

October 11th, 2021

Longmeadow Select Board
20 Williams Street
Longmeadow, MA 01106

Dear Members of the Select Board, Planning Board and Town Manager Lyn Simmons,

I am excited to submit this letter to you along with my strong interest in serving as a member of the Planning Board for the Town of Longmeadow. I believe that my lifelong commitment to equity and excellence in education, coupled with experiences and insights from serving as a community leader in Longmeadow, would make me a compelling candidate to support the work of the Planning Board moving forward.

As an educator, from the classroom to the superintendency, I have continually been charged with identifying educational needs for the students and families that I have served. I have sought input and collaboration from stakeholders across neighborhoods in order to ensure the views of the community are represented in decision-making. As the quality of our program increased and parental demand for high-quality seats along with it, we acquired three facilities in different parts of the community, pursued having them rezoned and ultimately remodeled them into new K-8 schools with the capacity to educate an additional 1,500 students.

More recently, I have had the opportunity to serve in a number of different capacities in Longmeadow and would bring a diverse lens of experiences to the Planning Board. I learned last week that I have been elected to a second term on the Blueberry Hill Elementary School Council and have run for election to the Longmeadow School Committee. I have also served as the Longmeadow Select Board's Coalition for Racial Justice Task Force Chair, a parent with the Special Education Alliance of Longmeadow (SEAL), a member of the Longmeadow Democratic Town Committee, a volunteer with the Longmeadow Pride Festival and as a leader with the Longmeadow Anti-Racism Coalition. Additionally, I sit on the Richard Salter Storrs Library Board of Trustees, which has provided invaluable resources to Longmeadow families for generations and serve as the Senior Director of Youth and Family Programs at the Springfield Jewish Community Center, providing resources to Longmeadow families each and every day.

My family relocated to Longmeadow after a national search for a community that met the needs of our growing family. My wife, Anya, and I are beyond fortunate that we get to raise our four children, Henry (8), Thomas (7), Katherine (5) and Samuel (3) in Longmeadow. We have formed wonderful friendships with our neighbors and with the broader Blueberry Hill Elementary School community. It would be an honor to be able to serve on the Planning Board and have the opportunity to represent my community in this role.

I thank you greatly for your consideration of my application for the Longmeadow Planning Board and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,
Zachary T. Verriden

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EXPERIENCE

- Senior Director, Youth & Family Programs, Springfield JCC, Springfield, MA** 2021-Present
- Drive programmatic excellence across multiple initiatives impacting youth & families
- Founder & Consultant, @ideaswithzach, Springfield, MA** 2019-21
- Create & deliver high impact strategies and solutions for educational organizations and leaders
- Executive Director, HOPE Schools, Milwaukee & Racine, WI** 2015-19
- Lead overall instructional & operational programming across eight campuses and communities
 - Directly supervise eight school principals and two community and family engagement managers
 - Research community need and acquire properties that require rezoning and renovation
- Director of People Development, HOPE Schools, Milwaukee & Racine, WI** 2014-15
- Collaboratively designed new instructional rubric, feedback cycle & leadership programming
 - Created scorecards & one-pagers defining excellence & key performance indicators
- Principal, HOPE High School, Milwaukee, WI** 2011-14
- Increased ACT average from 15.6 to 17.7* in 3 years (*outpaced local & national averages)
 - Increased enrollment (10%) & average daily attendance (5%) through strong teen programming
- Adjunct Professor of Education, Alverno & WLC, Milwaukee, WI** 2013-19
- Design & drive innovative curriculum & school leadership courses for graduate-level students
- High School Teacher & Grade Level Chair, YES Prep Public School, Houston, TX** 2008-11
- Students achieved 100% “passing” & 74% “commended” on Texas State Assessment (TAKS)
 - Manage culture and community/parent outreach for 10th and 11th grade levels
- High School Teacher & Learning Team Leader, LEAP Academy, Camden, NJ** 2005-07
- Lead social studies instructor charged with offering professional development to peers

EDUCATION | CERTIFICATIONS

- University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D. (*in-progress*), Education Leadership & Policy Analysis
- Harvard University, Master of Education, Education Policy and Management
- University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science
- Rice University, Entrepreneurship in Education Certification
- KIPP Public Charter School Leadership Program, Instructional Leadership Certification
- Secondary Teacher Certification, New Jersey
- School Principal Certification, Texas (*expired*)
- (092) Certificate for Intermediate Administration and Supervision, Connecticut
- Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent, Massachusetts

VOLUNTEERISM / COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Chair of the Longmeadow Select Board’s Coalition for Racial Justice Task Force
- Member of Longmeadow Anti-Racist Coalition (LARC)
- Member of local Blueberry Hill Elementary School Council
- Member of Special Education Alliance of Longmeadow (SEAL)
- Member of the Board of Trustees for the Richard Salter Storrs Library in Longmeadow
- Candidate for Longmeadow School Committee Summer 2021