

CAROL LEWIS CANDIDATE STATEMENT

To All Westwood Residents:

I am excited about the opportunity to serve Westwood as a member of the School Committee. My husband Warren and I were drawn to Westwood 11 years ago because of its excellent reputation for public education.

My Experience and Qualifications

My passion for education began early, from my days as a high-school representative to the Lexington School Committee to my undergraduate volunteer work at Hamilton College, tutoring inner-city children in Utica, N.Y. After receiving a B.A. degree from Hamilton, I earned a J.D. degree from Suffolk Law School and later, a Masters of Law degree in finance and banking from Boston University Law School.

A member of the Massachusetts, New York and Washington, D.C., Bars, I would describe my various career roles as advocate, researcher, educator, and communicator. For 15 years, I have worked for the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. For several years I was a bank examiner, and now, in my current part-time capacity, I manage the Bank's consumer regulations outreach unit, educating bankers, regulators and consumers on federal financial regulations and protections. I bring personal experience as a teacher as well to the Westwood School Committee candidacy. For several years, I served as a professor of criminal law and legal research and writing at the Massachusetts School of Law. I also have extensive advocacy experience, having spent a number of years in Brooklyn, New York as a public defender in the criminal justice system.

Westwood residents may best know me as the parent of a 5th and 3rd grader, a school volunteer, and a regular school committee meeting attendee. But what I am most proud of is starting a new organization in town in 2006 called Education411. "E411" is a non-partisan grassroots organization focused on getting facts about our schools out to Westwood residents. Since its formation, E411 members have informed Westwood residents on school issues by attending numerous town meetings, circulating newsletters, building an email database reaching several hundred residents, and organizing well-attended community forums on state funding and school safety policies. Through my work on E411, I have been able to collaborate with the school administration and various members of the School Committee to address resident questions and concerns. (Effective March 2010, I resigned from Education411 due to my School Committee candidacy.)

Why I Am Running For School Committee

I first became involved in school issues in 2005. In response to parent concerns about kindergarten assistant cuts, I organized and moderated a town-wide forum, allowing residents to create a dialogue regarding their concerns with the Westwood Public Schools superintendent. I have been a regular school committee attendee since then.

I have three main reasons for running for school committee:

1. I want to ensure continued high quality education for all Westwood students, delivered in the most cost- efficient manner;

2. I have always been passionate about education at all levels: as a student, as an educator, and now as a parent; and
3. With my financial, legal and academic background, I will bring a unique skill set that is especially valuable in these trying economic times.

Greatest Challenges Facing Our Schools

Four of the most important challenges for our schools are

- Sustainability of strong programs due to the uncertainty of funding at the municipal and state level
- Improving learning environments, including class size, space and technology
- Establishing strong updated policies and procedures that provide clear guidance to faculty and administration on such issues as bullying and student behavior
- Maintaining staff quality to ensure the best possible education for our students

Skills and Perspectives That I Would Bring To the School Committee

I bring a varied professional background and skill set as a result of my experience:

- Financial education and professional training
- Legal training and practice
- Teaching experience
- Advocacy and Negotiation Skills
- General Management Skills

With this unique background in finance, law and academia, I have also developed strong skills in communication, creative thinking, and collaborative-approach decision-making that I now use every day in my capacity at the Federal Reserve Bank.

What I Will Do For Westwood

As a School Committee member, I plan to collaborate with other Committee members and the school administration to effectively and creatively allocate resources, while being fiscally responsible. I also intend to communicate with other municipal departments and Westwood residents to understand their priorities. It is important to connect all of these constituencies to enhance our sense of community and emphasize the importance of our school system as the foundation that makes Westwood a great place to live.

My main goal is to ensure educational excellence for all Westwood students in these unprecedented times. I am ready to be an active Committee member, prepared and always asking pertinent questions.

Thank you for your support in the upcoming election on April 27.

You can reach me at lewis4schoolcommittee@yahoo.com

Carol Lewis