

# 2015 Election Guide



## Where do I vote?

It depends on where you live and the voting precinct you live in. You can find your polling place by:

- Calling the Lowell Election Department: **978-674-4046**
- Entering your address online at:  
[www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.aspx](http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.aspx)
- Asking a neighbor who lives on the same side of your block.

## Can I vote by mail?

Yes. If you will be out of town or can't go to the polls because of a health issue, you or a family member can fill out an application for an absentee ballot. You can do this anytime up to noon the day before the election. Get an application at:

- Lowell Election Office - 375 Merrimack Street
- Online at [www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleabsentee/absidx.htm](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleabsentee/absidx.htm)

## How do I check my registration status?

You needed to register by October 14, 8:00 pm to vote in this election. We recommend checking your status to make sure there are no problems when you go to your polling place. Check this by:

- Visiting <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx>
- Calling the Lowell Election Department: **978-674-4046**

## Do I need an ID to vote?

Only people voting for the first time need an ID to vote in Massachusetts. We recommend every voter bring an ID with their current address on it, like a driver's license, passport or recent utility bill or bank statement.

## Can I have someone help me vote?

Yes. If you need help with translation or marking the ballot (because English is your second language or you have disability), you can bring someone with you to help you vote. If what you need is a ride, get in touch with the Election Department: **978-674-4046**

## Can I bring a voter guide into the voting booth?

Yes. You can bring a voter guide, notes, or anything else you need to help you remember who to vote for. Just make sure to not leave it in the booth when you leave!

Candidates appear in  
ballot order in the guide.

# Don't forget to vote!

## Nov 3 - Polls open 7 am to 8 pm

Apply for absentee ballots before noon on Nov 2



**City Council**  
Candidate Guide



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**What one thing would you advocate as your top priority to improve the lives of the residents of Lowell?**

Job creation.. focus on commercial development to develop high paying jobs and strive to keep Lowell's residential tax rate among the lowest in the Commonwealth.

Increased police presence throughout every neighborhood and downtown.

Economic development, specifically industrial development is important because it expands the City's tax base, which enables the City to provide a host of municipal services and keep real estate taxes as low as possible.

The opiate addiction problem that is happening here in the city and around the state.

**How are you different from other candidates running for City Council – what most uniquely qualifies you?**

As a life-long Lowellian and downtown businessman for 15 years, I know the downtown very well and know what it takes to fix it. My business perspective on the council gives us a unique balance. I am very outspoken in what I believe in.

I have a Bachelors and Masters' Degree in Public Administration and 2nd Master's Degree in Political Science along with 30 years of experience in municipal finance and administration.

I have lived in Lowell for my entire life, I have a masters degree in public administration, and I have served on the City Council since 2012. However, what makes me unique is that I also served on the City Council in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which gives me a unique historical perspective.

Well, what separates me from the rest is that I believe that we need to concentrate on our neighborhoods first. The quality of life for you and me is key, from there it spreads out to our city. I work in the city, I talk to a lot of people and I feel that I have a good pulse of what is happening.

**What's the most important thing—besides adding police staff—the City can do to lower the crime rate?**

Engage our youth! Outreach to teenagers to become more involved in the community. Assist with art, athletic programs and employment is critical in keeping our youth occupied.

The council invested in a shot-spotter detection system. This technology captures images/ locations of gunshots and will help us in our fight against illegal guns in the City. Re-establishing the drugs/gang unit was also crucial to reducing crime.

The crime rate in Lowell is lower than last year or the year before. The City Council must remain vigilant regarding crime, maintain a police presence downtown and in the neighborhoods, and should continue to promote "neighborhood watch" type efforts and initiatives.

It takes all of us to help the police department to fight crime. When residents partner up, we are unstoppable.

**What do you see as the City's role in addressing the opiate crisis?**

(I am substance abuse chairman.) The opiate crisis is a huge issue that's ruining our city. Must be dealt with in an aggressive manner. Police must aggressively crack down on the low level dealers in the streets who are giving Heroin away to get people addicted. Outreach to judges to recommend mandatory sentences.

A 3-pronged approach: 1) Prevention - getting into the schools to teach our children about opiates; 2) Work with State/ Governor to expand treatment centers 3) Continue to work to get Herion off the streets. Lastly, work with the State to have insurance companies provide coverage for treatment.

The City has equipped all fire and police vehicles with Narcan and that initiative has already saved several lives in Lowell. The crisis is statewide and Lowell should join with other communities and advocate for adequate funding for the strategy developed by the Mass. Department of Public Health.

We need to collaborate with state officials to get this under controll. Parents, residents and our city leaders all need to be involved for a solution.

**Would you prioritize safe and convenient sidewalks citywide? How?**

I've received many complaints about sidewalks. I would push for a residential initiative that allows them to repair their sidewalks- City owned and does not allow residents to repair- to assist homeowners.

Yes, continue to increasing state funding to improve the conditions of the sidewalks and enforce ordinances adopted to ensure safety.

Yes. Safe sidewalks should continue to be a part of the City's capital plan regarding infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

Yes, I have been advocating all along for better streets and side walks in all neighborhoods. We need to come up with a better system to prioritize our streets and sidewalks.

**If any of the above require additional resources, and grants are unavailable, would you plan to increase taxes, reduce other expenses (how?), or wait until a grant is available?**

The key is to aggressively pursue grants. This council allowed the City to hire a full-time public safety grant writer. As a result, the City will be receiving a \$2m SAFER grant funds to hire 12 new firefighters. Added 13 new police officers in my first term.

No I would not increase taxes. I would work to reduce spending in other areas to make public safety a priority and our streets safe.

Increasing real estate taxes should always be a last resort, which is why expanding the tax base by promoting economic development is so important. Initiatives that require additional resources, with no outside funding available, have to be considered on a case by case basis.

Taxes are a last resort, we need to work with in our budget. Now eighty five percent of the budget is spoken for, it's the fifteen percent that we need to prioritize.



**City Council**  
Candidate Guide



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**What one thing would you advocate as your top priority to improve the lives of the residents of Lowell?**

Address the opiate epidemic more vigorously. This is a public safety issue as well. (Cure the drug users, eliminate crime, rid of the panhandlers.)

There are many, but public safety is a priority and the overall livability of the city. Lowell...there's a lot to like. I want our residents to be proud to live in Lowell.

Expanding economic and educational opportunities for all residents is key to improving the overall quality of life in Lowell. It is vital that the hard working families of this City have access to good paying jobs and their children receive a high quality education.

One thing I have prioritized is a holistic approach to governing that engages the feedback and participation of neighborhood groups and other community stakeholders. In order to improve the lives of residents, the priorities of the council should align with the priorities of the people in the city.

**How are you different from other candidates running for City Council – what most uniquely qualifies you?**

Constituent services is my forte. I feel you deserve the best constituent service. Your problem or concern is my problem or concern.

Both my educational/professional backgrounds make me different from other candidates. I have a Master Degree in Public Administration and I have spent many years working in both the public and private sectors. Ex. Dir. of DPD, LDFC/Lowell Plan and LHA; and many area banks.

In my career, I have served as a Substance Abuse Counselor, a Juvenile Caseworker, & am currently an Assistant Chief Probation Officer. My experience has given me a unique perspective on critical issues such as how we can continue to work together to address the opioid crisis.

As the former headmaster of Lowell High School, I literally worked with every socioeconomic and ethnic group in the city, including families from every neighborhood. This career in public service has given me a unique perspective into understanding the needs of the community.

**What's the most important thing—besides adding police staff—the City can do to lower the crime rate?**

Make it known that there is room in jails. If you commit a crime, there you will go. Perception is part of the plan. Add more cameras to key troubled sites to catch the perpetrator. We will catch you. Again, perception is the key.

Outreach in our schools and push "See Something/Say Something" Neighborhood groups are key to lowering the crime rate. Work in partnership with UML, DA, etc.

As Chair of the Public Safety Subcommittee, I worked with my colleagues to ensure Police have the resources to keep our families safe & that is one of the keys to addressing crime. For example, I led an effort to provide LPD with a gunshot detection system, which was funded in the FY16 budget.

On the council, I've called for an increase in camera surveillance and supported a renewed emphasis on community policing. But the biggest impact in improving public safety is to ensure that Lowell continues to improve its outlook and be a vibrant city of opportunity for ALL of its residents.

**What do you see as the City's role in addressing the opiate crisis?**

It is our problem. We need more beds at detox centers. We must do whatever we can to speed the permitting process when centers open. We need to continue to band together to form a strong team. To find ways and means to put the people back to a drug free state.

Outreach/awareness/education—keep the issue front and center. Meet with the medical community and the pharmacists in the area. Also deal aggressively with the street dealers.

The City should & has collaborated with stakeholders to identify ways that we can use our resources to address the opioid crisis. An example of that is the effort I led to equip first responders with Narcan. I believe we should continue this approach to address this pressing issue.

It begins with a solid public awareness and education program that starts in elementary school through high school and beyond. We used to invest more in these programs, we should again. I also support an emergency response approach that goes beyond initial contact and includes mandated treatment.

**Would you prioritize safe and convenient sidewalks citywide? How?**

I believe we are doing that now - the main gateways to the city are being done. I would have more streets accepted. That way, we could use our chapter 90 funds that the budget won't pay for.

Yes-enforce the ordinances on the books and get the bikes and skateboards off of the sidewalks. Make the sidewalks ADA accessible.

Yes. It's important for residents to be able to walk safely throughout the city and to make it easier to walk between key destinations like the Gallagher Terminal, National Park Visitors Center & downtown businesses. That's why I voted for the Complete Streets Policy & would support others like it.

I have made motions to prevent the use of skateboards and bikes on the sidewalks and supported a complete streets policy to make the city safer for pedestrians. A specific priority I have identified is improving the Lord Overpass, making a motion to review the state plans for a more walkable city.

**If any of the above require additional resources, and grants are unavailable, would you plan to increase taxes, reduce other expenses (how?), or wait until a grant is available?**

No, I would not increase taxes, but I would compensate for the shortfall by eliminating something on the capital plan list. See if there were other ways to re-invest our money to get more for our dollar, as we have done in the past.

Reduce other expenses; working cooperatively there are ways to reduce expenses. Sometimes waiting for a grant is not an option, however, our state/federal delegations work tirelessly getting funds for important projects.

I would work with my colleagues on the Council and the City Manager to determine the best way to find the resources for the initiatives that would help to address the issues discussed above & others that improve the quality of life for Lowell residents.

Rather than making political pledges, my approach has always been one of finding practical solutions in a given situation. My experience has shown that there is no one size fits all answer to governing. Being fiscally responsible means being willing to do what is right for the city.

	 <p><b>David J. Conway</b> 528 Andover St. Belvidere no website</p>	 <p><b>Jordan John Gys</b> 10 Meghann Ln. Belvidere <a href="http://www.jordangys.com/">www.jordangys.com/</a></p>	 <p><b>Martin J. Hogan</b> 3 Wachusett St. Centralville <a href="http://martyhogan4lowell.com">martyhogan4lowell.com</a></p>	 <p><b>Cheth Khim</b> 37 Butterfield St. Acre no website</p>
What one thing would you advocate as your top priority to improve the lives of the residents of Lowell?	Did not respond.	My number one priority if elected November 3rd is to tackle the opiate epidemic. As someone who has seen first hand the devastation caused by addiction on a family, I believe that is the most important task at hand. People are dying and I feel there is more that can be done.	Greater communication and transparency of government throughout the city of Lowell. More community involvement and bringing the city council to the people of Lowell.	One thing I would advocate is to be sure everyone cares for his/her community, and their city and loves their family members. If you didn't notice, we had only 7% of voters voting in the preliminary election. That is very small and disappointing percentage.
How are you different from other candidates running for City Council – what most uniquely qualifies you?		Aside from being endorsed by Governor Baker, what separates me from my opponents is my youth. My youth offers a unique and fresh perspective on the many problems the city will face in the coming years. We are a young city and I think a young councilor would be a great addition to the team.	I am different from the other candidates in many ways but most importantly the following area. I am not a native of Lowell, this gives me a unique perspective and allows for me to not only represent the native and long time residents but also the new residents that feel they are outsiders.	I am different from the other candidates because I am opposed to taxes and I believe in the sanctity of human life. I also give my services freely to help my community. I am not a politician but I am a community helper.
What's the most important thing—besides adding police staff—the City can do to lower the crime rate?		I think much of crime in Lowell is a direct side effect of the opiate epidemic. The true trade brings with it a wide variety of petty to more serious violent crimes. I also believe stronger partnerships with organizations such as UTEC is crucial.	Education is the top priority. The residents need to be given the tools and knowledge to help combat the city's crime. The city needs to work closer with the local civic associations and crime watch programs. In addition, I would work to increase the availability of drug rehab & education programs.	We should have a program to educate the citizens about crime in their neighborhoods. I would have better facilities for youths and adults for participation in sports activities and for adult education of citizens who are unaware of the way their circumstances are affecting them.
What do you see as the City's role in addressing the opiate crisis?		We need to find ways to weather the storm in the coming years. It will get worse before it gets better and we need to save lives. We can start by sending drug counselors out with first responders arriving on the scene of an overdose. We need to get these folks the help they need.	Just preventing opiate deaths and arresting users will not suffice. As I stated above, I believe that the city should increase the availability of drug rehab and education programs. Additionally, we need to give the police department resources, not just personnel, to find and deter drug dealers.	As a council of the government, we are here to help the people who are in crisis at this time. I strongly believe no one should be left behind. Let's help the citizens first, and then later deal with the building of the court house.
Would you prioritize safe and convenient sidewalks citywide? How?		I absolutely would. We can't wait until people get hurt to act on what I see is a growing problem. Increasing the pedestrian experience will also help with traffic congestion. We need to be looking to acquire state grants for infrastructure. The money is there and I'm confident we can get it.	I believe that some do not view Lowell as a welcoming, safe & convenient city and this stems from the insufficient and poorly maintained sidewalks and streets throughout our city. I would identify and work with all neighborhoods to make sidewalks uniform, safe and clean for all in our city.	Yes, safety is the most important issue in our community. I have been an executive director for The Couple Square since 2014, and I have been dealing with the city for quite sometime. I have the experience and the interest to help make the Lowell government more accountable to the people's wishes.
If any of the above require additional resources, and grants are unavailable, would you plan to increase taxes, reduce other expenses (how?), or wait until a grant is available?		I think we should wait until a grant is available or examine ways to save the city money, such as switching to LED lighting where possible. Raising taxes is in my opinion irresponsible. There are folks in this city who live pay check to pay check. Not everyone can afford a tax increase.	One of the reasons I am running is because I feel that the resident taxpayers of our city already pay for a more than fair share of the cost. I would work to use the PILOT (Pay in Lieu of Taxes) program to get the larger Non-Profit institutions to pay their fair share of taxes.	We must not wait until a grant is available, because it is required by law that the budget must be balanced. The council needs to oppose any future projects until the present ones are complete. We need to stop spending money on multiple projects at the same time.





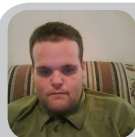
**City Council**  
Candidate Guide



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<b>What one thing would you advocate as your top priority to improve the lives of the residents of Lowell?</b>	Bringing high tech jobs to the Hamilton Canal District and increase the commercial tax base. This will relieve the tax burden on the residents and increase funding for education, public safety and neighborhood improvements.	Improving City infrastructure. We need proper maintenance of the public buildings, roads, and sidewalks.	Public safety	US Congresswoman Niki Tsongas said about me, "Vesna brings true passion and commitment to public education and to making our City safe," and cited my strong ability to reach out to people. Congresswoman Tsongas credited my ability to work with diverse groups of people to achieve positive results.
<b>How are you different from other candidates running for City Council – what most uniquely qualifies you?</b>	I am a former business owner, current business executive and current school committee member. I understand what businesses need to be successful and will use my knowledge and negotiation skills to bring new business to Lowell.	I have prior experience on the School Committee and the City Council and I have a strong understanding of the City's finances and budget.	I live in the one of the hard hit neighborhoods. I can relate to the residents on many levels.	Working at the Middlesex District Attorney's Office I was involved in hiring of the first two Cambodian Lowell Police officers using federal funding, building trust between the community & law enforcement. I focus on building opportunity for families by increasing solutions & simplifying obstacles.
<b>What's the most important thing—besides adding police staff—the City can do to lower the crime rate?</b>	Encourage residents to report crimes in their neighborhoods and provide them with a way to do so anonymously. Educate residents about the dangers of drug use, prevention methods and where they can go for help. Our law enforcement should be locking up the dealers, not the addicts.	Allow the Police Department to use their crime data to determine how the available resources are deployed - a larger police presence can deter crime. We must also encourage the public to report suspicious activity to deter crime with "see something - say something".	Updated neighborhood groups.	Aside from adding police staff, we need to build a strong partnership between community and law enforcement as well as business community.
<b>What do you see as the City's role in addressing the opiate crisis?</b>	Educate the young and their parents about the dangers of prescription drug use transitioning to illegal drug use and where to get help. Let residents know their options for non-prescription pain relief and connect them with holistic treatment centers coordinated by the Health Department.	We need to do what we can to reduce the availability of illegal drugs (including legal drugs prescribed to others). We need educate about the dangers of drug use and encourage rehab for addicts. Rehab is difficult because success requires a desire on the part of the addict.	Educational/resource center. Be more helpful.	I support a drug user diversion program, following the lead of Gloucester to treat addiction as a disease rather than a crime to help non-violent addicts get various forms of support that they need including employment, financial stability, and education especially for younger adults and children.
<b>Would you prioritize safe and convenient sidewalks citywide? How?</b>	Yes – Lowell should be a walkable city. We should look at the current budget of the Lowell Department of Public works to see if the funds are allocated by priority. We should apply for all grants available. Create and provide maps of the city to residents showing safe walking and biking routes.	Yes, that is one of my priorities - improving infrastructure. As we repave roads and sidewalks, they can be made ADA compliant and obstacles to wheelchairs and baby strollers can be moved or removed.	Yes. And I would work with local business owners and see what there concerns are as far as distance. And possible ramps for the handicapped.	Connectivity and mobility is the foundation to bring neighborhood and residents together. We need to identify community wish list for complete streets – making our streets a more bike, pedestrians, and public transit friendly. We also need to identify priority pedestrian areas for snow removal.
<b>If any of the above require additional resources, and grants are unavailable, would you plan to increase taxes, reduce other expenses (how?), or wait until a grant is available?</b>	Anything is possible using a proactive, creative approach. I would not increase taxes nor would I wait until a grant is available. Increasing the commercial tax base is the ultimate solution however it takes time. The best way to generate immediate funding is to get help.	We should avail ourselves of any available grants but we cannot depend on grants. We must try to control spending in order to shift the resources to desired improvements. There will be tax increases in the future - we need to use the added revenues in a way that provides greatest benefits.	I am not in favour of the tax hike. At 6.3% The budget needs to be reviewed.	I pledge to stabilize our property taxes. I look to find our funding sources as well as partner with other institutions to move the City forward.



**Pan So**

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**Paul Ratha Yem**

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**What one thing would you advocate as your top priority to improve the lives of the residents of Lowell?**

1. Availability education K-12 - Keep children in school and each child must acquire academic readiness before entering high school. 2. Job development - short/long term project, education and jobs are the foundation of public safety.

Economic and community development that creates jobs, increase tax base, and opportunities for Lowellians including our youths through the formation of the first Lowell Youth Commission.

**How are you different from other candidates running for City Council – what most uniquely qualifies you?**

I will establish a communication network in each community and throughout the city so that everyone could participate in making decisions on any problem and issue - democratic making decision (Democratic Community Base). I have studied on this democracy for 4 years.

I am uniquely qualified because of my experience & accomplishment in the area of economic development & public safety: completing a \$5.2 million mixed used project of affordable housing & commercial at 60 Middlesex St. in 2002 when no one thought it can be done since it was a tough area in the city.

**What's the most important thing—besides adding police staff—the City can do to lower the crime rate?**

Education performances should be able to identify and provide immediate assistances to the at-risk children at the younger age. The child who has lost interest in studying to learn is the root cause of the problems.

Community Policing that includes a regular meeting of residents and police for crime prevention, for community building, & for neighborhood patrol, where I was a member while working at the Exec Office of Public Safety in the 90's.

**What do you see as the City's role in addressing the opiate crisis?**

Lack of management skill and seriousness in finding the root cause of the crisis and prevent it from happening. It takes everyone to involve-Communication Network - Provide education to the youth and following up.

The city is the resource for the victims & their family, is the partner with other local, state and federal entities in addressing this epidemic. The city needs to decriminalize the addicts similar to what it is done in Gloucester, MA allows heroin, oxycodone and morphine users to turn in their drugs.

**Would you prioritize safe and convenient sidewalks citywide? How?**

Sidewalks must be prioritized because there have been casualties to people walking/ jogging in the street due to lack of it.

I would make the safety of pedestrians & bicyclists my priority as part of the community development by making sure the side walks are repaired/ paved along with the road works; install lighted crosswalk system at dangerous intersection and large road such as Andover St.( ex: [www.lightguardsystems.com](http://www.lightguardsystems.com))

**If any of the above require additional resources, and grants are unavailable, would you plan to increase taxes, reduce other expenses (how?), or wait until a grant is available?**

Reducing other expenses based on the degree of necessity or fundraising activities - get everyone involved through networking, with ideas and opinion for decisions.

I will not increase taxes for services that grants and resources are not available by prioritizing things just as we do our personal budget at home: "Needs" verse "Wants". I do not want to see our children continue to pay for something we want today.



**School Committee**  
Candidate Guide



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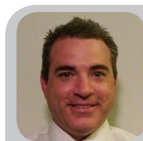
<b>What is the one top priority that should be tackled by Superintendent Khelifaoui?</b>	One of the most important things the Superintendent can do to improve education across the district is to reduce class sizes. Smaller classes give teachers more opportunity for personal attention to students, and this has been proven to improve results.	Every day in Lowell schools, our staff are transforming children's lives because of their talent, and dedication. One of the biggest opportunities for our Superintendent is to identify these pockets of innovation and then effectively replicate them across the district so all students can benefit.	I believe that Superintendent Khelifaoui should select a new CFO as soon as possible. He should also be settling the new teacher contract.	Provide leadership that unites us around a vision for excellent schools and steps to achieve it that include all stakeholders. This plan should challenge/engage all students and prepare them to attend college or if that is not their choice, have the skills necessary to get decent jobs.
<b>Can you share with us your thoughts on what would be a good contract negotiation outcome with the teachers' union, UTL?</b>	Lowell has excellent teachers that are passionate about their jobs. They deserve to be well paid and I am happy to support reasonable pay increases. However, the district has many different financial needs to balance. I am hopeful that we are closing in on an agreement soon.	The important thing to remember is that both sides share the same goal of providing our students with the best education possible. We can't move forward until we reach a balanced agreement that supports our teachers and staff, while still keeping the needs of the district as a whole in the forefront.	We have to be fair to both sides; the teachers and the city taxpayers. The City should make every effort to ensure that every available penny is brought to the table and that the teachers will be adequately compensated for the work they do every day for the student population of our city.	A good contract negotiation is one we can afford that also benefits our students, such as being able to grandfather-in sick-leave buyback, and with the savings, increase teacher compensation as well as time-on-learning for students.
<b>Do you have a favored location for Lowell High School, and why?</b>	I think the new Lowell High School should remain at its current downtown location. It is centrally located to every neighborhood and can be easily accessed via the LRTA buses. The downtown campus is close to MCC and UML, and a new facility downtown could impact the economy positively.	I feel that LHS does belong in the downtown. My LHS experience was the time when I really began to appreciate both the important history and the modern diversity of our city. However, when the research is completed, there may be information that requires me to reconsider my position.	The High School has to remain downtown. I have been saying all along that the current venue levels the playing field for ALL kids from every neighborhood. This is of course is pending the feasibility study findings.	I would review the study recommendations before making any decision, but I prefer a downtown location because that seems to be central to the most students.
<b>How should Lowell Schools work to be inclusive and safe for the diverse kids of Lowell?</b>	Lowell has safe schools. All our schools have restricted entry during school hours. Security guards, police and cameras do a good job of keeping our high school secure. However, I would support the development of a safety plan by the superintendent to ensure we are doing everything possible.	I support bringing in the Restorative Justice Institute to help our district and our community-at-large discuss these difficult issues in a productive and expertly facilitated process. I also support increased diversity in our hiring and demanding more inclusive standards in our curriculum.	Let me say, that after teaching in Lowell for nearly 25 years, our schools are safe and inclusive. We cannot paint the city's schools with one brush after the isolated incident at the high school. These were kids making very poor decisions. Let's teach them the right way of dealing with adversity.	First, we need more diversity in our staff and school leaders. Second, we need more parent engagement overall, but especially from diverse parents who need to feel welcomed into our school community. Third, we need a cultural change that does not differentiate rules or expectations by group.
<b>How would you support teachers and parents transitioning to Common Core standards and state tests?</b>	I am hopeful that the state will not make the PARCC test a requirement. Educational standards in our state are already among the highest in the nation. I believe the PARCC would only water down those standards. In addition, the cost of implementing the PARCC would be very prohibitively expensive.	Our data driven activities have laid a strong foundation for our educators to tackle the Common Core challenge and we need to continue to invest in professional development. We also need to improve communications with parents to ensure that they can effectively track the progress of their children.	We need to help our parents and students with every available tool. If we expect our parents to help their kids with homework, they need to know the new processes. PARCC is not viable here because we do not have the infrastructure needed to implement it.	The best way we can support parents and students is through regular communication that explains curriculum changes and how the standards are being taught—such as workshops at our schools, online homework guides, resources and tips, as well as Math Nights that include games, prizes and pizza along with learning opportunities.
<b>Do you support Head Start, Early Head Start, or other Pre-K programs? Why?</b>	I absolutely support education as early as possible. Studies show, and it is our experience in Lowell, that children who attend Pre-K are much more successful in their educational careers than those that don't. If we can find the money, this would be one of the best investments that we can make.	The test results comparing students who enter our kindergarten classrooms without any pre-k experience and those who have had the benefit of pre-k programming, show that high quality pre-k programming gives our students a valuable foundation so they arrive in kindergarten ready to learn.*	Yes. Our children need to be given every advantage to compete in our society. All of these programs have proven themselves as great "table-setters" for our young students. We cannot afford to let these programs disappear. Our kids need them.	Yes, I support these programs because the early years are critical and catchup difficult. Studies show students fall further behind as they grow, and those are the ones most at-risk for dropping out/failing. We should provide transportation for low-income, ELL-students to promote attendance.

\*In terms of full disclosure I will share that my full-time job is as an Associate Executive Director at Community Teamwork which currently serves over 1,200 children in our Early Education and Care programs including Head Start and Early Head Start. I am not part of that division and I have absolutely no oversight or management responsibility for those programs.





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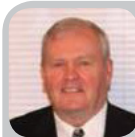
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<b>What is the one top priority that should be tackled by Superintendent Khelifaoui?</b>	Superintendent Khelifaoui will first need to tackle the inconsistent curriculums across the Lowell Public School system.	I strongly believe the top priority for the Superintendent is to develop a comprehensive plan for the Lowell Public Schools. A plan to address major issues in the system such as; increased class sizes, growing newcomer population, safety and security, and collective bargaining.	He, along with the school committee, needs to get the contract negotiations completed.	Teachers' contract.
<b>Can you share with us your thoughts on what would be a good contract negotiation outcome with the teachers' union, UTL?</b>	A good contract outcome would be one that ensures we get the best teachers we can because of a competitive salary that doesn't break the budget.	A fiscally responsible and respectful outcome for both parties. I was involved in the last successful contract negotiation with the UTL. I have the experience in successfully negotiating with all of the bargaining units and will continue to support what is best for the students.	Teachers 3 years = 9% All support staff 3 years = 12% (Except para's) They should get 3 years = 15%	I don't want to compromise the current negotiation between the city and UTL.
<b>Do you have a favored location for Lowell High School, and why?</b>	I prefer that LHS stay downtown. Its central location is ideal for all neighborhoods to travel to it. The students also benefit from it being near UML and MCC.	I would be in favor of keeping Lowell High School downtown. I am hopeful the feasibility study will clearly outline the best possible location for the city.	Keep it downtown. Centralized location and cost.	I do like the current location. It is situated at the location for which I call it "education district." It is strategically located close to both of MCC and UMass-Lowell. Since LHS has a matriculation agreement with both colleges, it is convenience for LHS students to get to campuses.
<b>How should Lowell Schools work to be inclusive and safe for the diverse kids of Lowell?</b>	Lowell schools have always strived to be inclusive and safe for all students. We need to ensure the guidelines for anti-bullying are followed by all students and classrooms.	Lowell Public Schools should always be looking for ways to improve inclusiveness and safety for our students. The schools and administration should work together with all of the stakeholders to continuously look at ways to improve the overall experience for each and every student.	Lowell schools are inclusive and they work very hard to keep it safe for all children. We can never let our guard down on safety.	Lowell is a diverse city with great ethnicities. We've seen people not by the color of their skin but the contents of their character.
<b>How would you support teachers and parents transitioning to Common Core standards and state tests?</b>	Teachers and parents will need to be informed every step of the way. Any and all training should be made available for both teachers as well as parents.	I would ask the Superintendent to bring parents, teachers and administrators together to clearly identify the major changes that will directly affect teaching and learning in the schools. Working together, I would advocate for clear communication to all parties and provide support to all parties.	Not a fan of the common core or testing, but like most mandates, we must comply or face the consequences.	Many parents are struggling with Common Core. It has left many parents unprepared for this curriculum. All of us need to be trained and understand the intent of the curriculum.
<b>Do you support Head Start, Early Head Start, or other Pre-K programs? Why?</b>	I do support early learning programs. The sooner a student is able to attend school to learn as well as interact with other children, the better.	I wholeheartedly support Pre-K programming and look forward to the day when we are able to provide it to each and every Pre-K aged student in the city. Many of our children are entering Kindergarten without any type of education and are immediately playing catch up with their peers.	If head start only took 4-year-olds, I would support it. I don't support early head start. And I like pre-k in the Public School system.	Pre-K program is good for our early childhood development. It teaches our children the foundation for social skills.





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**What is the one top priority that should be tackled by Superintendent Khelifaoui?**

Did not respond.

There are many issues that should be a top priority. I feel a resolution to ongoing contract negotiations is a good start. The entire school department needs to avoid any labor unrest and conflicts so the other priorities can be addressed.

There are a myriad of things for the superintendent to do, but in my opinion, the top priority is the teachers' contract. The issue of the teachers' contract seems to be a pall hanging over our school district.

Working with the city to make sure net school funding is met and resources are secured to reach the goals of the district, but there are many more such as infrastructure, technology, parent involvement, and focus the curriculum.

**Can you share with us your thoughts on what would be a good contract negotiation outcome with the teachers' union, UTL?**

I believe a good outcome is getting back to the bargaining table to resolve the issues that are stalling negotiations. This is a difficult question to answer considering the lack of public information available.

Before fresh negotiations begin, it is important to resolve any previous grievances. While that is going on or soon thereafter, I will explore and advocate possible carry over provisions in the previous contract for a specified duration (about one year) while fresh negotiations begin.

The teachers and the city come to an agreement that both sides think is fair and can be afforded.

**Do you have a favored location for Lowell High School, and why?**

First thought I would prefer Lowell High School to stay downtown. I feel that it is a central location and compliments UMass Lowell and Middlesex Community College. I will keep an open mind and wait for the feasibility study to be completed before taking a position.

The code of ethics for school committee members, requires that a member sees all the facts, before making a decision on matters facing the committee. Therefore, if elected, I will seek to see expert reports from a feasibility study before making a decision.

At this time I have not settled on a location. I have gone back and forth in regards to moving it or not. I want to wait for the feasibility study to be completed.

**How should Lowell Schools work to be inclusive and safe for the diverse kids of Lowell?**

I think Lowell schools are inclusive and a safe environment for the diverse student population. There is always more we as a community and school committee can do to further ensure inclusion.

The school district must make genuine effort, (key word is genuine) to show diversity among her ranks. When kids see their likes or the likes of their parents in positions of authority, they are more confident that their interests are protected and a sense of safety is subsequently established.

Work on hiring a more diverse group of teachers that is more reflective of the student body.

**How would you support teachers and parents transitioning to Common Core standards and state tests?**

I would work with the School Committee and Administration to ensure all teachers, support staff and parents are involved in the implementation of common core standards and state tests.

Enlightenment through information sessions and FAQ bulletins. Such bulletins must be made readily accessible physically and online.

The common core is the framework of what is being taught. The district should have parent forums to teach the parents and answer their questions.

**Do you support Head Start, Early Head Start, or other Pre-K programs? Why?**

Yes. These programs are a great opportunity for learning and school preparedness.

Yes, I support Early Head Start. It was created by an act of congress based on proven scientific studies on early brain developments. It is also beneficial and helpful to low-income pregnant women and their families.

Yes, I support these programs. To help with early identification of students who need support. It also gives them early exposure to structure, routines, early academic skills, and social skills.



Lowell Votes is a nonpartisan community group dedicated to increasing the number of people who vote in Lowell through education.  
[www.lowellvotes.org](http://www.lowellvotes.org)

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