

# Questions for Portland City School Committee Candidates

Your name: Morton G. Soule

Your home address: 70 Presumpscot Street Portland, Maine 04103

Your email address: M Soule 1@maine.rr.com

Your phone number: (207) 772-0589

Your website:

Other blog/social media sites you use:

If elected, what will your top three priorities be?

- 1) Elevate the rating of the Riverton School
- 2) In-house Professional Development — they're less expensive
- 3) Challenging curriculum for all students

Do you have children and where did/do they attend school? [This question has no bearing on your endorsement—we merely want to have some idea of your background.]

four children (all have graduated  
three in the Cumberland (Maine) schools  
one in the Portland (Maine) schools

Please share one positive change you have seen in our schools and in the School Committee over the last year?

schools • More harmony and interaction in Central Office  
School Committee • a seriousness of purpose

Please share one frustrating change you have seen in our schools and in the School Committee over the last year?

schools • the Riverton School's low rating  
School Committee • a feeling that a surplus is  
its primary goal

What competing responsibilities do you have, both professionally and personally, and how will you juggle those responsibilities?

I teach one course in Latin at the Cape Elizabeth High School language department. I am done by 8:50 a.m. I have no other professional responsibilities.

What is your position on the elected mayor proposal? How do you see this changing (if at all) the relationship between the school committee and the city council?

The elected mayoral position will free the City Manager from some of the ceremonial events; that is good. It will not impact the school committee.

What do you think the role of School Committee should be in determining the school budget? What ways will you improve the process of school budgeting?

School Committee members must be vigilant about the tax payers' funds. Money must be well spent on the education of Portland's youth. We must draw from those in State and federal government.

With the current reality of the state and city's school budgets, more cuts seem likely. What will you cut and why? What will you fight for to keep it from being cut?

We must watch out for growth in Central Office. (This has been a problem in yesteryears.) Casco Bay High School must be evaluated yearly; i.e., can we integrate its concepts into Deering and Portland. Participation fees are a must if affordable.

How do we increase the number of graduates that go on to pursue post-secondary education? What benchmarks would inform Portland schools towards reaching these goals?

The goal, of course, is to increase the number of graduates per annum. Alternative and meaningful programs are necessary. Elementary teachers et al. should begin talking about colleges. At the end of their sophomore year, students need to be told about their realistic post-secondary goals.

How can we better include our city's immigrant population in school decisions? What do you think of legal resident voting?

The greatest gift Portland can give its immigrant population is help with language skills. Opportunities and rights need to be conveyed and understood. Immigrants need to understand the tremendous privilege a vote affords a country's population.

Do you think student transportation needs any changes? Why or why not?

Let's get our kids to school — especially the elementary students. Bus all the elementary and middle school youngsters; high schoolers, who live less than a mile from school, can get their own transportation.

Data shows enrollment is declining in some Portland schools. Why do you think this is? What, if anything, should be done about it?

There are many acceptable reasons that some want the suburbs (Falmouth, Cape, Yarmouth, Freeport, etc.). Some parents feel the schools are better — they're not. We need to promote and better Portland's schools so that a child's education will not be a reason for leaving Portland.

Walter G. Sells

9/9/10