

Jonathan Bruno, Candidate for SBRSD School Committee  
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Dear residents of Southern Berkshire Regional School District,

I, Jonathan Bruno, am committed to helping Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) continue to live up to its reputation as a top Massachusetts school district. As a product of Massachusetts public schools and public school teacher of 15 years, I have the education, experience, and insight into what makes a public school work. In addition to classroom teaching, I was Lead Teacher and Registrar and served on School Leadership Team where I played a critical role in balancing budgets with a focus on supporting teachers and students. I earned a B.A. in History at UMASS/Boston, a Masters Degree in Special Education Northeastern University, and am months away from completing my Doctorate in Education at Northeastern. We, my wife Emilie and our three young children, live in Sheffield because of SBRSD's reputation and the beauty and resources the district has to offer. I am committed to helping provide the best education for all our children.

I was born and raised in Western Mass. My father was a firefighter and my mother a nurse, so I know what it means to grow up in a working-class home. We always had our home open to anyone that had needs, even when we didn't have much to share other than time or support. This upbringing instilled in me a lifelong duty to help people as best I can. I hope that I can continue to emulate that supportive spirit as a member of the SBRSD School Committee. A vote for me is a vote for your children's future.

Below are my thoughts on some of our current and ongoing issues in SBRSD

- **Communication** - The school committee is an elected body and works for the residents of the district. They should be easy to access and responsive to their constituents. I am getting feedback from residents stating the committee members don't communicate well if at all. I welcome communication and hope, if elected, residents gain better access to communication and school committee members that listen.
- **Transparency** - A School Committee must be transparent in all their dealings, otherwise residents may misunderstand its actions. Hiding behind executive session, other than to protect district employee privacy rights should be limited. It is also the committee's responsibility to inform residents of policy, actions, decisions, and any changes to the status quo. This is currently highlighted by the ongoing situation with South Egremont School. A two-way street of communication needs to be opened and constructive conversations must be encouraged.
- **Budget** - Investment in education pays the highest returns. Teachers and classroom supports are what our students need, not teacher cuts, and extraneous non-classroom purchases. Every decision must start with our current and future students' needs first, not our own personal agendas.
- **School Closings/Enrollment** - I have placed these two together because I believe they are closely connected. Closing a school rarely has a positive impact on a community. An elementary school is often the heart of many communities and shuttering it can cause rifts that are hard to mend. There must be an ongoing, transparent, collaborative process with all the stakeholders in the district including teachers and families. The recent closings can easily be tied to the trend of falling enrollments, so we must develop a plan to draw more families to our district schools, not just close schools. We need to look at drawing more families as well as convincing those who live here to send their kids to our public schools. Investing in methods that draw those families elsewhere should be seriously considered.
- **School Mergers** - In education, our focus is on the present, but we should always plan for the future. Enrollments have fallen across the Berkshires and there is much talk of mergers. I believe this conversation is important, but any decision must be transparent and include everyone at the table, not just a few school committee members. Personally, I would like to see a commitment to maintain all current elementary schools before beginning secondary school merger conversations.

Thank You, Jonathan Bruno

If you have any comments or questions please email me at [jon.bruno@gmail.com](mailto:jon.bruno@gmail.com) or go to my facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/jonathanbrunosheffield/>