

I am writing to formally express my interest in being considered for the vacant New Bedford School Committee seat created by the passing of Mr. Bruce Oliveira. New Bedford truly lost someone who helped build this city in ways many never fully saw. His legacy lives not only in our schools, but also in historic places and in the people he encouraged to step forward and serve. I would be honored to help carry that legacy forward.

When I began getting involved in local education issues in 2019 through the New Bedford Coalition to Save Our Schools, I was searching for a way to serve. During that time and later in my professional work, Mr. Oliveira was one of the individuals who helped open doors, offered guidance, and showed me how public service should be rooted in humility and respect. His example helped shape my passion for serving our community, especially our youth.

I am a lifelong New Bedford resident, a graduate of New Bedford High School, and a parent raising my family here. My work over the past several years has centered on public service, youth engagement, equity, historic preservation, and community health. I previously served for two years as the Community Outreach Coordinator for WHALE (Waterfront Historic Area League), assisting with education, youth engagement, and community access through preservation projects. I have also served as a Community Resilience Ambassador with Kim Lundgren Associates on the NB Resilient climate and resilience planning process, and I continue to work as a Resident Researcher with the Healthy Neighborhoods Study in partnership with MIT and the Conservation Law Foundation. Additionally, I serve on local boards and committees, including the Cape Verdean Recognition Committee, and collaborate regularly with youth-serving organizations, neighborhood groups, and city partners.

Through these roles, I have gained experience that I believe is directly relevant to School Committee service:

- Engaging residents and families in thoughtful dialogue about their needs and priorities
- Working with diverse stakeholders, including city departments, nonprofits, and grassroots leaders, to move shared goals forward
- Reviewing data and community feedback to inform policy, planning, and resource decisions
- Communicating across languages and cultures; I speak English, Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish

As someone living with epilepsy and navigating complex health and education systems, I also bring a lived experience perspective on how school policies, support services, and family engagement affect students with disabilities and health challenges. I am committed to advancing equity, supporting our teachers and school staff, and ensuring that every student, especially those in historically marginalized communities has access to safe, healthy, and opportunity-rich learning environments.

If selected, I would approach School Committee service with humility, a listening ear, and a strong commitment to collaboration with fellow members, educators, families, students, and community partners. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my background and vision in more detail and to participate in the January 7 joint convention.

Thank you for your consideration of my application and for your role in facilitating this important process for our city.

Sincerely,

Eldric R. Abreu

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