



Bike Newton Candidate Questionnaire

Questionnaire Intro:

Bicycling concerns are inextricably linked to a number of issues, including transportation and recreation generally, but also to concerns of climate, housing, land use, health and wellness, healthy aging, affordability, commuting, and mobility justice. This Candidate Questionnaire, developed by the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition and Bike Newton, is designed to explore how candidates for public office view and approach these interconnected issues.

Candidate Name: Ben Schlesinger

Office Sought in Election: School Committee – Ward 5

Campaign website:

<https://ben4newton.com/>

Campaign social media accounts:

<https://www.facebook.com/Ben4Newton>

<https://www.instagram.com/ben4newton/>

Tell Us Your Story

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective and for the work Bike Newton does to promote safe, sustainable transportation. While many of the questions in your survey extend beyond the School Committee's role, I do want to speak to the importance of biking and safe school access.

Biking to and from school is healthy, environmentally friendly, and good for community building. Both biking to school and recreational biking help restore a more play-based childhood—getting kids outdoors, off devices, and engaged with their community. My 12-year-old son loves the independence he gains from biking around the neighborhood to find friends, and I believe our infrastructure should give parents confidence that it's safe to let their kids do the same.

On the issues you raise, I support efforts to design school campuses with the safety of walkers and bikers in mind, while acknowledging that car drop-off and pick-up is and will continue to be the preferred option of many families for a variety of understandable reasons. The recent designs and redesigns are meaningful steps in encouraging healthier, more sustainable ways for students to get to school. At the same time, I believe strongly in a data-driven approach: traffic congestion, compliance with rules, and student travel habits are all measurable, and we should be evaluating outcomes and adjusting policies based on evidence of what's working.

While enforcement and road design sit with the city, the School Committee can help by making sure school leaders' voices are heard, by partnering with city officials on safety priorities, and by ensuring families clearly understand expectations around school traffic policies. I may not be able to answer every policy question beyond the School Committee's scope, but I am committed to constructive dialogue wherever our work overlaps—especially when it comes to ensuring students can safely walk and bike to school.