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SHOULD THE MAYOR CHAIR THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE?

When people think about improving our schools, they often focus on teachers, curriculum, class sizes, or facilities. Those are all important conversations.

But there's another issue that rarely gets discussed: Who should lead the School Committee?

Under the Malden City Charter, the Mayor automatically serves as Chair of the School Committee for as long as they are mayor. While this model exists in some Massachusetts communities, I believe it's time to ask whether it's still the best approach for Malden.

This isn't about any one mayor or any one administration. It's about creating a system that encourages transparency, accountability, and independent decision-making.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The Mayor has many responsibilities. One of the most important is preparing the city's annual budget and deciding how taxpayer dollars are allocated across all city departments, including our public schools.

The School Committee has a different responsibility. Its job is to oversee the school district, advocate for students and educators, establish policy, and work with the Superintendent to ensure our schools have the resources they need.

Those are two distinct roles.

When the same person is both the city's chief executive and the Chair of the School Committee, it can create a power imbalance. Even when everyone is acting with the best intentions, it can make it more difficult for the School Committee to function as an independent governing body.

Healthy government works best when there are checks and balances, open discussion, and leadership that is accountable to the members it serves.

A BETTER APPROACH?

I believe the School Committee should have the same ability that many governing bodies have: the ability to elect its own leadership. This would be done through a change to Malden's charter.

My proposal is simple:

- ✓ The Mayor would remain an ex-officio member of the School Committee however, would not be entitled to a leadership role.
- ✓ Mayor would vote only in the event of a tie.
- ✓ School Committee members would elect its own Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary from among its elected members.
- ✓ Committee would also have the ability to remove its Chair (or Vice Chair, etc) if that person is no longer effectively serving the committee.

This model preserves the Mayor's connection to our schools as an advisor, while ensuring that the School Committee has the independence to govern effectively.

WHY INDEPENDENCE MATTERS

An independent School Committee is better positioned to ask tough questions, debate priorities, and advocate for students without concern about undue influence from the city's executive branch.

Our schools are one of the largest investments our community makes each year. They deserve strong oversight, thoughtful discussion, and leadership chosen by the people entrusted with that responsibility.

Good governance isn't about giving more power to one person. It's about creating systems that encourage collaboration, accountability, and public trust.

As someone who has served on the School Committee for nine years, I've seen firsthand how important these conversations are. If elected Mayor, I would support changing the City Charter to allow the School Committee to elect its own leadership, even though it would mean giving up the position of Chair.

Because I believe strong institutions matter more than individual titles.

I'd love to hear from you. Do you think the School Committee should choose its own Chair, or should the Mayor continue to serve in that role? [See less](#)

