goals established by the Board of Education. The Superintendent is employed by the School Committee to manage the School District as its Chief Executive Officer. The School Committee is the legal agent of the State. It has the authority to discipline or terminate a superintendent in accordance with state laws and contract terms. Reasons for probation, disciplinary action or termination can range from accusations of misconduct, disagreements over educational policy, district performance or contract violations. As a school committee, it would need to be determined if an action was legal or illegal or violated any of the above. The Superintendent's evaluation, monitored by the School Committee, is goal oriented and based upon progress/accomplishments to goals.

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5. **At last count, Medfield needs to cut $300,000 from the proposed fiscal-year 2026 budget. Where would you look to trim dollars, i.e., what specific areas? What specific areas do you consider off limits?** (100)

Michelle Kirkby:
The Medfield School Committee will be meeting on Thursday, March 27, at 6 p.m. in the MHS library to discuss this very topic, and I encourage anyone interested to attend. Budget decisions require careful consideration, and it's important that discussions happen with input from the committee, administration, and community. Given the nature of this question, providing a detailed response outside of a public meeting could raise concerns regarding Open Meeting Law compliance.

Sophia Viglas:
I would look at opportunities to trim and consolidate amongst expenses that are similar in the schools (PD, curriculum materials etc). Our cost per pupil expenditure is low in comparison to neighboring towns so I believe we need to work through the different line items to find ways to trim or shop around for various services. I also believe we need to look for more streams of revenue such as looking into grants and exploring the cost of fees for valuable services. The Teacher contract has already been agreed upon for FY2026 and thus salaries cannot be touched. The Unit B contract is being finalized but I do believe if we would like to retain qualified staff we should maintain a competitive salary.

Caroline Waisberg:
Budget cuts are always tough and I am not in a position yet to propose any cuts, as I believe in conferring with the school principals and other stakeholders in the community to make this a multilateral process so that we can get the best results for the community and the schools as a whole. I would advocate for thoughtful planning and collaboration with town leadership to maintain fiscal responsibility without compromising educational quality.

Roseli Weiss:
There are sections deep within a budget where one can look for items that do not affect the instructional or social emotional needs of students. Teacher/student ratios need to be protected. Arts and humanities along with world language, often cut, should be off limits. One needs to look for line items that can be postponed to future years. A new sport can wait. Some administrative office décor and equipment updates can wait. Some particular professional development and conferences can wait. Students cannot wait, each year counts.

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6. **How would you describe the school committee role in the collective bargaining process**? (75)

Michelle Kirkby:
The School Committee plays a critical role in collective bargaining by setting priorities, negotiating in good faith, and ensuring agreements align with the district's financial realities and educational goals. It provides oversight, approves contracts, and works to balance the needs of educators, students, and the community.

Sophia Viglas:
It plays a vital role and should have a deep understanding of the staff experience Learning and working environments teachers fight for often mean better learning environments for students. Highly effective teachers are recruited and maintained through competitive salaries and a supportive school climate. I understand the administrative perspective and that difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions need to happen for schools to run effectively. I'm able to help bridge the gap and see both perspectives.

Caroline Waisberg:
I see the School Committee's role as one of financial stewardship, ensuring that both teachers and students are supported fairly while upholding our town's educational mission. I also believe that the school committee has a duty to keep the community informed about the impact of agreements on the budget and educational outcomes. Medfield has a fantastic school system—a strong foundation, rigorous curriculum, engaged families, and exceptional educators. We just need to keep it thriving!

Roseli Weiss:
The collective bargaining process is a joint decision making process by which the School Committee (employer) and Unions (employees) reach an agreement on issues affecting the contract. In my experience, the bargaining team for the School District is made up of some School Committee members, the Superintendent as their agent, and often the Business Manager.

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