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Fall River Educators Association

Guiding Principles

Quality public education is the cornerstone of a just and democratic society. In the interest of the schools our community deserves, we believe in:

1. **Fully funded public school in every neighborhood.** We can't work with what we don't have. Greater funding in our district means modern, safer school buildings with smaller class sizes, better technology, and more social-emotional supports. It means competitive salaries that retain talented teachers. In short, it means better teaching and learning. To make all of this possible, we support funding the district above net school spending requirement. We support the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission, which account for rising transportation and special education costs. We support the Fair Share Amendment, which will invest in public education and transportation by taxing millionaires at a 4% higher rate. And we oppose all efforts to privatize education-from expanding charter schools to weakening unions.

I support this principle. Budgets are not infinite, and everything that needs to be accomplished cannot be achieved without financial support. Education is the major ingredient to make our city flourish and build a stronger community.

2. **Educating all of our students.** We understand our district's diversity as an asset, and we welcome our students regardless of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability language, or citizenship status. Because our students' lives at home determine their success in our classrooms, we support an economic agenda that lifts families up-from a \$15/hour living wage to paid family and medical leave.

I support this principle. Every student deserves to have their basic necessities met, including social emotional needs, in order to become the most successful learners possible. I encourage all initiatives regarding home-school-community connections and support.

3. **Less testing, more learning.** High-stakes testing hurts us and our students. Tying test scores to student graduation and teacher evaluation turns our schools into pressure-cookers. We support a holistic curriculum with plenty of room for the arts and recess. We support hands-on, student-centered learning and authentic, teacher-designed assessments.

I support this principle. We need to build every aspect of the child, which includes various outlets that will build them into strong, productive adults. True learning does not involve teaching to a test. I understand teachers may feel they have their hands tied in making sure students are meeting particular testing standards, so as a community we need to have a voice at the state level regarding this approach to education.

- 4. Restorative justice practices.** Punitive discipline doesn't work, and it doesn't respect our students. We see children in our classrooms as young people deserving of love. We strive to work with them in ways that hold them accountable, repair harm, and transform behavior over the long term. We support adoption of these practices in every school and training in restorative justice practices for every educator.

I support this principle. Traditional discipline may not teach a child the life lessons that need to be learned, especially because it does not include problem solving and developing replacement behaviors. Restorative justice engages the entire school community to work toward conflict resolution alternatives, which has shown to decrease suspensions and dropouts while improving relationships.

- 5. Professional Development.** Our population of high-needs students is growing. We need ongoing high-quality professional development to meet those needs.

I support this principle. Teachers cannot be expected to handle the dynamics of our diverse population without supporting their professional growth on a regular basis. Our society is constantly changing, as are our students, and the education profession cannot remain stagnant if we are to serve the needs of every child.